



From Fixed to Flexible: FNBO Reinvents Contact Center Staffing with the NiCE WFM Suite

First National Bank of Omaha has served customers across personal, business, and commercial banking for more than 160 years. When a rigid fixed-schedule model left the bank struggling to fill hiring classes and retain agents after training, FNBO built Flex: a program that opens coverage gaps to agents who build their own hours using NiCE Workforce Management and Employee Engagement Manager. Absenteeism fell from 6% to 4.5%, attrition dropped among Flex participants, and demand for the program now exceeds capacity, with a waitlist of agents asking to join.

6% 4.5%

absenteeism reduction



30%

contact center workforce
enrolled in Flex



Lower

attrition among Flex
staff vs. fixed-schedule
peers



Down

FMLA usage among Flex
participants



100%

on-time, fully
functional EEM
rollout from day one



Waitlist

agent demand for
Flex exceeds current
enrollment capacity



Customer profile

About

First National Bank of Omaha (FNBO) is one of the largest privately held banks in the U.S., offering personal, business, and commercial banking services with a strong emphasis on customer care and innovation.

Industry

Financial Services

Website

www.fnbo.com

Location

Americas

Agents

Enterprise

Products

- NiCE Workforce Management (IEX)
- Employee Engagement Management
- Enhanced Strategic Planner

Goals

- Attract and retain agents by offering schedule flexibility
- Reduce absenteeism and FMLA usage
- Improve operational agility through real-time forecasting and self-service scheduling

Features

- Real-time forecast and availability integration in EEM
- Self-service scheduling with mobile app access
- Interval template configuration for peak variance management



01 Before

A Hiring Model That Could Not Keep Up

First National Bank of Omaha has spent more than 160 years building trust with customers across personal, business, and commercial banking. That commitment to customers runs deep inside FNBO's contact center, where roughly 500 agents handle the full range of customer needs every day. Holding that operation together requires not just the right technology, but the right people showing up when customers need them most.

For years, FNBO's contact center ran on a traditional fixed-schedule model. Agents were hired into specific shifts five days a week, and staffing plans were built around historical call patterns. The model was stable and predictable. It also left little room for the kinds of candidates FNBO increasingly needed to recruit.

When COVID-19 shifted the labor market, FNBO felt it immediately. Students who wanted part-time work could not commit to fixed shifts. Parents working from home needed schedules that moved around school pickups and childcare. Posting after posting went unfilled. "We had a specific number of FTE we were trying to fill," said Lauren Young, Workforce Management Analyst at FNBO. "Hiring class after hiring class, we weren't filling the FTE we needed."

The problem did not stop at the application stage. Agents who did get hired often struggled once their training ended and their official schedule began. "Once they started their official schedule, we noticed agents were starting to attrit out," Young said. "It's not working for them. They need more flexibility." FNBO was losing people at the exact moment it had finished investing in them.

02 Desire to change

A Program Built Around How People Actually Live

FNBO leadership recognized that the fixed-schedule model was not a staffing problem. It was a design problem. The contact center was built for a workforce that no longer existed, and competing for the workforce that did exist meant offering something fundamentally different.

The answer was Flex: a program that would give agents control over their own hours while keeping FNBO's coverage and operational requirements intact. Instead of posting shifts and waiting for candidates to fit themselves into them, FNBO would identify gaps in its forecast and open those windows for Flex agents to fill on their own terms.

Executing that vision required a platform that could make it real in real time. FNBO had been using a different WFM platform to pilot an early version of the Flex concept, but it lacked the capability FNBO needed most. "Aspect didn't give us the option to immediately input a forecast and have it update as schedules are getting built," Young explained. With NiCE EEM, that changed. As Flex agents built their schedules, available hours updated instantly. If the forecast shifted, the availability shifted with it.

For Brent Sicard, [title pending verification] at FNBO, this capability was decisive. "It had to accommodate flex," Sicard said of the platform evaluation. "That was a deal breaker for us as we considered which platform to move to."

"The decision to go with NiCE was driven by the solution's flexibility, interoperability, and long track record of solid performance," Young added.



We've stretched EEM beyond what it was originally built for and created a dynamic model that empowers our agents and enhances our business.

Lauren Young

Workforce Management Analyst, FNBO





03 NiCE solution

Using EEM to Operationalize Flex Scheduling

To bring Flex to life at scale, FNBO implemented NiCE IEX Workforce Management and placed NiCE Employee Engagement Manager at the center of the program. The approach was deliberate and iterative, built around making the experience as simple as possible for agents while keeping the complexity on the workforce management team's side of the equation.

FNBO structured each scheduling cycle around a designated Flex-only window. Four weeks out, Flex agents got exclusive early access to EEM to build their preferred hours within the blocks FNBO had identified as coverage gaps. Once that window closed, fixed-schedule agents could log in to make swaps, request time off, or adjust hours. The sequencing protected Flex agents' ability to plan while giving fixed-schedule agents the self-service access they expected.

Behind the scenes, the workforce management team did the work that made it seamless on the front end. Before each Flex week opened, the team pulled weekly staffing and intraday data out of NiCE IEX WFM, cross-checked it against EEM intraday figures, and configured interval templates to reflect expected shrinkage and set variances high enough to ensure agents could reach their required 20 or 40 hours. After agents submitted their schedules, the team converted additional hours to open hours in NiCE IEX WFM to maintain clean reporting.

"Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for the agent side," Young said. "Because of that, a lot of the manual work is put back on the workforce team. We want them to build their schedule, not wrestle with a system."

NiCE Enhanced Strategic Planner supported the longer-range view, helping FNBO anticipate weekend, evening, and holiday shortfalls far enough in advance to inform Flex availability before the scheduling windows opened.

The app was a turning point for adoption. Flex agents could build and adjust their schedules from home, on their phones, the moment the window opened. "Once agents saw they could build and change their schedules from anywhere, they were sold," Young said. "That freedom made a big difference."

04 Results

Better Retention, Lower Absenteeism, and a Team That Thinks Differently

The results FNBO saw were not limited to a single metric. They showed up across hiring, attendance, retention, and the day-to-day experience of every agent in the program.

Filling hiring classes, once a persistent challenge, became straightforward. Where FNBO had previously struggled to attract candidates willing to commit to rigid shifts, the Flex model opened the door to exactly the candidates who had been walking away. "When we went with Flex, we didn't have problems hitting our numbers for the hiring classes," Sicard said.

Absenteeism dropped from 6% to 4.5%. For a 500-agent contact center, that represents meaningful recovered capacity every single week. "Because of agent flexibility building their own hours, we saw absenteeism drop," Young said. "It doesn't feel like much, but it's significant."

Among Flex participants, attrition fell and FMLA usage declined. The connection is direct: when agents can build schedules around personal obligations, they do not need to call out or take leave to manage them. FNBO's HR team flagged both trends as notable byproducts of the program.

Demand for Flex has not slowed. Today, 30% of FNBO's contact center workforce is enrolled, and the interest keeps coming. "We do get quite a few requests saying, do you have any Flex spots open, can I get on that wait list?" said Young. FNBO intentionally maintains the 70/30 balance to protect coverage, but the waitlist tells its own story. Agents want to stay, and they want this model.

The program also transformed how FNBO’s workforce management team operates. The shift from fixed scheduling to dynamic Flex required the team to think analytically, evaluate forecast data in real time, and make decisions rather than execute routines. “WFM folks who just wanted repetitive processes, copy paste, click this, click that, don’t thrive in this environment,” Sicard said. “But it’s been more interesting, more challenging for our team in a good way.” Job descriptions were rewritten. Collaboration between the WFM team and forecasting grew significantly. The team now asks whether something is possible before deciding it isn’t.

“Before it was kind of set it and forget it with forecasts,” Sicard said. “Now it’s more dynamic.”

When NiCE rolled out new products across FNBO’s contact center, the WFM team’s EEM implementation was the only one that came in on time and 100% functional from day one. “We brag about that internally,” said Young. “You hand us the system, we’ll figure it out.”

05 Future

AI and Smarter Scheduling

FNBO is already thinking about what Flex looks like next. One initiative under exploration is a Flex Light model: a hybrid schedule that combines 20 fixed hours with 20 flexible hours, giving agents a foundation of predictability while preserving the autonomy that makes Flex work. “With the way that NiCE IEX and EEM interact, I think it would be very, very easy for us to create that base fixed schedule and then allow the agent to go in and build their remaining hours where they’d like to,” Young said.

FNBO is also testing NiCE IEX’s Bring Your Own Schedule capability, which would allow agents to propose their own schedule templates for business review rather than selecting from employer-defined

windows. The ability to layer a new NiCE IEX feature directly on top of an existing EEM workflow is exactly the kind of integration FNBO has been building toward. “Being able to blend new IEX capabilities with existing EEM capabilities is, so far, a win,” Young said.

The longer-term vision is more ambitious. FNBO wants AI to take over the real-time coordination work that the workforce management team currently handles manually. “Even taking it down to a more real-time Flex program,” Young said. “Maybe it’s not building your full hours four weeks in advance. Maybe it’s a current-week message from EEM saying: we need you, would you be willing to sign up for two or three hours on this date? Being able to utilize AI real-time rules in that way would be hugely helpful.”

FNBO is also in early stages of exploring how NiCE’s AI-enabled solutions can help with coaching, sentiment scoring, and unlocking patterns in service delivery, all while keeping data secure and compliant. “We see a bright future utilizing AI tools,” Young said.

What FNBO has built is not just a scheduling program. It is proof that a contact center can be redesigned around the people who run it, and that when agents have control over their time, the business numbers follow. FNBO has stretched EEM beyond what it was originally built for, and the results have followed every step of the way.

“

You hand us the system, we’ll figure it out.

Lauren Young
Workforce Management Analyst, FNBO

About NiCE

NiCE is transforming the world with AI that puts people first. Our purpose-built AI-powered platforms automate engagements into proactive, safe, intelligent actions, empowering individuals and organizations to innovate and act, from interaction to resolution. Trusted by organizations throughout 150+ countries worldwide, NiCE’s platforms are widely adopted across industries connecting people, systems, and workflows to work smarter at scale, elevating performance across the organization, delivering proven measurable outcomes.

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