FSB

FIELD SERVICE BUSINESS

managing, resourcing & enabling your team in the field

FIELD SERVICE SOFTWARE

DON'T MAKE THE WRONG DECISION

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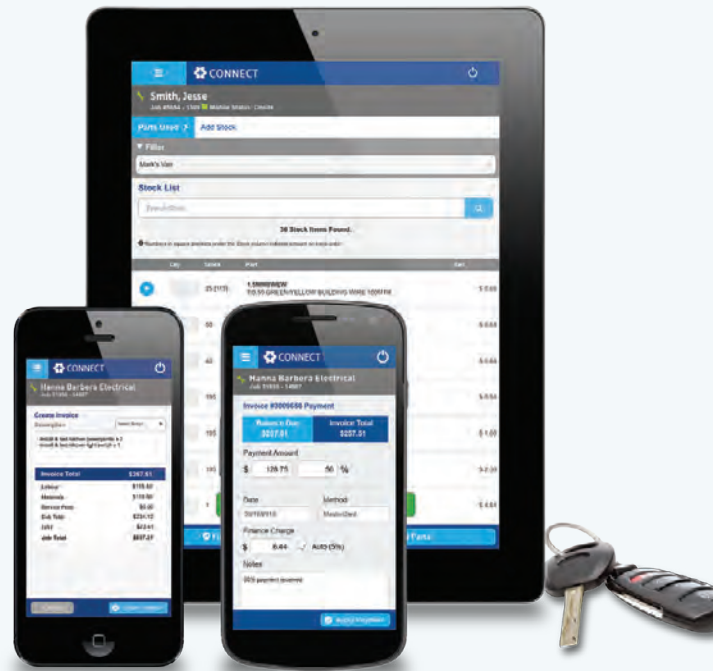
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WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the launch issue of *Field Service Business*, Australia's first dedicated media channel for the field service sector. I'm thrilled to be on board as Editor for the print and online arms of our newest title.

The Australian field service community is transforming rapidly, as companies strive to meet evolving customer demands and higher expectations. To enable you to achieve these goals, we'll be delivering the latest information on key topics including field service software, mobile workforce management, fleet management, logistics, safety, hardware and more.

While much of our content will focus on the local ANZ market, we are very pleased to announce our partnership with The Service Council, which will be providing regular contributions to the magazine and website. The Service Council is a community of services executives representing global, industry-leading, service-centric businesses. The council's mission is to provide a platform for innovation sharing, shaping and sharpening; where service-centric businesses can emulate the strategies deployed by global service leaders. We are confident that our collaboration will provide you, our readers, with valuable information and insights into international field service sector trends.

I do hope you enjoy the magazine. We welcome reader feedback, so please drop us a line and tell us what you think.

Dannielle Furness

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**udc** SYSTEMS

ADOPT
MOTIVATE
ACHIEVE
AND WIN

Use your own organisation's goals to create configurable, correlating or even progressive achievements to:

- Drive the change management process and make it fun
- Improve productivity through motivation and emotionally engage your field workers
- Deliver a better experience for your customers
- Provide visibility and tangible results of the great work happening in the field

The Achievements Center uses self-motivation to drive improved efficiencies in the field and deliver superior customer service.

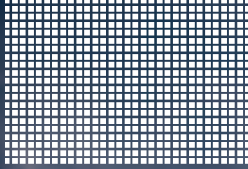**The quest for superior customer service starts here, with Achievements from ClickSoftware**
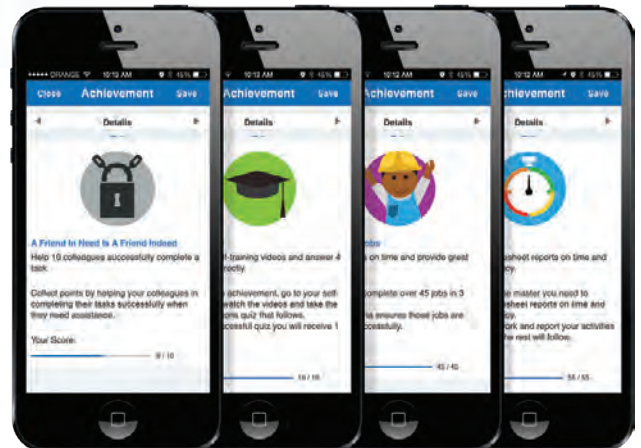
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MOBILE + GAMIFICATION
= A SUPERIOR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE FOR FIELD SERVICE

FIELD SERVICE SOFTWARE
DON'T MAKE THE
WRONG DECISION

Dannielle Furness

Today's field service manager needs to build effective business strategies to deliver superior customer service and increased revenues.

The plethora of available software options can enable improvements across a range of activities, but finding the right solution for your business can be a minefield. We investigate some of the factors that can help determine the most appropriate solution for your needs.

Superior service delivery requires effective coordination of a range of activities: scheduling and work order management, accurate data capture and transmission, two-way communication, mapping routing, asset and inventory control, CRM and billing, to name a few.

Creating a seamless flow between these processes enables businesses to better meet the needs of clients: to ensure members of the field service team arrive on time, possess the skill set required to complete the job and have the correct equipment and parts to carry out the service or repair. Return visits don't satisfy anyone, leaving the client frustrated and causing unnecessary supplier cost burden.

Technology has inarguably advanced sufficiently enough to signal the end of paper-based systems. Data transmission speeds have improved and an ever-increasing choice of mobile devices means that technicians no longer need to spend time filling out paperwork and physically returning it to the office in order to facilitate timely invoicing. This may be the case, but providing a reliable electronic connection to the field team is only one piece of the puzzle. To effectively determine the best option for your business, you need to look at current processes and establish where there

is room for improvement and have a thorough understanding of the project objectives before you begin.

Current and future size

Clearly there is a marked difference between running three field service vehicles and three hundred, in terms of both office staff and those on the road. The size of your team is an obvious starting point when determining a suitable path, but future requirements also need to be considered. If your business projections include short- or medium-term growth goals, they need to be factored in now. Equally, you need to recognise how many steps are currently in the chain and how much integration between these systems is required. Establishing new technologies and processes can be disruptive to business, so there is benefit in limiting the amount of change introduced while still ensuring you are well placed to cope with future demands.

Existing skills

It's worth understanding existing field worker proficiencies before you embark. Implementing a system that requires vast amounts of training or simply doesn't align with the skills of your team can be problematic and serve to alienate staff, limiting the success of the operation before it even gets off the ground.

Type and location of field work

The type and location of service work will also influence your choice. Remote locations with limited connectivity may call for an offline component to the chosen field service solution, enabling the mobile team to enter data for upload once a reliable connection has been

FEATURE

established. Equally, the type of work being undertaken is an important factor - structured, regular maintenance call-outs present different conditions to emergency repairs. For instance, if technicians are required to quote on the spot, they may need access to pricing information from head office as well as suppliers. Smooth integration with existing systems, both internal and external, may make all the difference when it comes to successfully delivering on customer expectation.

Collaboration
A knowledge bank for field service staff can be a valuable time-saver. Enabling staff to communicate with one another via a central knowledge repository can facilitate a fast and efficient resolution, eliminating costly multiple return visits. Determining this requirement at the outset will assist in identifying a suitable solution as some offerings make collaboration via a reliable communication platform simpler to execute. Conversely, if the work carried out by your team is more straightforward and they are unlikely to require the input or assistance of others, this may be an unnecessary feature.

What information do you need to extract?
As important as the information that goes in (if not more so) is the data that can be extracted back out of a system. As the manager of a field service team, it's worth identifying two things: what you

and other stakeholders need to see now as part of the current business process and what additional information could be used to produce efficiency gains.

This information can range from simple real-time visibility of a team member's current location through to the accurate reporting of customer satisfaction. Many advanced systems incorporate business management functionality and will offer customisable reporting that allows users to capture snapshots ranging from sector-specific through to enterprise-wide. Identifying current business and department KPIs can assist here as the introduction of more advanced technology may make it easier to achieve those goals, or to report the levels of success.

Demand a demo
Most vendors will endeavour to understand your business and will work to identify your requirements based on some of the factors already listed, but

"Look at current processes and establish where there is room for improvement. Ask too many questions ... then ask some more.

you'll need to carry out research on your side as well.

Always ask for a demonstration and/or a limited trial to see if your needs will be met. This should apply from a free app download through to a multifaceted whole-enterprise solution. You can't judge adequately until you see the system in action and determine how it fits with your current workflow processes. In the case of more expansive systems, most vendors will be happily put you in contact with a satisfied customer, which will provide insight into the process and additionally give you an idea of their service levels.

Know what you're in for
Ask too many questions ... then ask some more. Implementation of a new software system can have a huge impact - there are certainly positive gains to be had, but there may be disruption to day-to-day activities during the planning and execution phases. You can minimise the interruption to your business by being adequately prepared and understanding where the lines of responsibility lie. In the case of more complex systems, the chosen vendor will often handle project management, but you will need to prepare internally as well. A smooth deployment is crucial to maintaining existing customer service levels - ideally your clients won't even notice the difference in the initial stages of rollout - so you need to feel confident that the chosen solution can deliver.

