Optichain
ADVISORS

PROJECT SNAPSHOT · 01

Closing the gap between shift plan and floor execution.

How a real 15-minute execution tracker helped managers compare labor, rate, and output against plan before the shift recap.

> Built during prior high-volume fulfillment operations experience. Generalized for confidentiality.

OPERATION	FOCUS	WHAT WE BUILT	WHERE IT RUNS
High-volume fulfillment	**Plan vs. execution**	**15-minute WMS tracker**	**Existing WMS data**

PROJECT SNAPSHOT SUMMARY

The operation ran a real pre-shift plan with expected volume, planned rates, and assigned headcount by process path. Once the shift started, managers had no clean way to compare actual execution against the plan, so drift surfaced only at recap. Optichain reviewed how planning, rates, and headcount were set, then built a tracker that pulls WMS activity and compares it to the plan every 15 minutes while the shift is still running.

The plan was solid. The shift was a black box until recap.

Managers could feel when a process path was falling behind, but feel isn't a number you can move labor against. The only clear view of execution arrived after the shift, when the labor was already spent and the gap was already baked in.

WHY POST-SHIFT RECAPS WERE TOO LATE

- No real-time comparison of actual execution against the shift plan.
- Rate lag on a path went unseen until output was already short.
- Overstaffed and understaffed paths weren't visible while there was still time to rebalance.
- Late starts, late breaks, and late finishes only showed up in hindsight.
- Recap ran on memory, not on specific 15-minute windows.

WHAT OPTICHAIN REVIEWED FIRST

- How the pre-shift plan gets built, and who owns it each day.
- How process-path rates are determined, and whether they hold on the floor.
- How expected headcount is calculated from volume and planned rates.
- Where WMS activity data lives and how cleanly it can be read.

Why this order

A tracker is only as honest as the plan it compares against. We started with the planning logic, not a screen, so the comparison would hold up on the floor.

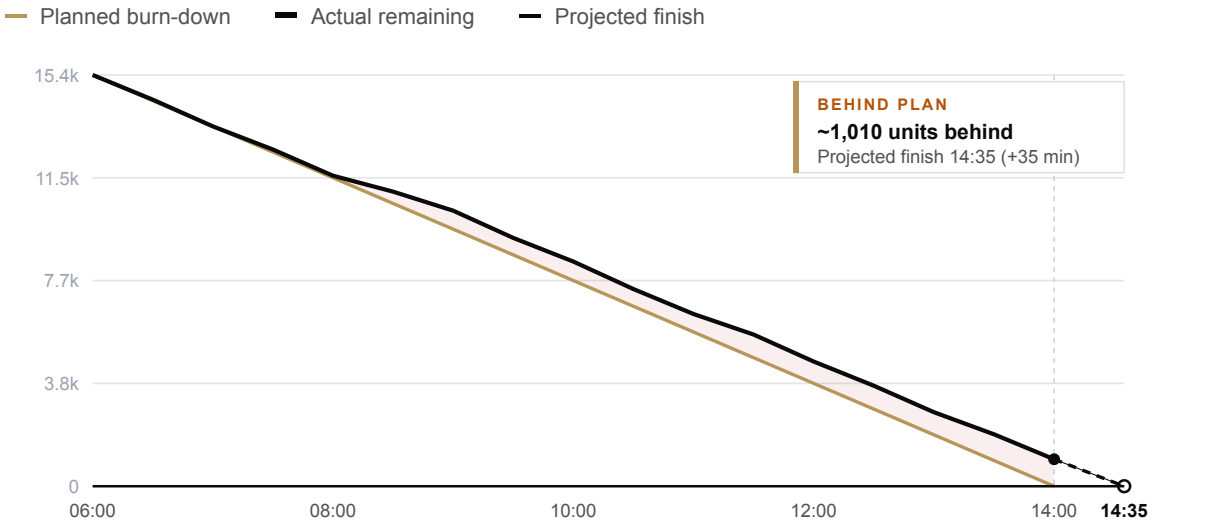
A 15-minute tracker that reads the WMS and the plan together.

The tracker ingests WMS activity automatically and compares actual execution against the shift plan in real time, broken into quarter-hour windows. It surfaces output vs. expected, rate vs. planned rate, headcount variance by path, late starts, late breaks, late finishes, and time off task.

Shift burn-down, volume remaining vs. plan

REPRESENTATIVE TRACKER VIEW

Units left to process across the shift. The tables that follow zoom into one stretch of it.



During the shift, the burn-down showed whether we were on pace to finish on time, early enough to move labor or pull volume forward. At recap, it anchored the conversation around exactly where actual pulled away from plan, instead of debating whether the shift felt slow.

Headcount by path, every 15 minutes.

Expected versus actual people on each process path. Overstaffing reads red, understaffing amber, so a manager can rebalance while the shift is still live instead of reading it off the recap.

