



Peak planning checklist

Black Friday, Christmas and the seasonal surge — work backwards from the date

Forecast the peak

- Start from last year, adjusted for the trend since
- Apply known step-changes (new product, pricing, marketing, deflection)
- Re-shape for the calendar (which weekday each peak date falls on)
- Forecast peak AHT separately (harder mix + new-starter ramp push it up)
- Forecast in ranges — low / expected / high

Back-plan the people

- Set the date you need heads productive
- Subtract ramp, training, hiring lead time and funnel yield
- Open the requisition by that date (for Christmas, hire in autumn)
- Check training throughput — can you onboard the numbers in time?
- Model new starters as effective FTE through the ramp, not full heads

Flex, protect and prepare

- Match the lever to the variation — annualised hours, part-time, overtime, temps
- Place planned shrinkage away from the peak weeks
- Hold a buffer for peak-driven sickness; protect occupancy and the team
- Write the surge-and-escalation playbook before the storm
- Book the post-peak review while the memory is fresh