LIFTING THEIR GAME

In Australia's highly competitive access equipment market, a product range renowned for its quality, performance and innovation is merely a good start. That's why the management of JLG Industries Australia set out to back it with the best possible support systems - including Baseplan Software.

In 2007, with a successful 25-year track record in Australia behind it, JLG's management initiated a drive to upgrade every aspect of the service and support it provides for owners of its vertical mast lifts, scissor lifts, boom lifts, lighting towers, telehandlers and stock pickers.

The strength, carrying capacity, versatility and safety of JLG equipment had helped make it the first choice of hire and rental companies and contractors. The company wanted to build on that advantage by providing even better after-sales support for customers in cities, regional areas and resources sites while at the same time improving its own efficiency and profitability.

Simone Klingberg, IT manager at JLG Industries, describes the software environment changes which took place to support this major upgrade of the company's customer support services.

"JLG had outgrown our previous system and set out to find other options. In 2008, we contacted Baseplan to implement a total operating system, including CRM for sales, IVT for field service and administration staff, all the way through to full financial integration. Pilots began in 2008 and the full Baseplan package went live in 2009, covering parts, service, sales and finance."

"With Baseplan's help, we are also able to implement processes to feed the local accounting data back to our American parent company's accounting system in a format it can use," Klingberg said. "We're sending back our month-end and year-end financials at the touch of a button."

Just as important for the company was the rollout of the IVT module, which allowed JLG's service division to deliver major speed and efficiency improvements for customers. Advanced In Van Terminal (IVT) units fitted to JLG field service vans and linked to its Baseplan system are helping to provide even quicker response times and improved first-time fix rates.

Field service technicians use simple touch-screen menus on the IVTs to display, navigate and manage job-related information while communicating with the JLG Baseplan system and updating records. The terminals work with wireless barcode scanners and compact thermal printers. The barcode scanners provide an error-proof method for entering parts information to update equipment service histories and for accurate invoicing.

By using the printer the technician can produce job dockets and time sheets to leave with the customer. Service jobs flagged as complete by technicians through the IVT are invoiced within 24 hours, making it easier for customers to administer their own equipment records.

Baseplan software and the IVTs provide a system which gives the real-time status of every service job booked with JLG. In turn that allows the company's service administrators to respond rapidly to changing priorities with improved scheduling of technicians.

Baseplan software modules are used by virtually all of JLG's 250 staff, including administrative staff who use a fleet module to track and record the service history of every piece of equipment sold by the company.

"Even though full service histories are available through the Baseplan system, we don't rely on our field service technicians to go back through historical data about a particular machine," Klingberg said. "We have branch administration staff who can access that and then pass it on to our field service technicians. That avoids wasting time and allows the technicians to concentrate on getting through their allotted jobs and minimises our response time to customer calls."

With the Baseplan IVT function bedded down, JLG turned its attention to improving the efficiency of its branch service workshops around Australia by introducing In-Workshop Terminals (IWTs).

"We wanted to do away with paperwork, such as work orders, in our workshops," Klingberg said. "The terminals sit in our branch workshops and, like the IVTs, they are linked to software which is very easy to use. That's been another area in which we've been able to use Baseplan to improve our efficiency."

JLG and Baseplan are now rolling out a phase 2 services mobility offering on Windows-based mobile and workshop tablets.

Baseplan
www.baseplan.com

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myFLO is an electronic work order management system for service-based businesses that have service technicians in the field.

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myFLO ™
WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT

DRIVING SERVICE EFFICIENCIES

Since 2001, ECONZ has been the driving power behind New Zealand's favourite roadside breakdown service, The Automobile Association, helping rescue an average 1200 stranded drivers per day.

ECONZ was commissioned to design and build a computer system that would allow AA to get to customers quickly and to keep them informed. The resulting Computer Aided Receipt and Dispatch (CARD) system provides an end-to-end solution - from the interactive voice response (IVR) to the call centre, optimised job scheduling and dispatch to the road service application (the field worker's job management system).

The system manages all breakdown jobs from the call centre operators through to the service officer who arrives at the roadside. Mini laptops in the vehicles are electronically integrated so all the information is consistent and ready to hand. If the issue is resolved it is directly recorded and if another resource is required, eg, a tow truck, then the system manages that process as well.

ECONZ helps The Automobile Association service 1200 customers per day.

The system's Road Service application dispatches jobs to roadside operatives in their vehicles then navigates them to the job. Operatives can directly schedule jobs for other services within the same application and interact with the office in real time. This means fewer calls and fewer miscommunications, increasing operational efficiencies and, ultimately, cost savings. This, in turn, keeps member fees to a minimum.

The ECONZ system doesn't just 'handshake' information from one point to another, as it is intelligent software that actively optimises scheduling. It calculates defined parameters including: the distance between a job and a service provider, penalty costs for crossing work areas, work area density, job age and service provider available state time. It then makes recommendations on service provider suitability for each job, which delivers faster, more efficient services for members, as well as complete transparency of the service provision process.

In 2013, ECONZ integrated mobile apps and web-based logging, which allows members to log a callout directly from a mobile phone or via the internet, in addition to the existing call centre facility. Increased automation through ongoing software development has given members improved customer service and allowed AA to more than meet KPIs.

One such measure was length of time customers spend on a call, which has seen an improvement from 10 or 15 minutes down to fewer than five.

The use of Electronic Data Integration (EDI) means that every part of the system is fully integrated and accessible in real time. Any field in the system can be tracked and KPIs developed around what is required. 1200 callouts a day generates a lot of data, but the system provides an accurate picture of current performance through monitoring and reporting.

The benefits aren't limited only to members, as the system makes a big difference to the company internally. Front-end staff can be informed as soon as changes happen, so everyone is abreast of all options available to members. This means that processing is faster and that members know they are getting the most up-to-date information and are delivered the best possible outcome. The level of detail generated allows AA to highlight challenge areas and provides the impetus for new developments and new options for improving the customer experience.

ECONZ Wireless
www.econz.co.nz

AS A BUSINESS OWNER OR MANAGER WITH A MOBILE WORKFORCE, YOU'VE INVESTED A LOT OF MONEY INTO YOUR VEHICLES. BUT HAVE YOU EVER STOPPED TO THINK JUST HOW MUCH? OR HOW MUCH YOU COULD BE SAVING?

Vehicle costs by percentage

Average TCO, Athlon Car Lease, February 2011, 40% depreciation not displayed.

FUEL 19%	INSURANCE DAMAGES 11%	MAINTENANCE 10%	TAX 7%	INTEREST 7%	OTHER 6%

Predictably, petrol is the highest cost – and fuel prices continue to rise. Heavy traffic can mean more accidents and idling time. This, in turn, leads to higher insurance and maintenance payouts, not to mention disappointed customers. Add increasing taxes and vehicle depreciation to the mix, and you would be forgiven for thinking that vehicle running costs are beyond your control.

However, thankfully, this isn't the case.

Whilst it's impossible to control fuel prices, it is possible to reduce fuel consumption. Safe, responsible driving helps to keep maintenance costs in check. And, with less damage to your vehicles, insurance costs will be lower. By influencing the costs that are under your control, you can stay firmly in the driving seat when it comes to saving money.

How can you control vehicle running costs?

Drive fewer kilometres

By ensuring that you and your drivers take the quickest routes and cut unnecessary journeys, you can save fuel and minimise the wear and tear of your vehicles.

- Take the smartest routes
- Go straight to the customer
- Know where your drivers are

Reduce risk

If you and your drivers are more careful on the roads, you can protect your vehicles from unnecessary damage, save on insurance costs and even reduce fuel consumption.

- Know how your drivers are driving
- Promote proper vehicle maintenance
- Make your drivers ambassadors

Avoid fines

No one wants to pay out for something that could have been avoided. Today's leading fleet management and navigation technologies help you to make sure you don't pay any unnecessary costs.

- Stick to speed limits
- Avoid tax fines

Control all costs with one solution

These techniques all contribute to lower vehicle running costs. They will help you to save fuel and minimise wear and tear. And, if your drivers receive real-time feedback on their driving behaviour, there will be less damage to your vehicles. As a result, insurance costs will be lower too. And, a higher-quality vehicle will be worth more when it is sold – which means you won't need to borrow as much money to buy a new one. Indirectly, this leads to less interest payments.

One simple solution. Forum Fleet. Powered by TomTom Telematics, Forum Fleet is helping thousands of businesses reduce costs at all operational levels.

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BEST OF BREED

INTEGRATED BUSINESS SYSTEMS VS SILOED APPLICATIONS

When starting out, it's easy for a company to settle on stand-alone software solutions that fill a particular business requirement.

Referred to as 'best of breed' in their category, these applications can certainly be an astute option when addressing a specific commercial function, such as accounting, HR management or CRM. While they may present a suitable short-term solution, what happens to these unrelated systems as the company grows?