15-minute execution tracker, headcount by path

REPRESENTATIVE TRACKER VIEW

Expected vs. actual people on each process path, by segment

Time	Pick		Pack		Sort		Receive		Stow	
	EXP	ACT	EXP	ACT	EXP	ACT	EXP	ACT	EXP	ACT
07:00	18	**15**	12	**13**	8	**8**	6	**5**	6	**7**
07:15	18	**15**	12	**13**	8	**8**	6	**5**	6	**7**
07:30	18	**15**	12	**13**	8	**8**	6	**5**	6	**7**
07:45	18	**15**	12	**13**	8	**8**	6	**5**	6	**7**
08:00	18	**15**	12	**13**	8	**8**	6	**5**	6	**7**
08:15	18	**17**	12	**11**	8	**8**	6	**5**	6	**7**
08:30	18	**17**	12	**11**	8	**8**	6	**5**	6	**7**
08:45	18	**17**	12	**11**	8	**8**	6	**5**	6	**7**
Shift avg	18	**15.8**	12	**12.3**	8	**8.0**	6	**5.0**	6	**7.0**

over plan under plan. Pick runs short while pack carries extra, until a manager moves two people to pick after 08:00. That's a labor move made during the shift, not explained at recap.

Rate lag shows up in the next segment, not at recap.

With actual rate sitting next to each path's planned rate, a slip is visible in the next 15-minute window. The same dip reads two ways below: as rate by path, and as total output.

15-minute segment rate by path

REPRESENTATIVE TRACKER VIEW

Actual rate in units per hour against each path's plan

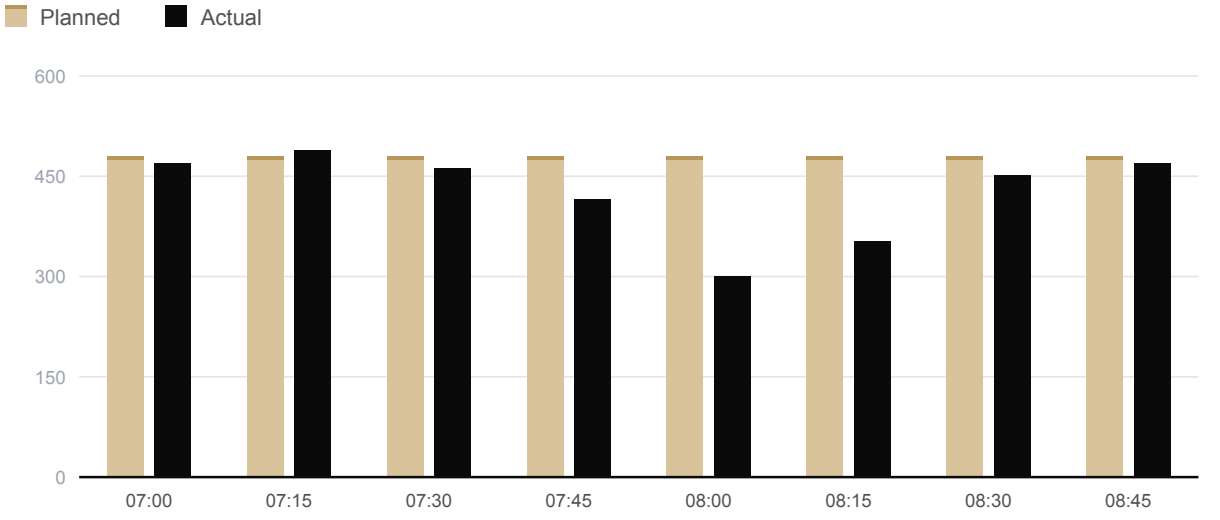
Time	Pick PLAN 120/HR	Pack PLAN 100/HR	Sort PLAN 200/HR	Receive PLAN 80/HR	Stow PLAN 90/HR
07:00	115	97	196	79	90
07:15	119	100	202	82	93
07:30	113	95	192	78	88
07:45	101	85	172	69	79
08:00	73	61	124	50	57
08:15	86	72	146	59	67
08:30	111	93	188	76	86
08:45	115	97	196	79	90
Shift avg	104	88	177	72	81

rate lagging plan. The whole floor slips around 08:00 as breaks run long, then recovers.

Planned output vs. actual output

REPRESENTATIVE TRACKER VIEW

Total units completed by 15-minute interval



The same drift, grouped by what caused it.

Plan-versus-actual tells you a path slipped. Grouping the lost time tells you why, so the next conversation targets the real driver instead of pushing the whole floor harder.

Time-off-task drivers

REPRESENTATIVE TRACKER VIEW

Estimated minutes of productive time lost across the shift, by driver

Staffing misalignment is enough labor in the building, but not in the right process path at the right time. The tracker makes that imbalance visible in the next 15-minute window, in time to rebalance before it becomes an end-of-shift miss.

Labor moves during the shift, not after it.

Managers could see where they were overstaffed or understaffed while the shift was live, and rebalance the floor in real time instead of waiting for the recap. Recap discussions got sharper too, because the team could review specific 15-minute periods where execution deviated from plan.

Real-time labor moves

Over and understaffed paths surface while there's still a shift left to fix them.

Earlier on rate lag

A path slipping off its planned rate shows up in the next 15-minute window, not at recap.

Sharper recaps

Discussions point to specific windows where execution deviated from plan.

Shared picture

Plan and actual sit in one view, so the floor and the office read the same numbers.

RELATED OPTICHAIN SERVICES

Custom WMS Apps & Integrations | Outbound Optimization | Inventory Accuracy & Exception Control | WMS Launch, Migration & Stabilization

Want to see where your shift plan is drifting from floor execution?

Optichain Advisors can assess your current planning process and build a practical visibility tool around your WMS data. Most engagements start with a 30-minute call to understand your WMS environment and confirm which data is available.

optichainadvisors.com/contact · calendly.com/optichainadvisors-info/30min

Scan to book a 30-minute call