Employer Survey

For this assignment I interviewed William, a Customer Service Manager from Ashley Homestore in Eau Claire, WI. As a customer service manager, he’s in charge of training new representatives, creating employee schedules, working closely with the operations team to roll out new procedures at the store level and much, much more. He has been working at Ashley Homestore for over two years.

**Survey Question 1:** One task you complete regularly is the creation of employee schedules. What data do you use to determine the amount of hours needed to be covered weekly and how many hours each employee is scheduled for?

**Answer:** Ashley Homestore uses Excel to create schedules. There is a weekly fixed schedule of the hours the store is required to fill as determined by corporate. Exceptions such as holidays and peak sales time are allocated by the Store Manager. Employees are able to voluntarily pick up those hours, otherwise they are assigned.

**Survey Question 2:** How is sales data tracked?

**Answer:** The sales manager and I work together to compile reports on a daily basis. To find this data, our management reporting system allows for parameters to be set for the reports needed to create an individual breakdown of each sales representative’s progress. Information includes the number of units they’ve sold, the price of each item and their commission earned.

**Survey Question 3:** How does data drive the work the sales team does on a daily basis?

**Answer:** The sales data compiled is used by the management staff to determine the focus of each sales representative as they connect with customers. For example, if sales are lower in the bedding department, the sales representative with the most experience working in that department will be assigned there to ensure the best chance of increasing sales there.

**Survey Question 4:** How does Ashley Homestore ensure data is collected with accuracy and consistency?

**Answer:** The data Ashley Homestore collects is consistently being updated and is connected to all Point-of-Sale terminals. This data is made readily available to sales representatives, so they are able to get minute to minute results. Additional data is shared from production facilities, so sales representatives can give accurate information to customers about when to expect their purchases.

**Survey Question 5:** What have you noticed about the evolution of data use at Ashley Homestore throughout your time working there?

**Answer:** For the most part, the systems are slow to be updated and changed. This is because there are so many different places using data for different reasons. Changes that are made are gradual to make sure that each facility has time to learn the changes and enact them.

**Survey Question 6:** Which data points are most useful to you as a customer service manager?

**Answer:** The most useful data points would be production time, the amount of customers coming into the store on a daily basis and the amount of sales our sales representatives are completing. This helps make sure all our customers are being taken care of while meeting Ashley Homestore’s sales goals.

The interview with William helped me better understand how Ashley Homestore uses data. While none of this information was a surprise to me, it was helpful to hear from a manager how they viewed data use and collection. If I had more time to interview William, I would have been curious to learn more about his opinion on the effectiveness of the current systems Ashley is using to track data and what his thoughts were on how improvements could be made.

Overall, I learned more about how managers used data to drive placement of employees and scheduling. I also learned that the process for updating systems and processes can be slow moving due to the large amount of facilities that are using these systems. As a former sales representative and a current Data Analytics student, it was interesting to see how data use functioned at Ashley from my new point of view.