The benefits of implementing best-of-breed products are obvious; in the early stages of a developing enterprise it seems logical to treat individual areas of the business as operational silos with specific software requirements. However, single-focus products can create disruption to communication and disconnection between departments, as they centre on a distinct segment of the business, unintentionally discouraging company-wide interaction and collaboration.

As a business grows, managers and operators will often discover that disparate systems create operational inefficiencies and generate unnecessary burden for both customers and staff. The more common issues encountered range from the obvious, such as underutilised human resources due to procedural inefficiencies, through to the hidden, including unwarranted training and subscription costs.

Staff inefficiency

When utilising multiple stand-alone software products, employees are often unnecessarily bogged down with manual administrative

duties for extended periods of time. Double data entry is commonplace as information regularly needs to be keyed into multiple systems, such as accounting and CRM. The potential for error is raised with each data entry process, further exacerbating the problem.

Lack of visibility

Disconnected software systems are effectively overlapping databases. When duplicated information is found to be inconsistent, countless hours are wasted trying to tie together unrelated, error-riddled or out-of-date information. Not only does this represent an inefficient use of time, but it increases the likelihood of important business decisions being made based on completely inaccurate information.

Training and learning limitations

Running multiple specialist software programs increases training requirements, which can be problematic in the short and long term. If members of different departments are required to 'cross-pollinate' between systems in order to adequately perform in their role, the need for training in the secondary system can be easily overlooked. A lack of training leads to individuals using software platforms without sufficient knowledge, creating potential for disinterest and disengagement. A 'not-my-department-not-my-problem' attitude pervades and establishes an environment prime for error.

Hidden ongoing costs

On-premise software packages can be expensive, particularly when they are implemented for single-use. Running out-of-date product versions means that full features and benefits are not realised, but the costs associated with upgrades can often be prohibitive, particularly in the case of multilicence sites. The more software products an enterprise employs, the more expensive, confusing and difficult it becomes to collate data for reporting and security.

The big question

So, when assessing the needs of your company, are you better off with multiple best-of-breed products or is a combined business software suite the answer?

While there may be no single response to the question, there is no denying that when systems simply work, life becomes a whole lot easier. When customers expect a timely response, having access to accurate real-time data in one centralised system certainly presents advantages and can deliver personalised insights for improved customer satisfaction.

We've all been a customer at one time, be it buying a new phone, servicing a car or consulting a medical professional. We've all experienced the frustration of different company representatives presenting conflicting information or suggesting that 'there is no record' of a conversation, commitment or action.

The advantage of running a business on an integrated platform, which consolidates and extracts reports and dashboard data from a centralised repository, is that all employees have access to a single source of the truth. The benefits are numerous:

Enterprise-wide process efficiency

The automatic integration of core business processes ensures that manual, duplicative work is, at best, avoided and, at worst, dramatically reduced. This subsequently frees up resources to focus entirely on key activities, rather than error-chasing and double entry.

Real-time visibility

Access to an accurate, consolidated representation of customer account data should be a top priority for any service business. Precise, available business intelligence provides a solid foundation on which to build a superior service offering. Customers expect it and smart companies deliver.

Training and education

A key benefit of implementing an integrated solution is an overall reduction in training requirements. Specific training programs can encompass instruction on both up and downstream processes, establishing an environment that encourages collaboration between departments.

IT infrastructure and other cost savings

In addition to costs associated with licensing and upgrades, disconnected best-of-breed software products generate further operational expense via a need for supplementary hardware and storage capacity, as well as dedicated IT personnel to manually manage numerous systems.

A move to an integrated solution automatically delivers cost savings via reduced hardware and maintenance costs, licensing fees and IT staff time.

How to know when it's time

While every company is different, growth and expansion plans are best based on clearly defined business goals. At what point do the costs associated with maintaining disparate software systems and processes outweigh the benefits of keeping them in place? When is the right time to make the move?

Fragmented data scattered across multiple locations will eventually impinge on a company's service delivery ability, so it's important to understand the situation as it is today and to know when to make a change. Some key questions to ask:

1. Is it difficult to find out what is really happening in the business, right now?
2. How much time is spent re-entering and reconciling data across multiple systems?
3. Are sales being lost because customer information is hard, or prohibitively slow, to access?
4. Does the majority of accounting occur outside the core business package, rather than in?
5. Is there more time spent worrying about technology than business results?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then it is probably time to consider options and to implement a program for change.

KLUGO Group
www.klugogroup.com

SMARTER SERVICES

John Carroll - CEO

For many years, the importance of 'services' has been increasing in the global economy. Take, for example, the US economy: services accounts for roughly 68% of US GDP and, according to a June 2014 private payroll report conducted by ADP, the US witnessed 230,000 jobs added in service-providing businesses, significantly (4.5 times greater) out-hiring the goods-producing sector, which added 51,000 jobs.

This rise in importance is primarily the result of the impact of commoditisation, particularly in manufacturing-related industries. Manufacturers have relied on post-sale service given the impact commoditisation has had on product margins.

Commoditisation is the movement of a market from differentiated to undifferentiated price competition. In the book *The Experience Economy*, co-authors B Joseph Pine II and James H Gilmore claim that only those organisations that stage experiences will differentiate and avoid commoditisation. They claim that "an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event".

Yet with all the recognition of the importance of service on profit and market differentiation, organisations still struggle to transform from a cost to a profit centre. In a recent quarterly service trends survey, The Service Council polled its community on whether their organisation was operating as a profit or cost centre. The results: 62% - yes, profit centre, 29% - no, cost centre, 7% - in transition to profit centre and 2% - don't know.

Treating your services organisation as simply a lever to generate profits, however, is a losing strategy. Your services organisation is an opportunity to generate loyal customers thus improving long-term market share and happy customers. However, staging experiences that accomplish this oftentimes is not in line with being operationally efficient and cost effective.

What are Smarter Services?

Smarter Services, a philosophy termed by The Service Council, is defined as "a company-wide recognition of the role and importance of service as it impacts customer centricity, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, customer retention and the overall customer experience. It represents the healthy balance that links issue resolution, service profitability and happy customers; and delivers a consistent and effective customer experience across all channels at every phase of the customer journey."

Smarter Services advocates that these three major forces (customer satisfaction, service cost, service profit) are not adversarial; however, they will require an organisational and cultural shift, without service being relegated to simply line of business service executives but rather to everyone that touches the customer and regardless of where the customer is at in the journey.

Establishing a culture which embraces Smarter Services requires a transformational leadership team. Alarmingly, in a recent benchmark study conducted by The Service Council titled Going Global in Service, we asked does your organisation have a dedicated head of global service strategy with 21% reporting "no".

Over the course of the next several months, we are eager to share with you results from our ongoing Smarter Services research series as we explore the latest field service and mobility trends including the following topical areas: talent management: hiring, training and knowledge management, mobile maturity framework, equipping the next wave of field service agents, technical support best practices, cost optimisation for service businesses and big data for customer results.

About The Service Council

The Service Council is an exclusive community of Services Executives representing global, industry-leading, service-centric businesses. The mission of The Service Council is to provide a platform for innovation sharing, shaping and sharpening; where uncommon service-centric businesses can emulate the strategies deployed by Global Service Leaders.

The Service Council presents its annual Smarter Services Executive Symposium in March. The symposium provides an invaluable opportunity to meet and network with services, customer experience and customer management executives in an environment conducive to advancing executive relationships.

www.theservicecouncil.com

FIELD SERVICE MANAGEMENT - IT'S NOT THE TECHNOLOGY, IT'S THE PEOPLE

Clive Roberts*

When it comes to implementing new business systems or processes, it is recognised that the human response to change has the greatest capacity to determine a project's outcome.

This continues to be a factor in a range of studies into the causes of failure in large-scale ICT project implementation. A lack of senior level support, changing mindsets and poorly defined objectives are just some of the factors that influence the results.

As the focus of Australian corporations returns to cost management and operational efficiency, these human factors can become an in issue. Companies now aim to improve profitability and to transform field service operations through the introduction of updated systems. While it is encouraging to see increased interest in managing field service operations via mobile and cloud technologies, it is not simply about employing new solutions to fix old problems.

The reality of the field service market, both in Australia and globally, is that many of the scheduling, inventory management, repair and maintenance activities are still executed via a combination of paper, whiteboards and spreadsheets. We've even encountered a service delivery manager being asked to build a bigger room to house more and bigger whiteboards when the business quickly scaled. Additionally, many engineers, while experts in their profession, are not necessarily technology experts.

With many organisations using outdated methods to manage hundreds, or even thousands, of field engineers, it is clear that there is room to innovate. While we know it is possible to improve the profitability and operational efficiency of mobile workforces using new technologies, we must take into account the human factors when implementing these solutions.

The integration of social collaboration with field service management automation is a key driver in reducing costs and increasing customer satisfaction, particularly as the focus moves from the back end of a company's operations to the centre of a customer's brand experience. A successful implementation can bring stellar results -

according to a ServiceMax customer survey conducted in January 2014, the results showed that best practice organisations are delivering year-on-year revenue increases of 22%, driving productivity improvements by 26% and customer satisfaction by 15% on average.

