

Plan 5: Labor-Hours Forecasting

30-DAY OUTCOME Convert forecasted sales, guests, workload, events, and service standards into defensible labor-hour requirements.

Control	Plan Requirement
Plan owner	_____
Start and end dates	_____ to _____
Baseline period	_____
Primary shift/daypart	_____
Supporting roles	_____

Measures and targets

Measure	Baseline	Day-30 Target	Actual
Forecasted versus actual sales	_____	_____	_____
Forecasted versus actual guests	_____	_____	_____
Scheduled versus required hours	_____	_____	_____
Actual sales per labor hour	_____	_____	_____
Labor percentage	_____	_____	_____
Coverage failures and excess-hour incidents	_____	_____	_____

Recommended target boundaries

- Establish a written labor-demand model for every daypart
- Reduce forecast-to-actual labor-hour error over the baseline
- Keep service-critical positions protected
- Document all major forecast adjustments and causes

Likely causes to test—not assume

- Scheduling from habit
- Using sales alone without workload or guest count
- Ignoring events, weather, school, and promotions
- No separation of fixed and variable labor
- No forecast-error review

Minimum operating standard

- Begin with historical comparable days
- Adjust for events, weather, promotions, reservations, and known changes

- Calculate fixed opening/closing work separately from volume-driven hours
- Record forecast, decision, actual result, and lesson

Training requirements

- Comparable-day selection
- Sales and guest forecasting
- Fixed versus variable labor
- Forecast error and bias

The 30-Day Action Calendar

Day	Phase	Required Action
1	Measure	Collect four to eight comparable weeks of sales, guests, and hours
2	Measure	Separate opening, service, and closing hours
3	Measure	Identify fixed tasks and volume-driven positions
4	Measure	Record known events and operating factors
5	Measure	Build the first daypart labor-demand baseline
6	Define	Share baseline findings with managers and confirm no coaching began early
7	Define	Approve the target, definitions, and data owner
8	Define	Define staffing floors and productivity ranges
9	Define	Train managers to document forecast assumptions
10	Define	Create the next seven-day sales, guest, and labor forecast
11	Train/Pilot	Compare schedule hours with calculated need
12	Train/Pilot	Approve changes using service-risk checks
13	Train/Pilot	Observe the pilot without rescuing every difficulty
14	Train/Pilot	Revise the standard only when evidence supports the change
15	Train/Pilot	Confirm every affected employee received training
16	Execute	Record actual results daily
17	Execute	Calculate forecast error and direction of bias
18	Execute	Adjust for weather, events, reservations, and local patterns
19	Execute	Correct recurring overstaffing or

Day	Phase	Required Action
		understaffing periods
20	Execute	Produce the second seven-day forecast using lessons learned
21	Execute	Hold a ten-minute mid-plan review with assigned owners
22	Execute	Document exceptions, causes, and corrective actions
23	Execute	Recheck the highest-risk handoff
24	Stress-Test	Test the model through a full schedule cycle
25	Stress-Test	Review service results alongside labor results
26	Stress-Test	Document where sales-per-hour measures are misleading
27	Stress-Test	Finalize daypart ranges and adjustment rules
28	Verify/Hold	Publish the weekly forecast and post-shift learning rhythm
29	Verify/Hold	Obtain employee feedback on usability
30	Verify/Hold	Assign the ongoing report owner

Weekly Review Record

Review	Result	Primary Cause	Decision / Owner	Due
Day 7				
Day 14				
Day 21				
Day 27				
Day 30				

Day-30 Verification

- Was the baseline measured consistently? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Was the standard trained and observed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Did the primary metric improve? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Were safety, quality, hospitality, and fairness protected? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Decision: ☐ Standardize ☐ Extend controlled test ☐ Redesign ☐ Stop

Sustainment rule: Forecast seven days ahead, update 48 and 24 hours ahead, and review error and bias every week.

Manager verification: _____ Date: _____ Next review: _____