



## LA BOUTIQUE DU COIFFEUR

### NOMINATIVE SCHEDULING OF SMALL TEAMS AT POINTS OF SALE



#### Aim:

To automate the nominative scheduling of store employees while complying with many business, labor and regulatory constraints.



#### Solutions:

- Development of a bespoke optimization engine meeting constraints integrated into the “house” ERP and based on Eurodecision’s LP-Shift component
- Scheduling in two phases: an initial model schedule was produced and extended to the whole planning horizon in the second phase.



#### Results:

- Planning time saved
- Improved schedule regularity and employee equity
- Increase in the number of stores assigned to each planner without the need for team expansion.

***“Eurodecision’s great asset is its team. The two lead experts were key to the project’s success as they clearly took the task in their stride, displayed excellent people skills and persevered throughout this long-term project, providing flawless project management. They were highly effective and readily grasped our sector-specific issue, translating it into an algorithm whose fineness outstripped other market solutions.”*** Jean-François DEGOUTIN, IT Director, HAPPY’CURL

La Boutique du Coiffeur (HAPPY’CURL Group), the sector leader for specialist professional hairdressing product distribution, has 150 stores across France. The chain regularly opens new retail outlets and plans to open 30 new stores every year for years to come.

In-store human resource planning is the duty of a dedicated team working in Tomblaine (54), while the sector is beset by recruitment difficulties and high turnover rates, which create tough challenges. Each of the five planners is responsible for 30 stores whose employee schedules need to match footfall forecasts and sales, yet must meet many crucial constraints including employee equity.

The very complex task of building weekly schedules is conducted using an internally developed ERP. In the past, the planners spent three months building model weekly schedules for a season, then expanded them and adjusted them for each week of the planning horizon. As it stands, each point of sale has its own specific features (store size, number of employees, location, working hours, etc.) coupled with human (employees' working hour, vacation, part-time work, and other aspirations) business (sales targets, season factors, etc.) and regulatory constraints (Sunday opening, and so on).

La Boutique du Coiffeur sought an automatic planning solution to supplement its existing management tool to simplify this task as its business surged, with the aim of achieving its defined profitability goals without adding to the team. After launching a tender and analyzing the market solutions, it transpired that the existing off-the-shelf software did not meet the needs of an organization comprising many outlets with small teams. So, the IT Department focused its search on developing a bespoke tool. Having met at a human resources trade fair, the Eurodecision advanced mathematics algorithm experts offered to develop an automatic scheduling engine that would communicate with their ERP, without compromising the existing operation.

It was this proposal that La Boutique du Coiffeur adopted, and in November 2019, an engineering study was launched. From the outset, Eurodecision suggested applying iterations. Regular workshops were organized with IT Department representatives and planners to gauge their needs and compile a binding list of specifications and constraints. Successive versions of the optimization engine were evaluated and the results were scrutinized. Whenever they met, discussions revolved around a dashboard of the key schedule quality indicators (balancing modulation counters, equity, number of working hours at the end of the period, compliance with a variety of constraints, etc.) and helped identify which criteria to retain or discard.

Staff well-being is a high priority for La Boutique du Coiffeur, which seeks regularity in weekly schedules and maximum employee equity. Eurodecision devised an optimization engine that reproduces the process set up by the planning team in two phases to meet this requirement. An initial model schedule was formulated for each store in the first build, then in a second phase, a nominative, week-by-week schedule was built to best address the many constraints.

The delivered solution fully meets the current La Boutique du Coiffeur expectations. The very powerful optimization engine provides stable schedules that take all the criteria into account, and while the latter are likely to evolve, the solution will be easy to reconfigure to make allowance for any social or business modifications. The tool is fully integrated into the ERP, and has also reduced schedule build time as, the planners only take one month to complete this task for all the points of sale within their remit for each season. This time-saving will enable additional stores to be assigned to them, which meets the project's initial requirement and the company's strategy.

Although it will be a few months before La Boutique du Coiffeur is in possession of a quantified assessment of the use of the tool developed by Eurodecision, it is very satisfied by how this first project progressed. The IT Department is now considering commissioning Eurodecision for a medium-term assignment, as it has discovered the decisional mathematics specialist's other areas of expertise, in particular that of logistics optimization.

***"The project was long, but this was not caused by delivery delays, it's because we wanted to push the limits of optimization to achieve the best possible solution. I work with many partners and I must admit that I'm seldom so satisfied. Furthermore, when Eurodecision asked me if I would recommend it to another company, I was more than willing to do so." Jean-François DEGOUTIN, IT Director, HAPPY'CURL***