Such improvements are achieved by harnessing the power of the cloud, along with social collaboration tools and apps. These organisations use a suite of cloud, social and mobile field service management applications to dispatch the technician with the right skills to the customer's premises, to automatically track and manage parts inventory and to connect the technician with a knowledge base and subject matter experts via their mobile device.

The Technology Services Industry Association (TSIA) highlighted the power of collaboration in a webinar titled '5 ways field service can use social technology to delight customers'. A member case study illustrated how an office products company achieved estimated savings of US$12 million per year, through the launch of a global knowledge base. 23,000 repair users worldwide were able to connect, share knowledge and ask questions. The result was 300,000 issues per year being solved on the first site visit.

Closer to home, when implementing ServiceMax software, the Australian subsidiary of a global manufacturer recognised that understanding the skills and knowledge of field engineers was imperative. During the implementation phase it became clear that information displayed on mobile devices, in this case iPads, had to be significantly pared back in order to make it easier for technicians to use the technology effectively. This ensured they had all the information needed

Many engineers are not necessarily technology experts.

to complete the job, without making the new process more complicated than the old.

Identifying what information to include (and to leave out) came from collaboration with more than 50 field engineers. During this process we identified several 'cheerleaders' with whom we could test various iterations (or Sprints) of the solution, before broadly rolling it out. Those who were early adopters and keen users of new technology in both their work and personal lives were particularly good at promoting the new approach to field service management. They also had credibility and respect among their peers, which was valuable in terms of leading others to the adoption of new solutions. Empowering these cheerleaders not only reduced project risk, but meant that user acceptance testing of the ServiceMax solution ensured that the final implementation reflected the realities experienced daily by engineers. This iterative and collaborative process reduced resistance to change, as field engineers were an active part of the solution development.

Ownership of the mobile device is another important consideration. Companies will generally consider the cost of breakage associated with such hardware, particularly in the case of expensive non-rugged tablets such as iPads. Allowing the device to be utilised for personal, as well as business, use encourages field technicians to appreciate and care for it more, as it is a valuable tool for both work and home use.

Fire protection and security solutions leader Tyco took the human factors into account during its ServiceMax implementation. The company's change management team identified the following elements as essential to success:

- Reducing the gap between change introduction and adoption to minimise business disruption and to safeguard customer satisfaction.

- Including user acceptance testing to ensure that the change reflects the way people work.

• Recognising it's not about reducing resistance to change; it is about making staff an integral part of the new system build.

Based on this, Tyco implemented Service-Max by work stream rather than across the organisation. This enabled the company to build familiarity and trust in the new system by allowing field employees to 'personalise' the change and understand what it meant for them in their roles.

Tyco's experience and review approach demonstrated the significant value leakage that can result from not taking employee resistance into account. Figures shared in a webinar titled 'Tyco's 5 principles of change management for field service' demonstrated the biggest source of value leakage (US$22 million on a US$100 million investment) came from low end-user adoption of the new system.

This reflects the importance of maintaining an agile approach to project implementation. It allows companies to adopt change elements quickly and for user acceptance testing to form the basis of 'Sprints'. The methodology is relevant to cloud development projects such as ServiceMax, because it ensures customers are taken on an efficient and transparent journey towards their goals, while achieving quick wins and user buy-in.

ServiceMax facilitates this process through provision of a range of discrete modules, allowing customers a choice for implementation. This ensures they are not trying to 'boil the ocean' when executing a solution to improve the operational efficiency and profitability of their field service business.

Clive Roberts is the Managing Director and founder of Sydney-based ProQuest Consulting, a Platinum Partner for Salesforce.com and a strategic implementation partner for ServiceMax, a comprehensive solution for field service management.

ProQuest Consulting
www.proquestit.com

PRODUCT WATCH

RUGGED TABLET PC

Backplane Systems Technology has released RuggON's 7″ IP65 Windows-Based Rugged Tablet PC, the PM-311, designed for field applications.

The PM-311 meets the MIL-STD-810G rating for shock and vibration and can be dropped from 1.5 m onto plywood on a concrete surface. It is fully sealed against the ingress of liquid and dust damage (IP65) and has an operating temperature rating of -20 to +50°C.

The 7″ LED backlit screen with integrated 5-wire resistive touch screen features a display brightness of 400 nits with optional 500 nits sunlight-readable functionality for outdoor applications.

The device is based on Intel's Atom N2600 1.6 GHz Dual Core CPU and includes 2GB of DDR3 SODIM and 32 GB of upgradeable SATA solid-state disk. The hot-swappable dual batteries offer up to 8 h of battery life.

A 5 megapixel webcam with an LED light is embedded in the rear bezel and a 2 megapixel camera with audio input is in the front panel. Seamless communication is available via the onboard GPS or optional 3.5G or 4G TLE modules.

The Rugged Tablet is available with an optional 1D/2D barcode scanner and magnetic stripe reader (MSR) suitable for portable stock and asset management.

Multiple connectivity interfaces include 2x USB, 1x RS232, 1x audio jack, 1x Micro SD slot and 1x Ethernet port supporting PXE function. Plus, for user flexibility, five programmable function buttons are located on the front panel.

Backplane Systems Technology Pty Ltd
www.backplane.com.au

SERVICE MANAGEMENT MOBILE PLATFORM

Astea International has introduced a new release of its most robust service management and mobile workforce platform. The release incorporates fresh features throughout the solution suite. Whether on-premise or in the cloud, and seamlessly integrating with existing ERP/CRM solutions, Astea Alliance provides powerful features without adding layers of cost, enabling businesses to provide improved customer service at a lower total cost of ownership.

Astea Alliance offers improved productivity and collaboration. It is no longer enough to just connect the field worker to the back office and companies need mobile solutions that provide advanced tools and capabilities. Astea enables engineers to create sales quotations, perform inventory cycle counts, support complex items with subcomponents and create and support different workflows/apps for different groups/types of work.

Out-of-the-box, robust functionality combines easy-to-use customisation capabilities to provide the flexibility that businesses need. Customers can build new modules, as well as import and export customisations to different environments if needed.

Further extending its existing Third Party Vendor Management Portal, Astea has released a mobile app that makes it even easier for third-party service providers/subcontractors to participate in the service delivery process. The third party simply downloads the mobile app and they are instantly connected, regardless of the mobile device being used. In a secure and controlled environment, the third-party engineer is able to receive work orders, view asset and service history, request and record parts, capture customer signatures and work in a connected or disconnected mode.

Astea International
www.astea.com
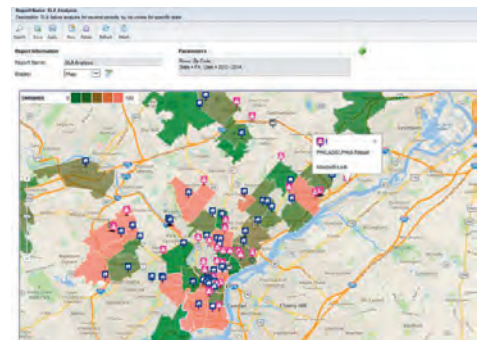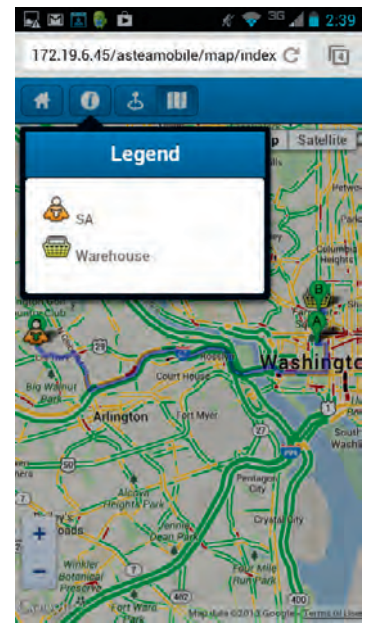
DRIVING IMPROVEMENT TO PROFIT

MorCo Fresh is a wholesale food distributor specialising in daily deliveries of fresh produce. The company required a technology solution that would help optimise its day-to-day operations and maximise productivity and efficiency, both on and off the road.

The key objectives were to increase the number of deliveries the trucks could make per day and to improve customer service by providing accurate ETAs. Additional priorities included increasing driver safety, lessening mechanical wear on vehicles by reducing fuel and mileage, and minimising the number of accidents and infringement notices.

There are a number of variables, such as weather, traffic congestion and delays from earlier drop-offs, that impact on daily deliveries. The result is a cascade effect that impacts all customers along the entire logistics line.

MorCo Fresh needed a solution that would provide greater visibility of daily driving operations and alert customers to any delivery time changes. The company also

required a system that provided drivers with information about traffic delays, to ensure they could select the fastest route while safely and efficiently making their rostered drops. The solution needed to extend to MorCo Fresh's backend operations to ensure effective fleet management.

Forum Group installed Tom Tom Telematics tracking solutions to provide increased visibility of driving operations to office staff and accurate driver ETAs to customers.

