

EUROPORTE

RIGHTSIZING THE WORKFORCE



Aims:

- to redesign an in-house workforce sizing tool
- to improve productivity by optimizing work cycles



Solutions:

- a bespoke full-web application
- a simulation module to examine various workforce sizing scenarios
- a cyclic roster optimization module



Results:

- duty days scheduling optimized
- higher company productivity
- time savings for planners, who can test many scenarios

"We relied on EURODECISION's expertise at every stage of the project. Our planning teams are fully satisfied with the new software, which was specifically developed for our company's organization." Bernard LAVIEVILLE, Program Management, EUROPORTE

"The EURODECISION team quickly latched onto our complicated business and provided us with deliverables that matched our expectations." "Today, thanks to the roster optimization module, we are certain that we have the best solution and can prove it." Tristan ZIEGLER, Activity Scheduling, Sizing and Organizing Manager, EUROPORTE

EUROPORTE, a EUROTUNNEL Group subsidiary, is the leading private rail freight company in France. Every week, more than 200 trains travel on the national rail network, not to mention the connections with its European neighbors.

As rail freight transport is going through troubled times, planning staffing needs is a major challenge for EUROPORTE. The company needs to organize itself in the most effective way to safeguard its market shares and meet the changing needs of its business activity... even more so since it clinched new customer contracts.

So, in 2015, EUROPORTE decided to redesign its workforce sizing tool for its France-based drivers and operating employees. The tool had been developed in-house using Excel to simulate and calculate its personnel needs for each rail traction and each duty take-up point a

year in advance. The rail firm decided to invest in a more robust Web-based application in a bid to solve its solution's maintainability shortcomings.

The EUROTUNNEL Group's IT Division recommended EUROPORTE to call on EURODECISION to guide it through its redesign project. The parent company had already worked with this decision support specialist on human resources scheduling.

Thanks to their practice of working on specific projects and strong business comprehension ability, EURODECISION's experts devised a bespoke workforce sizing tool that catered for EUROPORTE's scheduling constraints. The new robust, multi-user web application facilitates the planners' tasks of examining various organization scenarios and reliably forecasting the workforce needs, gearing them to workload fluctuations. Advance management of accesses now means that roles can be assigned by user profile. Furthermore, the data validation mechanism alerts the managers when user modifications require approval.

EUROPORTE then asked EURODECISION to help it broaden the solution to include a work cycle building and optimization module. As it happens, manual scheduling of duty day sequencing is extremely complex. Apart from having to comply with labor rules and company agreements, there are rail freight-specific features to contend with, such as irregular traffic, trains traveling 24 hrs. a day and duty take-up points scattered all over France. Now, it takes the tool just a matter of minutes to come up with an optimized sequence of the forty or so duty days for the activity of a skills pool.

The workforce sizing tool and its work cycle optimization module have been in daily use to guide operational decisions since the fall of 2016. They have turned out to be real assets for EUROPORTE and contribute to increasing its productivity. The scheduling teams consider them to be invaluable and they have also been presented to and acclaimed by the Regional Divisions.

Early in 2017, following publication of a new base decree setting common, rail sector-wide working rules, new agreements were signed between labor and management. The resulting regulatory changes were factored into the tool. The EURODECISION consultants tasked with the initial project took this assignment to update the solution in their stride



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