

Operational Workforce Planning Survey highlights UK's productivity puzzle



The 2019 Hilton Productivity Services Operational Workforce Planning Survey has revealed that businesses are recognising the relationship between productivity and planning processes but too many are failing to employ specialist resource to maintain productivity KPIs.

The survey carried out in February found a marked difference in the way that retail logistics operations and third party operators are managing operational workforce planning processes. Retail-based businesses are far more likely to have planning teams and far more likely to employ specialists (Industrial Engineers) to maintain productivity and planning management systems. The survey indicates that third party operators are much more likely to rely on operations managers to manage planning processes.

It showed 100% of respondents incorporate some form of productivity KPIs into their planning processes, but whilst all retail logistics businesses in the survey reported that they employed specialist resource to maintain productivity KPIs, only half of the third party businesses did so.

Around half of all respondents say that operational workforce planning processes are not standardised across the organisation.

Spreadsheets remain the main tool for managing KPI and planning data. Fewer than half of the respondents' report that they are open to or actively looking to upgrade these systems.

The main challenges for operational workforce planning highlighted by respondents are; Uncertainty in forecasting, the cost of labour and the reliability of management systems to provide accurate and consistent data.

Peter Hilton CMILT, Managing Director of Hilton Productivity Services said; "After my 30 years of work in the sector, it was clear that the use of established tools and techniques for productivity management and planning were not widespread. Some businesses in the sector recognise that establishing effective processes gives them competitive advantage, others don't but could gain this relatively easily with quick paybacks. I commissioned this survey to find out the scale of the issue."

He added; "If we are to maintain our global position in this sector we must seek to improve and learn from others."

The survey comes on the back of other research by [Be the Business](#): "Too few businesses measure their productivity or compare themselves against other firms, with only 58 per cent having invested in measuring their performance in the past two years. More than a quarter (28%) of businesses surveyed have never evaluated their business practices to identify areas for improvement."

And from the UK Warehousing Association's 2019 conference: "38% of companies have no metrics in their fulfilment operations to identify costs."

Ends -408 words

Background information

Photos attached.

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Hilton Productivity Services works with retail, manufacturing, warehousing and logistics enterprises analysing data and recommending solutions based on tried and tested operational planning techniques so that clients can improve business efficiency, save money and benefit from clear workplace structures and increased morale.

Recent clients include DHL, JD Sports, Lakeland and Morrisons.

Peter Hilton established Hilton Productivity Services in 2015 to create a blueprint for best practice following 30 years of senior level experience in productivity improvement.

Operational workforce planning is a subset of workforce management, which is a critical element of most large organisations' human resources and enterprise resource planning systems. It looks at workload demands and the volume of work that is forecast to be processed in a given planning period. It helps managers develop work schedules and account for employee hours required to maintain maximum production output, service, quality and productivity. It can cover machine operators, pickers, packers, dispatchers and other areas of operational activity.

The 2019 Hilton Productivity Services Operational Workforce Planning Survey asked 90 of the top logistics and warehousing organisations in the UK, how they undertook their operational workforce planning. The 90 were selected to provide a cross section of the sector.

Contact:



Peter Hilton

Peter Hilton

07906 052207 direct.

enquiries@hiltonproductivityservices.co.uk

hiltonhps@aol.com

www.hiltonproductivityservices.co.uk