The TomTom Telematics system sends updates every 10 seconds, with vehicle locations and timings, to provide accurate delivery times to customers so they can track deliveries without having to call the driver directly.

Forum also installed ECO PLUS units that monitor fuel consumption and allow MorCo Fresh to access accurate fuel usage data. This allows the company to accurately pinpoint inefficiencies in its vehicle fuel systems.

Since TomTom Telematics was first implemented in July 2013, MorCo Fresh has seen an average increase in productivity of two additional deliveries per vehicle per day.

The office team now has full visibility of the drivers and their pending workloads. The drivers also benefit from TomTom's intelligent navigation and live traffic information to keep them moving at all times.

By using a fleet management solution MorCo Fresh is able to report and manage its vehicle and driver health and safety requirements, as well as fuel and maintenance costs. Being able to proactively monitor speeding and driving conditions, fuel consumption and maintenance expenditure has significantly reduced costs across the entire fleet.

MorCo Fresh initially piloted the TomTom system with three delivery vehicles, but the program was so successful it was rolled out across the entire fleet of ten vehicles over a 6-month period.

Nicholas Moraitis, General Manager of MorCo Fresh NSW explains the benefits; "Having never used a fleet management or telematics solution before, the improvements we've achieved have been very significant, both in terms of how we manage our vehicle fleet and service our customer base" he says.

"Forum Group's solutions have given our business a strong competitive edge now we have real-time and historic data to maximise our whole operations. The reports that we receive via email are customised to our requirements and provide our administration staff with accurate data to cross check and manage both driver behaviour and invoicing. My experience with Forum Group and TomTom Telematics hardware has been impressive and I look forward to working with them in the future on some of the exciting projects we have on the horizon."

Forum Group
www.forumgroup.com.au

A GAME OF ENGAGEMENT

Keeping employees engaged is key to keeping loyal customers, yet most companies have not been able to master the matrix of costs vs ROI in the complex push and pull environment of financial obligations and customer satisfaction. But the answer may be right underneath our agile thumbs that happily build farms and defeat angry birds on our smartphones.

Gamification has become a core part of our daily lives. Whether we're sitting at home playing Candy Crush or trying to break that unbeatable Flappy Bird record on the way to work, people from all walks of life are beginning to play more games more frequently.

We work best when we are happy, and smart companies are looking into how they can use the surge in popularity of both games and the smartphones they are played on. Is there some way you can blend the two to make work that little bit easier? The answer is absolutely.

Only now are we seeing gamification adopted by businesses of all industries and sizes to:

• engage employees
• maintain customer loyalty
• change behaviours
• develop skills
• drive innovation

It also helps make those tasks you know you have to do, but don't always enjoy doing, a little more exciting. Actions like completing timesheets can be turned into a reward for employees who complete these tasks on time and accurately. A small badge here, an unlockable picture there - small tokens that can make staff more open to attending to administrative matters.

Engaging employees of all levels and functions is a notoriously difficult thing to do, especially when it comes to adopting new processes. It often happens that employees are resistant to changes because they can't understand the new processes nor do they see any personal benefit in adopting them. But adding in gaming tools just might be the way forward.

ClickSoftware Australia Pty Ltd

www.clicksoftware.com

With over a decade's experience in providing easy to use, mobile service solutions to field service businesses, e-nable Solutions knows how to remove the pain from your business.

e-nable Your Field Service (eYFS) is a fully customisable, cloud-based system that links your staff, back office and customers together to reduce your costs to serve - giving you real-time visibility of both customer service & staff productivity and ultimately a faster quote-to-cash time. Getting started is easy too with our online wizard-based setup and low predictable monthly fees.

e-nable solutions

For more information email: sales@e-nablesolutions.com or visit www.e-nablesolutions.com/FSB

UTE CANOPY

AutoNexus has announced the release of a 100 kg carrying capacity ute canopy. The fibreglass construction and custom-moulded fit, to complement popular ute brands, provide a quality solution for security and weatherproofing.

Features include: a carrying capacity of 100 kg certified to AS1235:2000 meaning no internal frame is required when fitting roof racks and carrying top load; water-tight seal through the aid of a rubber membrane; dual-latch positive locking system which can be opened from inside the canopy, ensuring no-one can become accidentally locked in and also prevents rear doors from being levered open; flexible window options including fixed, sliding and lift-up windows with self-supporting gas struts; tempered safety glass windows; and a smooth UV-resistant high-gloss finish.

The canopy is backed by a 3-year warranty.

AutoNexus
www.autonexus.com.au

MOBILE DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM

The JMango360 Mobile App Builder gives developers of every skill level a quick and easy way to create rich, native mobile applications. JMango360 Mobile App Builder supports all market devices, including Android, Blackberry, iOS and Windows phones. It provides integration with third-party business systems, including payment service providers.

The JMango360 Mobile App Builder provides: a development platform that delivers top-tier level business app functionality; easy-to-use drag-and-drop features for speedy app creation; ability to deploy applications across multiple devices from a single-code base; customisable capability and flexibility to address changing needs and respond to dynamic growth; integration with third-party business systems, such as the Magento e-commerce suite and various payment service providers.

JMango360
www.jmango360.com

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WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT
MATTERS

> In any enterprise, the workflow process from the point of job instigation right through to payment must be as efficient as possible.

Michael Stornelli, CEO e-Net Solutions

Workflow problems are common to all businesses, but it is even more critical when operating field staff. A smart system reflects the way you want to run your business, rather than dictating changes in processes to meet its parameters.

Dispatching work orders electronically to field technicians and then monitoring progress from the office using a smart device will improve workflow and efficiency, while minimising administration costs and increasing profits. Additionally, field teams need easy access to essential real-time job information while out on the road.

There are very few service-oriented businesses that would disagree with these two statements. Particularly when you consider the number of touch-points both inside and out of the business, the functions they perform and the responsibilities they carry:

- Clients and customers who may require regular work request status updates.
- Admin staff who enter work order requests and track missing paperwork.
- Schedulers and dispatchers assigning work orders to field technicians for a particular date and time.
- Field technicians who provide quotes, reports and carry out the required work.
- Field staff supervisors who are ultimately responsible for ensuring work orders are actioned and meet KPIs.
- Accounts staff who generate invoices based on completed work orders and process payments for staff and subcontractors.
- Management who require access to accurate information to provide a clear understanding of the current situation and enable better business decisions.
- External authorities that set out expectations and may audit the business's procedures and processes.

- Safety officers who ensure risk assessments are carried out and WHS policies adhered to.
- Workshop and stores personnel who are responsible for stock control and inventory tracking.
- Maintenance staff responsible for maintaining valuable assets and keeping records.

With so many links in the chain, there is an enormous administrative burden on a business when carrying out day-to-day activities. In many cases, organisational support grows to the point of being unmanageable, while other areas are pared back to cope with increased overheads. The simple solution is to increase overall efficiency through the introduction of a real-time work order system.

What it needs to do

Work order information needs to flow seamlessly and in real time. For businesses without a systemised workflow, the capture and management of data becomes increasingly difficult. Data should ideally be entered once and this should be at the point of initial contact. Once a client's information is entered in the system, that information should stay on file and be augmented with any new work requests.

When a company is reliant on a paper-based system, or a series of non-integrated processes, there is a high margin for error. An incorrect entry at the initial point can cause headaches for everyone else down the line. An appropriately implemented work order management system that supports existing business processes makes everyone's life easier.

So, how does a business know when its administration obligation has gone too far? Depending on the nature of the business, if five technicians to one admin staff member is the optimum, then a ratio of two or three to one shows there is definitely room for improvement.

Why businesses don't just do it

There are many reasons why a business may opt not to implement workflow improvements:

"

How does a business know when its administration obligation has gone too far?

- Software is a non-tangible asset and some managers just don't see the value as they can't relate to it. Using the calendar functionality of email programs for scheduling and off-the-shelf accounting packages for invoicing may seem like a suitable solution, but the paper-based nature still creates unnecessary administrative work.

- Not understanding that workflow issues exist. It's not uncommon for company owners and managers to be focused on fighting fires and generating revenue, rather than identifying holes in business practices.

- Difficulty in choosing the right software package. This can be a daunting task, as those responsible for selecting a suitable solution may lack the necessary information or competency to do so. While reviewing the most popular systems is a good start, it doesn't end there. Potential users need to understand the amount of input that will be required to get the system to function - too much and there is no benefit. Additional factors to consider are scalability - can it grow with the business? - and interoperability with other existing systems.

- Price is always a factor, often to the detriment of the purchaser. Too often companies choose the cheapest option, instead of understanding the ongoing savings presented by a solution that cuts out double-handling and allows for better use of technician time.

How to set the wheels in motion

The first step in finding a suitable solution for workflow improvement is to gain a thorough understanding of the existing system. Stakeholders that are reliant on any part of the workflow should be involved. A review of current processes will help identify policy and procedural gaps at the outset and will also provide a clear picture of any issues that hamper delivery of real-time, transparent information.

