

# PIER 1 IMPORTS

## COMPANY BACKGROUND

Pier 1 Imports Inc. is a retailer specializing in imported home furnishings and decor. The chain operates over 1,000 stores in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. When Pier 1 Imports celebrated its golden anniversary in 2012, the milestone was marked by tech upgrades to ensure the longevity of the iconic home furnishings brand. Topping the list of systems upgrades was a workforce management initiative, that was reaping rewards for the company just six months after go-live.

**COMPANY:** Pier 1 Imports Inc.

**HEADQUARTERS:** Fort Worth, Texas

**EMPLOYEES:** 20,000

**INDUSTRY:** Retail

"THE [CERIDIAN] DAYFORCE SOLUTION HAS ALLOWED US TO BETTER ALIGN STORE STAFFING TO CUSTOMER NEEDS. IN FACT, WE ENDED UP DEPLOYING MORE ASSOCIATES ON THE WHOLE, BUT WITH SIGNIFICANT SCHEDULE AND LABOR COST DIFFERENCES WHICH ENABLED SIMULTANEOUS LABOR COST SAVINGS AND IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SALES RESULTS." – Sharon Leite, Executive VP of Stores

## CHALLENGE

- Replace its legacy, Excel and Access-based scheduling systems with a modern, SaaS-based WFM suite
- Need to optimize staffing coverage in a way that maximizes employee performance
- Integrate scheduling with other business processes, such as budgeting and planning

## SOLUTION

A single hosted workforce management solution comprised of:

- Labour scheduling
- Time & Attendance
- Task Management
- Employee self-service

## RESULTS

- Increase revenues by aligning labor deployment with customer demands
- Generate automated schedules to reduce unproductive labor and eliminate undesired premium pay
- Ensure compliance, preventing costly violations of hour and wage laws, company policies, and other regulations



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CASE STUDY

## THE CHALLENGE

For its first 49 years in business, Pier 1, which employs more than 20,000 associates in 49 states and Canada, was managing schedules using a mix of pen, paper, Excel and Access. "Thanks to the dedicated work of Senior Manager of Store Operations Lee Crowell and his team, the system worked well through seven substantial in-house upgrades," says executive VP of Stores Sharon Leite. The homegrown system was sophisticated enough to integrate traffic counters that enabled demand curve analysis and management. But Crowell and Leite both knew an upgrade was inevitable. In fact, Crowell says the late-stage development of the old scheduling system at Pier 1 was part of a grand exercise in self discovery that helped the company discern its needs in preparation for purchase of an off-the-shelf, automated labor scheduling system.

### Cost, and Sales Opportunity Drive Upgrade

In 2010, Leite and a team of Pier 1 executives traveled to the National Retail Federation's Big Show to research WFM solutions. "Two goals drove our search," says Leite. "Our old system told us that intelligent WFM could be leveraged as an offensive tool to drive sales by giving us an opportunity to be more scientific and proactive with scheduling, better aligning store associates to customer demand. We also knew that we could become more efficient with our labor and management budget," she explains.

## THE SOLUTION

After an evaluation of the competitive WFM solution provider landscape, Pier 1 chose a hosted WFM suite from Dayforce that includes labor scheduling, time and attendance, task management, and employee self-service.

This was a big decision for the company, which had never before implemented a core retail system on a SaaS platform. "We took ourselves to task with due diligence," says Leite. "We don't take new systems implementation lightly, especially when the system in question is one that ensures our associates get paid fairly and accurately."

Ultimately, the Dayforce WFM combination of functionality, usability, and low cost of entry enabled by the SaaS approach sealed the deal. "Left to their own devices, store managers are prone to building schedules that are influenced by intuition and the people they're around, as opposed to the needs of the business," explains Crowell. This approach can often have negative implications on the business because it doesn't align the right associates with the right customers at the right time. It can also have negative consequences at the site and associate

levels. Because hours scheduled affect the livelihood of employees, manual scheduling can result in the perception of preferential treatment.

From a labor cost perspective, the Dayforce solution was able to support a strategic Pier 1 initiative to adjust its complement of full-time employees at each store. "We had a lot of full-time labor when I joined the company in 2007, and we determined that adjusting the level of full-time associates downward would create both better sales-driving scheduling flexibility and allow us to better manage labor costs," says Leite. Today, instead of employing three-to-four full time managers and assistant managers per store, Pier 1 staffs each site with a full-time store manager, full-time assistant, and a part-time "sales lead" associate, in addition to a full complement of part-time associates. "The Dayforce solution has helped us manage that transition, which has allowed us to better align store staffing to customer needs," says Leite. "In fact, we ended up deploying more associates on the whole, but with significant schedule and labor cost differences, which enabled simultaneous labor cost savings and improved customer service and sales results."

### Establishing Trust in Labor Schedules

Change management was an integral part of the Dayforce implementation. "Getting store managers past their emotional attachment to manual schedule writing has required a concerted effort, but once they trust it and they let it work we can report back to them and illustrate a corollary positive impact on sales," says Leite. "We have a regional manager in the Detroit area, one of the famously depressed areas of the nation, who has embraced it fully and is enjoying substantive sales gains as a result. The combination of her hiring skill and scientific scheduling resulting in sales gains – in spite of a tough economy – is a real-time testimony to our success." Crowell says the corporate office has benefitted from newfound visibility into its WFM efforts. "Previously we'd have to look at 1,000 or more schedules and do a lot of math to understand any semblance of a relationship between labor and sales," he says. Now, after implementation and rollout that took a mere 12 months, Pier 1 Imports can see the correlation instantly, and take effective action to improve scheduling to customer demand immediately.

## ABOUT CERIDIAN

Ceridian is a leader in human capital management with more than 100,000 clients across the globe. Our offering includes the award winning, cloud-based Dayforce HCM, LifeWorks, Small Business and International Payroll Solutions. Ceridian makes work life better.



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