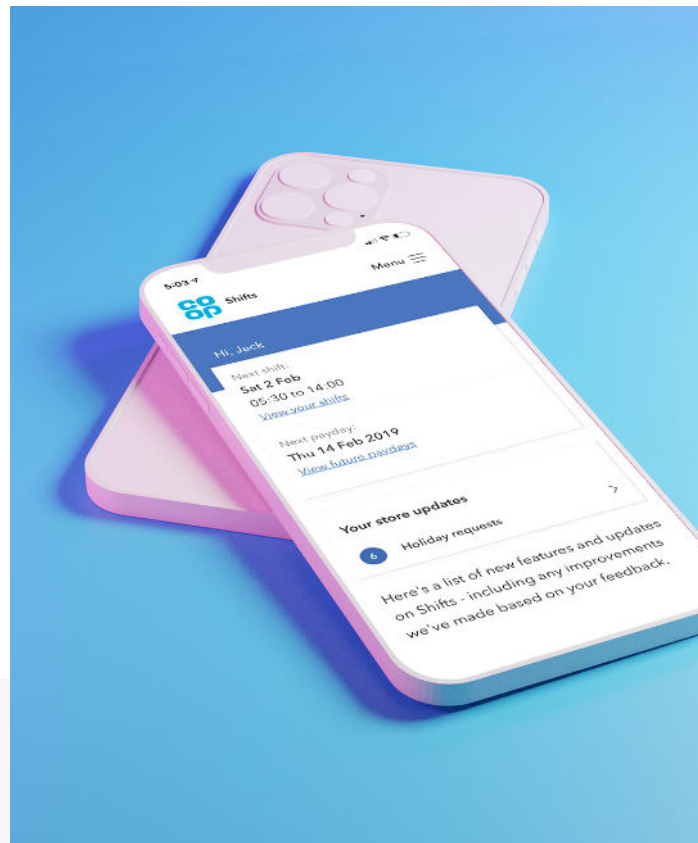




# Shifting how rotas work.

Helping the Co-op to organise their staff.

**Staff rotas are a hugely important part of the management and operation of the Co-op's 2,600 stores. Yet, at the time, they relied on a paper-based rota system to coordinate more than 45,000 employees.**



This created several problems, including staff not having the most up-to-date information, and a lack of consistency from store to store.

Recognising a need for change, the Co-op approached Equal Experts to develop a new web based application. This needed to be accessible to all Co-op staff on their mobile devices, putting control of scheduling, quite literally, into the hands of users.

The app, named Shifts, has transformed the culture of the Co-op. It has improved relationships between colleagues and managers, making scheduling simpler and more transparent.

Building on the existing system (which created the paper based rota), and API, the new app is now being used in every Co-op store, **with 80% of store colleagues and 95% of store managers depending on it to run their operations.**

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**2,600**

UK Co-op Food Stores now use the app.

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**80%**

of store colleagues and 95% of store managers now depend on Shifts.

# About The Co-operative Group.

The Co-operative Group, trading as the Co-op, is a British consumer co-operative with a diverse family of retail businesses including food retail and whole-sale, e-pharmacy, insurance services, legal services and funeral care, with in excess of 3,700 locations. Co-op is their food retail division, accounting for around 6% of the UK grocery market.

## INDUSTRY



Supermarket

## ORGANISATION SIZE



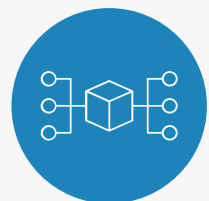
45k employees,  
£7.5b turnover

## LOCATION



UK

## SERVICES



Website  
application

# Working around a substandard management system.

Staff rotas – and the decisions and processes used to devise them – are an emotive topic. They directly affect lives and, when not done correctly, put a strain on colleague/manager relationships.

The Co-op's food retail business had new, revamped stores that provided a more welcoming experience for shoppers. However, behind the scenes, coordination of their staff and rotas was a much less user-friendly experience.

Their IT system used to manage rotas was difficult to use, and only accessible by managers. This left stores relying on a paper-based system to manage shifts for over 45,000 employees. A cumbersome process, it involved staff printing the rota, taking a photo and then sharing it in WhatsApp groups. This resulted in staff being unsure whether information was the most up-to-date, and there was little consistency from store to store.

As a result, shift confusion was a common complaint of those leaving the business.

## It all started with understanding how staff interacted with technology.

After evaluating a number of off-the-shelf products, Co-op quickly realised these would be extremely invasive and expensive to implement. Realising the potential to work by plugging the gaps in the current system, Co-op asked us to create a solution that could easily be accessed by all staff.

Through user research, Co-op identified that many staff didn't use a personal email address, but smartphone use was prevalent. Therefore a web-app would provide the lowest possible barrier to use. Named 'Shifts', it needed to be simple to use and accessible to Co-op staff of all ages and digital capabilities.

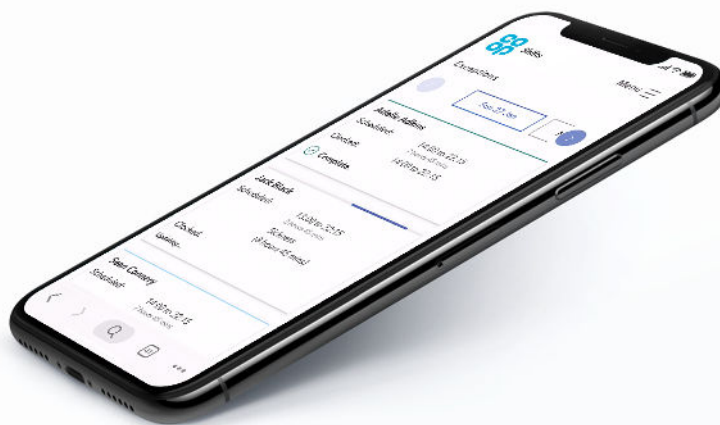
Offering a brand-new front end to a complex existing system, the app used an API to access all data, which made it easy to understand and interact with on a mobile device.

# How a single app can transform culture and relationships across an organisation.

Before Shifts, any colleague with doubts about their payslip had to rely completely on their manager's word. Colleagues could raise queries with managers, who could check and report back, but colleagues were always one step removed from the data.

Now, everything is transparent. Every user can see exactly when they punched in and out, as well as a weekly summary of scheduled hours.

Shifts also allows for different levels of access. When in 'Manager View' it assembles information alongside relevant calls-to-action, including team holiday requests. Previously, this information was only accessible through a desktop computer, and there was only one per store, usually in the back office. **With Shifts, these processes take moments – and can be completed on the shop floor, freeing up valuable time for the manager to improve customer service.**



## Creating better partnerships through collaboration and partnership.

Shifts is an enterprise-scale collaboration with real users benefits. Co-op Digital (Co-op Group's IT division) worked with Co-op Food (customer and product owner) to deliver the project vision.

Equal Experts then brought this vision to life, by rebuilding the alpha from the ground up to provide Shifts as a live service, ready for rollout to thousands of users. As it stands, the resulting service is still optional and requires colleagues to use their own mobile device and data, but they clearly feel it's worth it.

Five months after its nationwide rollout, the app is used in every one of the UK's 2,600 Co-op Food Stores. 80% of store colleagues and 95% of store managers already depend on Shifts, which has become vital to store operation. In addition, managers regularly report improved attendance and colleagues' feedback that they appreciate the added control they have with Shifts.



# Want to know more?

Are you interested in this project?

Or do you have one just like it?

[Get in touch](#). We'd love to tell you more about it.