Once issues have been identified, goals can be set and a functionality 'wish list' drawn up based on those objectives. Suitable alternative packages can be identified as fit for review, contingent on the ability to meet those needs. Primary functional requirements are one thing, but the impact of improvement in this area on the overall workflow process is the key consideration. If a system provides faster invoicing capacity without accurate scheduling, the benefit of the efficiency gain is negligible. It's important to keep the whole process in mind.

A good work order management software solution should provide a return on investment within 12 months. The system should become every staff member's virtual assistant, reducing unnecessary burden on administration staff and field technicians. If the gain is as simple as one extra service job carried out by each technician every day, due to less paperwork, it won't take long to realise the savings.

Picture the scenario: A customer requests a quote electronically and the job is automatically assigned to the appropriate field technician, based on skill set and geographic location. The technician goes to the site, provides a report and a quote based on the inspection and is given approval on the spot. The work is carried out, an invoice generated and automatically issued electronically to the client and is paid via EFT later that afternoon. At all times, the current status of the job is visible to all stakeholders but requires no direct intervention. If may sound like some perfect-world, unattainable sequence of events, but don't be fooled. This is what a good work order management system can do for you ... today.

myFLO
www.myflo.com.au

END-TO-END FIELD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

FieldOne field service management software enables companies to deliver world-class customer experiences in the field while maximising efficiency and minimising costs.

FieldOne Sky is an end-to-end software platform supporting all phases of field service management. The solution incorporates state-of-the-art routing and scheduling, advanced work process automation, comprehensive social collaboration and communications capabilities, inventory and contract management, complete customer life cycle management, and robust reporting and business intelligence.

FieldOne Sky features an open architecture for simplified integration with CRM, ERP or virtually any other enterprise system, flexible deployment options (cloud, on-premise or hybrid), native apps for all major mobile platforms and no-code customisation driving rapid deployment and fast ROI.

FieldOne Systems LLC
www.fieldone.com

JOB MANAGEMENT APP

Fieldteam is a job management mobile app that allows businesses to easily manage field service teams and streamline business practices. Fieldteam seamlessly connects mobile staff with the office, providing real-time information on location and job status.

Office staff can see actual start and finish times; view job information including video, photos and audio notes; schedule and dispatch jobs online; and prepare detailed reports for clients.

Mobile workers can access job schedules and work orders, view job information, message the office and other team members or site contacts, record time spent on-site and track materials used.

Australian owned and designed, Fieldteam has been developed with the local market in mind and is suitable for small and large businesses alike.

Key features include: job scheduling, GPS tracking, job management, accounts integration, asset management, site management, inventory management and site history details.

Fieldteam
www.fieldteam.com.au

Analytics: The key to achieving customer service excellence
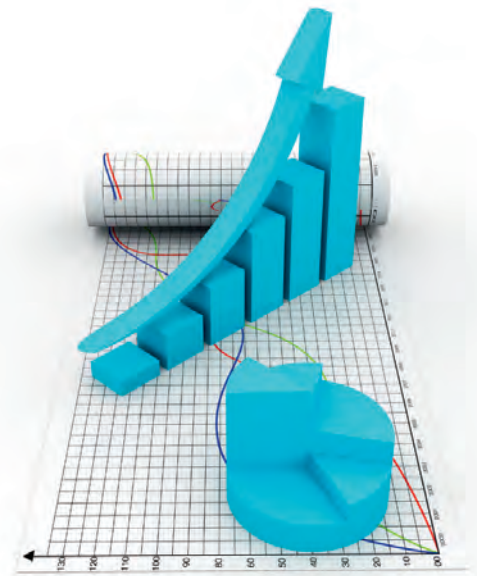
How much data a field service organisation collects through fleet and workforce management technology, and how it uses the data, can set it apart from its competitors. Companies that analyse and act on this data to optimise operations often reach higher levels of customer satisfaction and increased profits.

Aberdeen Group[1] found that best-in-class field service organisations that adopt analytics technology see their service profits increase by 18%, customer retention rates by 42% and SLA performance by 44%. As companies strive to achieve or retain best-in-class status, it is imperative that they leverage analytics in their operations.

The key to improving customer service

Revenue growth for field service organisations is strongly related to a business' commitment to customer service excellence. Indeed, organisations with customer satisfaction rates of 90% or more enjoy service revenue increases of 6% and overall revenue growth of 3.7%[2]. Best-in-class organisations look to balance cost and service delivery through 'getting it right first time'. Ensuring that the technician arrives on time, has the right part/tool and has the right skills to complete the job is the ultimate objective[3].

Field technicians are key to a customer-centric approach as the type of service work and information they provide is often the primary way for customers to measure the integrity, credibility, effectiveness and overall brand promise of the service-based organisation.

The right information increases efficiencies

Delivering excellent service is tightly integrated with how companies collect, digest and act on field data. In-vehicle GPS boxes feed data back to dispatch centres throughout the day, providing critical insight into the quality of service that field workers deliver. This information includes service commitments that are kept/missed, whether tasks take too long, and if time is wasted through poor scheduling and inefficient staff utilisation.

Leveraging analytics, field managers can gain greater insight into their operations, enabling them to lower operating costs and improve efficiency and productivity. Through data collection and strategic analysis, organisations can determine when it's feasible to add more jobs per day, shorten routes by scheduling the technician's daily tasks in relative proximity, and – based on performance data that logs a worker's preferences, geography and skills – match the right technician to the right task for the right job.

Armed with this valuable information, and the ability to interpret and act on it, businesses are better equipped to determine accountability and move forward to reduce operational costs and maximise service quality.

www.trimble.com/fsm

To download a copy of Trimble's new industry report, 'Transforming Service Delivery: An Insight Report', visit www.trimble.com/fsm/insightreportaus

1 Get Smart: Business Intelligence and Analytics for Service Organizations, Aberdeen Group
2 Get Smart: Business Intelligence and Analytics for Service Organizations, Aberdeen Group
3 Secrets to Optimize Field Service for Better Customer Experiences, Aberdeen Group

THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service is the number one priority for field service organisations[1]

Organisations are placing an increased importance on getting it right first time for the customer[2]

71% of field service businesses use customer satisfaction as the main metric to measure the performance of their organisation[3]

1:Trimble Road Ahead Report 2:Aberdeen Group 3:Trimble Insight Report

Dannielle Furness

MORE THAN A MODE OF TRANSPORT

Gone are the days when a truck or van was just a way of getting from one job to the next. Field service vehicles are an increasingly valuable asset with many faces: mobile office, technology hub and roving inventory location.

So, too, have vehicle fit-outs moved beyond just racks and shelving. From preconfigured to custom designed, the right fit-out can improve vehicle investment and running costs, streamline work management, enhance inventory control and minimise time on-site.

There are plenty of aftermarket products available for DIY installation into most common vehicle makes and models. So, should you go down that road or are you better off working with a professional installer? In truth, there's no 'right' answer. However, an increased spotlight on the duty of care for mobile workforces means that field service managers have a vested interest in guaranteeing employee safety, both in and out of a vehicle.

Safety first

In a time of escalating fuel prices, it might be tempting to focus solely on weight reduction in an effort to minimise the load and subsequent running costs, but there are other considerations when choosing the most appropriate fit-out. Selecting components made from lighter materials may reduce weight, but fail to provide the same levels of safety or durability as the alternatives.

In April this year, the federal government announced a $2.2m two-year funding commitment to the independent vehicle safety rating organisation Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP). In addition, recent changes to OHS legislation nominated managers of mobile teams as directly responsible for the welfare of those employees. Obviously, employers are bound to provide staff with a safe working environment, which inherently includes fleet-managed vehicles, but these changes signal an increased focus on employee safety, particularly in the realm of the mobile workforce.

Obviously, the function of a service vehicle, the nature of the work and the necessary equipment load will guide much of a fit-out requirement, but some elements are simply mandatory. Cargo barriers, for instance, are generally a given to prevent equipment from entering the driver's cabin. However, safety extends beyond just being in transit, so thought should be given to creating secure conditions for loading and unloading, or simply accessing the vehicle when on-site.

The choices

There are so many elements to a vehicle fit-out: service bodies, canopies, shelving, racking, drawers and other forms of storage, cargo barriers, window grills and guards, air curtains, interior trimming, flooring, lifts and accessories such as roof racks, tow bars, bull bars, nudge bars, grab handles, lighting, ladder posts and extra seating, to name a few.

While the DIY option may seem like a better choice economically speaking, the benefit of working with professional designers and installers means that equipment is not only tailored to meet the specific needs of your team and the work they carry out, but it is also guaranteed in terms of materials and installation.

Vehicle fit-out professionals understand the nature of the equipment and how best to fit it, including any material limitations, and many offer systems that have been designed to meet with Australian crash test standards. They also understand the weight impact of additional equipment within a vehicle and will ensure an appropriate balance is achieved.

These are important factors when it comes to ensuring both safety and longevity of an installation.

