



The Future of Commercial Field Service Companies

Velosio



Increasingly, the field services industry is becoming a technology industry – and the changes are happening quickly.

Technology can power positive progress for companies in the sector, fueling efficiencies that allow them to overcome many of the challenges they face today and helping to bring the future into sharp focus.

As field service companies map out future goals to grow their companies, what role can technology play in helping achieve them? In other words, what is the future of the field service company?

Here, we look at five ways technology is already beginning to accelerate growth and drive future efficiencies for field service operations.

Attracting Tomorrow's Workforce

One of the single biggest challenges facing field service organizations today is the shortage of skilled labor. While it's easy to point to the pandemic as the cause, the shortage began much earlier. Fewer young adults are joining the trades. High school graduates have been so effectively encouraged to get a bachelor's degree that high-paying skilled trade jobs — requiring shorter and less expensive training — go unfilled.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the nation's skilled workforce skews older. One analysis found that 40% of the skilled trades workforce in the U.S. are over 45, with nearly half of those over the age of 55. Only 9% of workers are aged 19-24.

That makes Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, the workforce of the future. And they're digital natives. They've never known a world without the internet. Attracting and keeping Gen Z will require service companies to prioritize technology at every level of the operation. Paper work tickets aren't going to fly with this crowd.

While an organization may have invested in ERP, CRM, and job costing applications that are primarily used by office personnel, to attract and keep a Gen Z workforce in the field, companies will need to equip them with technology tools as well. (We'll look at some of those in a bit.)



For their part, field service companies are getting creative in their efforts to increase the skilled talent pool. Some are launching their own “universities” where they augment union training with software skills like scheduling, estimating and productivity tools like Excel. In addition, many are investing in virtual reality (VR) training courses that provide immersive learning opportunities in ways that younger workers in particular, can relate to.

Going forward, the industry may best mitigate the labor shortage by incorporating technology into every aspect of the business as a way to attract and keep talent and optimize the productivity of every worker.

Connecting With Customers

In the past, field service providers could service based solely on their technical expertise. Today, providers must also focus on creating great customer experiences. In short, the emphasis is shifting from “field” to “service.”



To remain competitive in an impatient world, field service organizations will need to up their service games.

They will need to pursue capabilities and efficiencies that allow them to not only respond to requests more quickly, but even anticipate those requests and handle each customer interaction with greater understanding and context.

A holistic view of customers and their accounts is essential for creating fast, frictionless, and positive customer experiences. However, it requires access to a myriad of customer data to gain this view, including detailed contact information, relationships and associations, equipment lists, warranty details, open service tickets, service-level agreements, and more. Customer-focused technologies, such as CRM applications, allow field service organizations to gain and maintain a 360-degree view of every client and they are rapidly becoming essential tools in the industry.



3. Optimize Employee Efficiency

Field service providers can scale their operations in one of two ways. They can grow their workforce larger, so they can handle more new projects and service more customers. Or they can make operations more efficient, allowing them to perform more work with the same number of personnel.

Since we've acknowledged that the labor shortage will likely be with us for a while, it makes sense to incorporate greater efficiencies. And technology as the lever that activates those efficiencies.


Some of this technology is already in broad use, such as equipping technicians with mobile devices running field service management software applications. The applications can notify a technician of a new service call, direct them there with maps and directions, walk them through the steps involved in a typical service call, collect labor and parts data, and pass the information to the business's billing department upon completion.

Using technology, companies will find they can keep more senior technicians in the office, supporting a fleet of junior-level technicians through real-time expert collaboration that leverages mixed reality, machine learning, and IoT tools.

There's also a growing movement among service organizations to adopt a service subscription model. Customers pay a monthly or annual rate that includes specific maintenance services. The growing subscription economy is a boon to many service companies who are able to schedule maintenance during slower seasons, freeing technicians' time for urgent repairs during peak periods. Software tools that support service-level agreements, optimized scheduling, recurring billing, and predictive travel and work duration will help maximize technician utilization and make the move to subscription service seamless.

More Profitable Field Service Operations

Ensuring the profitability of field service operations is critical to long-term success. As service providers learn to operate with a leaner workforce, accounting for and optimizing every billable hour will become even more critical in the future.



Geofencing is one technology tool that shows promise. Geofencing can lead to more accurate work order and job costing. It allows users to draw zones around a service location or job site.

You then configure the system to “start the clock” when a field technician enters the zone and stop the clock on the way out. The data can then be used for accurate costing and billing purposes. It also has the potential to simplify time tracking for payroll purposes. Geofencing isn’t brand new, but as the technology is incorporated into more business applications and becomes increasingly accurate and easy to use, its value to contractors will continue to grow.

Back in the office, field service technology tools will provide the dispatch team and management with real-time insights into field operations, from open work orders to system statuses and technician skillsets that all contribute to exceptional customer service and more profitable projects.

5. Uniting the Operation

From opportunity tracking, bid management, project and work order management, equipment optimization, scheduling, cost management, and billing — and then through ongoing support, field service and more, commercial service companies are diverse operations with complex workflows.

Perhaps the single highest use of technology for service providers is its ability to unite the diverse aspects of the business and deliver near real-time visibility into the operation.

Technology tools designed for the task grow more powerful and sophisticated every day. For example, they may incorporate artificial intelligence and machine learning to automate scheduling, make preventative service recommendations, perform bid trend analysis, monitor opportunities, better connect sales teams to customers, accurately forecast workloads, and much more.

In years past, gaining a full picture of such a diverse operation would have been impossible. But today, it's a growing reality. As technology continues to become more powerful, more connected, and more accessible, contractors gain a level of insight. It's that insight that will allow them to not only face future challenges but anticipate them — and turn them into opportunities.



Embrace the Future

As the construction services industry continues to evolve into a technology industry, many companies are turning to Microsoft Dynamics to help them make the transition.

As a cloudbased solution, the system is easily accessed from company offices as well as by technicians on the road and support staff working from home offices — removing barriers to productivity and efficiency.

With all data and processes in one place, companies gain efficiencies in field technician scheduling, dispatching, asset management, and work order processing. Field technicians find Dynamics easy to use on any device, and service managers can run reports to analyze past performance on customer contracts and forecast future demand for technicians during peak and off-peak activity periods.

Dynamics also enables service managers to assign resources and coordinate system deliveries to synchronize technician availability with equipment arrivals. Managers can prioritize

which customer tasks warrant the highest priority while managing technician schedules and making adjustments as emergencies arise. And technicians can track schedules remotely and easily document break-fix and maintenance tasks.

From a reporting standpoint, Dynamics offers dashboards that provide visibility into all operations so the company can take corrective actions before issues impact customers. This includes forecasting resource and equipment availability as business models change the mix of new installations versus break-fix and maintenance subscriptions.

Another key benefit is the integration between Dynamics and other Microsoft solutions. Whether it's ERP, the Office suite, Outlook email, Teams, or Power BI, data flows automatically across all applications. End-users can easily access customer engagement data and files from the other Microsoft applications. This fosters internal collaboration that enables the company to respond quickly to service inquiries and greatly enhance customer experiences. For more information about how Velosio's solution for field service companies, based on Microsoft Dynamics, helps companies like yours own your future, schedule a free demo today.

<https://www.peopleready.com/skilled-trades-labor-scarcity-workforce-aging-as-fewer-recruits-enter-trades/>



Contact Us

 888-725-2555

 insider@velosio.com