CNN

How Humanity Scheduling Helps CNN Deliver 24/7 News Coverage Across the Globe

Challenge

CNN.com is among the world's leaders in online news and information delivery. CNN's employees operate around the clock and across multiple countries and time zones. The International Programming Department manages the production and programming for the network's 24/7 international television channel. More than 200 dedicated news professionals including anchors, producers, writers, and copy editors make up this Department, which operates 6 bureaus in multiple countries and provides support for CNN USA's overnight broadcasts.

With the unpredictable nature of the global news cycle, schedules at CNN change rapidly. Employees rarely work the same days, hours, or on the same programs each week. Depending on the assignment, writers and producers work the hours of other bureaus, while program directors continuously collaborate on the lineup of programs scheduled to run on their designated channel. Because of this, CNN's static scheduling process was creating double the work and double vision for managers.

Prior to using TCP's Humanity Scheduling, all schedules were manually created in Excel and compiled by one administrator out of CNN's headquarters. Without in-depth knowledge of the staff at each bureau, the scheduling administrator was not able to take into account each employee's skill set, subject-matter expertise, and interpersonal relationships when assigning them to a specific production and program team.

In an attempt to streamline this process, bureau managers took over scheduling for their office, while continuing to rely on Excel. This localized approach gave managers better control over assigning the right staff to programs, but it practically doubled their workloads.

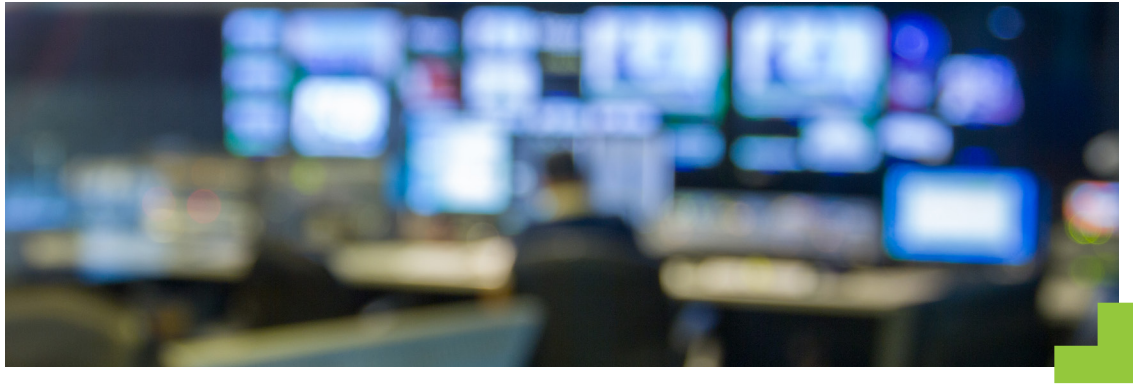www.tcpsoftware.com | **Your Workforce Ally**

BACKGROUND

CNN, one of the world leaders in online news with employees who operate around the clock in multiple countries and time zones, needed a scheduling solution that could provide more personalized schedules and save time in the schedule-building process.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Complex workforce: 200+ employees in 6 bureaus in multiple countries across the globe
- 24/7 coverage needed and frequent schedule changes due to the unpredictable nature of news
- Static scheduling process created double work for managers

BENEFITS OF SWITCHING

- Reduced time spent on scheduling by 88%
- Centralized schedule created for all bureaus
- Increased tracking of time-off requests
- Simplified management and budgeting

Without a central schedule, organizing and locating employees across the bureaus became extremely difficult and time-consuming. Any last-minute schedule update had to be emailed and confirmed by both the manager and the employee, which was particularly inefficient for employees working on shows in different time zones. The process caused unnecessary work for both parties and introduced a risk that an employee would miss their shift altogether. Maintaining the labor budget and schedules for CNN's freelancers presented another challenge for the bureaus. While the freelancers were managed on site, CNN's business department in Atlanta needed to verify the labor budget for each bureau and authorize any overtime. As a result, in addition to their regular duties, managers had to report to the business department to coordinate payments to freelancers, as well as confirm if their monthly labor budget may have changed.

Solutions & Results

"As journalists, our schedules vary greatly – we have to work holidays, weekends, and overnight hours. Working this type of schedule is stressful, so we wanted to provide our employees with something that would make this part of their lives less hectic," said Ryan Cooper, Director of Programming for the Los Angeles bureau. With Humanity Scheduling, the bureaus are now spending 88% less time on scheduling—a sharp decline from 40 to just 5 hours a week, freeing up managers to focus on

more important tasks. Key managers now oversee specific departments and can quickly assemble and update schedules to meet the changing demands of the news cycle. Relevant employees and managers are automatically notified about shift changes, eliminating miscommunications. Notifications on their real-time schedules are especially helpful for employees who work floating shifts or when urgent staff changes are needed to adapt to breaking and developing news, as well as other unforeseen program changes.

Managing the freelancers' schedules and payrolls is now streamlined as well. With Humanity, CNN's business office and bureau managers can independently manage their freelance labor budget, and the billing department can easily view the schedule and verify how many hours a specific freelancer has worked and if they've worked overtime.

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> For our managers, Humanity reduces the administrative efforts associated with scheduling and enables us to focus on the more pressing aspects of our jobs.

Want to learn more? Let's talk.

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