KEEPING THINGS ON TRACK

BHP Billiton (BHPB) is a diversified, multinational resources corporation, with headquarters in Melbourne and London. Considered to be the world's leading resources company based on revenues generated, it retains a wide variety of mining and processing operations in 25 countries. A core BHPB activity is large-scale mining and transportation of iron ore in the remote Pilbara region of north Western Australia.

BHPB's dedicated, heavy-duty rail network is a vital component in its vertically integrated, Australian iron ore supply chain. Some of the world's longest and heaviest trains are under its direct control, operating continuously in the harsh outback environment.

BHPB needed an efficient software solution that could reliably record and control the thousands of locomotive and ore

Transportation of iron ore in the remote Pilbara region of north Western Australia.

car assets managed through its state-of-the-art Ore Car Repair Shop (OCRS) and locomotive shops in Port Hedland, WA. In addition to this demanding requirement, the software solution also had to perform a vital damage management function to ensure that BHPB's rolling stock items are promptly returned to traffic after attention by its skilled technical workforce.

Each of BHP Billiton's 7200 iron ore cars comprises 53 individual components. With the added complexity of more than 100 state-of-the-art locomotives to manage, BHPB needed to efficiently monitor, assess, repair and service almost 400,000 measurable assets and components, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

Keeping each of the 126 tonne-capacity ore cars and multimillion-dollar locomotives in peak running condition is essential in order to optimise availability, reduce out-of-traffic dwell times and to ensure maximum revenue generation. In addition to these mobile assets, BHPB maintains a complex network of stationary components including track, signals, level crossing protection, civil structures and other infrastructure

items, all critical to the efficient transport of iron ore.

The chosen solution needed to seamlessly integrate with existing rail management software, including Rail Historian, to ensure an uninterrupted flow of critical data for technicians, supervisors and managers.

Achieving continuous productivity improvement in a dynamic industry, such as heavy haulage of iron ore, is an ongoing challenge. To effectively meet this target, BHPB selected Loc8 Enterprise, with intelligent asset and damage management features, for deployment at the company's Port Headland OCRS.

Loc8's asset and fault management software package is tailored to the needs of rail asset owners, operators and service providers. Leveraging best practice and functionalities, Loc8 delivers a powerful cost-effective product to facilitate sustainable maintenance and asset management.

Through the implementation of Loc8, BHPB has introduced an intuitive program of asset life cycle management and tracking to a component level. They are able to responsively and effectively monitor, report and action asset-specific damage items and to achieve improved efficiency and reduced asset downtime. The customisable statistical report generation feature enables proactive management of individual ore wagons through the OCRS, optimising network operation and facilitating preventive maintenance of infrastructure items and rolling stock.

The complexities and technicalities encountered by rail asset enterprises are effectively handled through this closed-loop mobility solution, specifically designed for remote in-field use. Real-time remote job dispatch to in-field technicians and engineers, intuitive work scheduling and effective mobile resource management serves to further streamline company operations.

Andrea Strickland, supervisor OCRS, BHPB service providers, recognises the benefits, both short and long term - "Loc8 is a great application in all aspects; from training new users, simplicity and to creating reports for future projects and management," she says.

Integration with other enterprise software systems and data sources, such as SAP, Oracle and specialist rail management products, simplifies business-wide operations and heralds an important revolution in the rail industry - where integration, automated communication and operational rationalisation not only improve service outcomes, but deliver higher margin at all points of the service delivery process.

Loc8.com Pty Ltd
www.loc8.com

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A-Body

Z-Body

The ideal mobile workstation

The XL A-Body results from many years of XL's design refinement. Robust, practical and lightweight, it's the flagship of the XL fleet. With a low overall height providing excellent rear vision, and low centre of gravity for improved handling when loaded, the XL A-Body is the ideal mobile workstation for the serious contractor on the go.

For maximum storage

The XL Z-Body has the largest storage capacity in the XL range. This Body provides an abundant storage area for tools and consumables, and you can easily adjust the internal shelving to suit your needs. The XL Z-Body is the ideal mobile workstation for carrying bulky items and tools.

xl.com.au

MOBILE DATA COLLECTION

UDC Mobile is a cloud-based solution that allows organisations to re-create their paper-based forms electronically and deploy them to their mobile workforce's smartphones and or tablets.

UDC Mobile allows workers to record current job information and to record their physical location via GPS, as well as photograph work or take voice recordings of more complex items. There is also the facility for customer authorisation by signature. Once the data is collected on the device, it is sent back to secure servers for processing and integration with core business systems. In the event of no internet connection, data can be stored on the device until connection is established.

The UDC Mobile runs on Android and iOS devices. There is no restriction on the number of forms that can be defined and used by the mobile workforce.

UDC Systems Pty Ltd
www.udcsystems.com.au

MOBILE SERVICE SYSTEM

e-nable Your Field Service (eYFS) is a cloud-based, fully featured mobile service system developed for field service and remote workforces. eYFS's built-in skills or location-based workflow links the customer to the right staff with the right skills automatically and provides management with an automatic escalation and notification when things don't go according to plan.

eYFS allows field service organisations to deliver better service to their customers by using the latest in cloud software and smartphone apps. By removing the reliance on paper-based processes or the game of 'telephone tag' with field staff, organisations can control costs while reducing staff turnover and receiving payment quickly.

The cloud-based system connects office staff to field service colleagues using their smartphone or tablet, web browser client or SMS and does not require the expense of purchasing dedicated servers. Flexible options cater for a range of business sizes.

Jobs can be scheduled in a variety of ways - to the team member who is geographically closest, to the one who has the most appropriate skills or to the initial responder.

Management reporting is fully customisable and includes a job status dashboard that provides a view of individual job status in real time.

e-nable Solutions
www.e-nablesolutions.com

WORK MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Trimble Work Management is a cloud-based solution that enhances the productivity of mobile work-forces through state-of-the-art performance management analytics and intelligent scheduling tools.

Based on real-time location and job data, Work Management provides easily digestible consoles and in-depth reports which feature analysis of key performance metrics such as quality of service, efficiency and utilisation of workers to help service-based businesses easily pinpoint areas for improvement.

The Work Management solution also features a dynamic set of scheduling tools that optimise in-day and planned work to provide the flexibility businesses need to respond to growing customer demands. The technology provides real-time visibility of a company's work plan and instantly warns dispatchers if a task is at risk of being missed. The solution also offers a self-learner tool to help businesses make better in-day decisions. To avoid large data set-up exercises of skill sets and work areas, a self-learning tool supports the assignment of work orders to the field technicians by remembering who has the right skills and their usual work areas.

With its enhanced analytics as well as dispatch and task management capabilities, Work Management can help organisations increase field efficiency and flexibility to ultimately transform the way work is planned, allocated, managed, reported and evaluated.
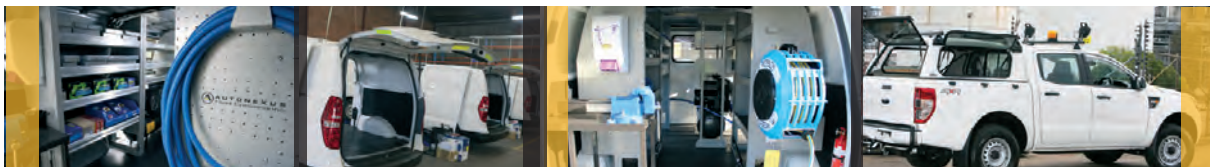
Trimble Field Service Management
www.trimble.com

ALUMINIUM OR STEEL

FOR YOUR SERVICE BODY?

For any equivalent quantity of metal, aluminium is lighter but steel is significantly stronger, so how do you decide which path to go down when choosing service bodies for your fleet? The answer is not as simple as you think.

Many factors will decide which metal is best suited to any given purpose - what it is used for, how it is manufactured, the environment in which it will be used, what life expectancy is required and many other real-world issues need to be taken into account. Weight, strength, hardness, stiffness and a range of other variables need to be considered.

Weight

As a reference point, water has a specific gravity (sg) of 1.0 g/mm². Aluminium has an sg of 2.6 g/mm² and steel one of 7.8 mm/g². Obviously, this means that steel is heavier, but that's only half the story. It is the comparative strength-to-weight ratio of metals that is the critical factor in most applications, including the manufacture of service bodies.

Strength

Strength is commonly defined as the maximum load to which a material can be subjected without bending, or yielding. Most aluminium alloys used in general service body construction (6061-T6 series) will yield under a force of between 275 to 310 MPa.

Kilo for kilo, 6016-T6 is stronger than some steel alloys, yet not as strong as others. For every given high-strength alloy, there are higher strength steels that will outperform aluminium alloys in strength-to-weight comparisons.

Steel has considerably greater resistance to denting and deformation.

© bugpha/Dollar Photo Club

Regardless of the type of alloys used for either metal, the modulus of elasticity for each varies only slightly. High-strength aluminium alloys offer almost no corresponding increase in stiffness and steel still outperforms them all by a factor of nearly 3:1.

In practical terms, that means that the wall thickness of an aluminium tube or plate needs to be three times as thick as its equivalent in steel to achieve the same degree of stiffness that steel provides.

Hardness

The hardness of a material is defined by the relative resistance that its surface offers to penetration by a harder body. Because of their inherent lack of stiffness, aluminium panels have relatively low 'bounceback' resistance and will dent quite easily. Steel has considerably greater strength and resistance to denting and deformation than is commonly experienced in everyday working environments.

A panel that dents easily will often deform and twist as a result. Twisted panels that don't close properly and are prone to leakage are the most common complaints about aluminium service bodies.

Reactivity

Aluminium is more inert than steel and resists corrosion in normal environments. It does, however, still require protective coatings in environments such as coastal areas where saltwater corrosion is commonplace.

Aluminium's inert nature also makes it very difficult to securely apply protective coatings as the surface makes adherence difficult.

Welding

Aluminium welds well, but the area around the weld has significantly lower yield strength than the base material. The Alcoa Structural Handbook recommends that, without proper heat treatment after welding, the design strength for the aluminium adjacent to any weld should be taken at just 75 MPa - a decrease in the average strength of the base metal of around 70%.

With the exception of hardened and exotic grades, mild steel that is welded or brazed drops only a fraction of its strength at and around welding points.

Steel spot-welds very well, while aluminium requires large TIG welds or complex and expensive manual fastening to attain the necessary strength.

Weighing in

The low weight of aluminium comparative to steel may make it seem like a better option from a fleet manager's point of view; less weight equals less fuel, right? With so many other influencing factors, it's imperative to understand how the vehicles will be used, in what type of environment and for what expected timeframe?

Steel and aluminium both have distinct advantages and disadvantages, so it's important to work with a manufacturer who understands the nature of both and can determine which material should be used. Only then can fleet managers be sure they are minimising maintenance and replacement costs, while experiencing increased safety, reliability and long service life and the return on investment they demand.

XL Service Bodies Pty Ltd
www.xl.com.au

Additional factors to strength and weight eventually dictate which material is a better choice for a particular application. Aluminium can be made to match the strength of steel through the addition of extra fabrication, but it requires almost three times the amount by volume to equal the strength of steel, thereby eliminating the weight savings offered by aluminium.

Stiffness

Stiffness refers to how much a material bends when a load is applied. Each metal's stiffness is quantified by a parameter called the Modulus of Elasticity, usually measured in gigapascals (GPa). Aluminium's modulus of elasticity is about 69 GPa, versus the significantly higher (around 3 times higher in fact) 200 GPa demonstrated by steel.

IMPROVING WORKFLOW =
SAVINGS

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Honeywell and The Service Council have revealed that 38% of field service organisations can expect to potentially reduce costs by an average of $875,000 following improvements to workflow processes that would save each worker 30 minutes or more per day.

The finding came out of a survey of 260 global decision-makers, including representatives from Asia Pacific, which polled them on their organisation's field service processes to gauge potential areas of improvement and enhancements.

The survey showed that in the past 12 months 75% of respondents have conducted a process review, most of which are driven by continuous improvement programs. But 25% have not, and of that group, 63% have not conducted a process review in more than five years.

The most highly ranked opportunities to improve worker efficiency were: daily schedule management and communication, clock-in and clock-out processes, parts lookup, and resolution information and knowledge lookup. Additionally, the top-rated area for workflow improvement in Asia Pacific was call and appointment management.

The primary disconnect from the survey data is that while 65% of organisations indicate that they are fairly diligent about conducting process reviews of their field service operations, only 27% indicate that they are doing so while keeping an eye on revenue objectives.

"The key learning field service leaders can take from this new research is that there are big pay-offs to be earned from placing more emphasis on aligning revenue goals with their process and workflow reviews conducted at the field operations level," said Honeywell Scanning and Mobility Country Manager, ANZ Tony Repaci. "The positive news is that it is often straightforward changes made across the entire workforce that can deliver these large cost savings results," he continued.

"Also at the heart of successfully achieving the business goal of increasing revenue is investing in cost-efficient workflow process change, supporting technologies that are capable of meeting business needs now and in the future, as well as the direction and evaluation of workers," he added.

Field service organisations often follow a common path of goal evolution, including replacement of paper-based processes to productivity boosts and, lastly, a focus on revenue growth. It is evident as businesses move from the initial stages of paper replacement towards the ultimate objective of increasing profits that deploying technology infrastructure only to field operations is not the whole solution. As companies continue to analyse their workflows, the more they will be able to capture and realise the value of moving down the mobility maturity path.

Honeywell Limited
www.honeywell.com.au

MEASURING SUCCESS :

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT METRICS

Jeffrey Wartgow
Vice President
TOA Technologies

Reduced driving distance? Increased customer satisfaction scores? First-time resolution? When it comes to field operations, there are plenty of metrics that you could track. And if you aren't already measuring the success of your field operations, you need to start - now!

But measuring success isn't as simple as creating a spreadsheet, collecting data and graphing results. It's also not as easy as adopting what are considered to be some of the standard metrics of field service, such as completing more appointments in a shorter workday and increasing customer service.

Field service metrics should be meaningful - ie, in context to your organisation's short- and long-term objectives.

So how do you put field service metrics into the context of your business to make them more meaningful? Start with two simple steps.

1. Map the relationship between field service operations and the strategic goals of your business.

Often, field operations leaders fall into this trap: "I've implemented this field service technology solution or strategy, so I have to assign some sort of measurement specifically to field services to check that it's working."

The challenge and the opportunity of measuring field services is that it affects multiple areas of the business. It's not that common productivity metrics (eg, increase in jobs completed per day) are wrong, but using that field service metric alone is not effectively demonstrating the impact of your success on the business.

It's like saying your car is a good car because it can accelerate quickly. But maybe you only drive on residential roads, so does that metric actually mean anything to the bigger picture?

Here's an example of a company with a field service team that got this step right. A large cable provider wanted to build loyalty by creating a culture of customer service in all departments. It realised that a key component of good service was ensuring technicians showed up on time for every installation and service call, and that they were friendly and knowledgeable. So, the operator enacted a plan to empower its field technicians to be better prepared for each appointment, using new training and a mobile application.

2. Assign metrics that assess the impact of field services on the strategic business goal(s).

Now it's time to get to the good stuff: building the field service metrics that will help you measure the true impact of your field service operation on the business.

For the cable operator in our example, because on-time service was key, it focused on measuring what percentage of the time field technicians arrived within the window of time that was promised to the customer. The new strategy improved on-time arrival to appointments by 18% within six months. Subsequently, as it evaluated the impact on the strategic customer loyalty initiative, the cable operator saw a direct correlation between this improvement and an increase in its Net Promoter Score.

So now that you know how to assess your field operations in a way that both measures the success of your field operation AND the impact on a business outcome, here are some final tips to help you put this into practice:

Consider the maturity of your field service processes and technology when creating metrics, especially when they are based on a timeline.

Keep in mind the business model - a service organisation will focus on different metrics than one that is infrastructure focused.

Finally, you're ready to go! Armed with this strategy of mapping your field operations to business objectives, then determining the field service metrics that contribute to those objectives, you will be able to meaningfully measure the success of your operation.

In the long term, it will position your field service workforce as a strategic part of the organisation that drives real business value - not just another cost centre that must be run more efficiently.

TALK FROM THE TOP ▼

With strong links to customer satisfaction and retention, achieving first-time fix is now the top business priority for field service organisations, according to a 2014 Insight Report (Transforming Service Delivery).

Despite this increased importance in the boardroom, failure to fix a problem first time continues to be the most common customer complaint.

Research conducted by the Aberdeen Group in 2013 revealed that 57% of incoming service requests require a visit by a technician with a startling 26% of those visits failing to resolve the issue first time.

This inability to achieve first-time fix is proving detrimental to a service business's bottom line. Companies that don't achieve a 50% first-time fix rate and then require return visits report revenue declines of nearly 3%.

Fortunately, advancements in workforce management technologies are driving improvements in a business's ability to complete a job, first time, every time.

Intelligent scheduling is one such technology. It incorporates technician knowledge, parts availability and capacity into a business's scheduling process to ensure that the technician arriving on-site is the person who can resolve the customer's issue the first time around.

Self-learner tools also help with intelligent scheduling. The tools support the assignment of work orders to field technicians by remembering who has the right skills and their usual work areas. This advanced capability ultimately helps field service managers ensure they get the right person with the right skills and assets to the job within a set time.

First-time case resolution can be further enhanced by leveraging performance management analytics (PMA) technology. PMA provides managers with the ability to analyse the productivity of their entire field operations by collecting data about the type of jobs that overrun, the number of commitments met and the performance of workers. Using this data, managers are able to identify what type of jobs require follow-up visits as well as key trends in individual worker follow-up rates.

For any business operating a field-based workforce, having intelligent scheduling and PMA capabilities in place will significantly help to transform the way work is performed. With this technology onboard, multiple return visits will soon be a thing of the past.

As the Business Area Director, Australia and New Zealand, for Trimble Navigation's Field Service Management (FSM) and Transport and Logistics (T&L) divisions, Tom Scahill is responsible for steering the strategic direction and development of these two businesses nationally.

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