

EMPOWERING THE MOBILE WORKER WITH REAL-TIME INSIGHT AND DATA INTEGRATION

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Report Highlights

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Leaders are 49% more likely than peers to integrate data in real-time between the back-office and the field team via a mobile device.

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Leaders are 61% more likely than peers to have the ability to monitor the use of mobile apps by the field team.

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Leaders achieve 4.7 times higher first-time fix rate as a result of their mobile deployment, as compared to Followers.

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Followers have 22% more paper-based field service tasks / processes than Leaders.

This document highlights the role that mobility plays in delivering service and creating a link between the field and the back-office.

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Field service has become much more advanced and complicated since those early days of a paper schedule and a technician working in a silo of influence.

Is Field Data Sitting in the Cab of the Truck?

The field service journey for many organizations begins and ends with a schedule, a technician, and a truck. This ecosystem is integral to the delivery of service, as without these three pieces of the puzzle, resolution cannot be reached and a customer will be unhappy that a service level agreement (SLA) was missed. However, field service has become much more advanced and complicated since those early days of a paper schedule and a technician working in a silo of influence.

As seen in recent Aberdeen research, *Service Mobility: The Right Technology for the Tech* (August 2014), 82% of sampled organizations identified mobility as a strategic initiative for the service operation in the next 12 months. Mobility is not just an investment made by the IT department to equip workers with a tablet or smart phone. Mobility, as viewed by top performers, is a tool to empower the field with the real-time intelligence to make decisions and resolve customer issues. Customers demand service, **and** resolution, the first time a technician is on site.

The Power of Mobile is the Connection to Insight

Mobile technology connects people, equipment, and customers, in real-time. Paper-based field service operations depended on technicians inputting the correct, and legible, information onto a form while also returning that form to the back office in a timely fashion to complete service. Furthermore, organizations could not actually invoice customers until service was completed and paperwork processed. This process was rife with errors, delays, and unhappy customers, who sometimes were incorrectly billed. The move to mobile tools and apps is not solely a benefit for service organization productivity (see sidebar) it also has a real benefit for the customer. Top performing organizations have used mobile devices and apps to link the insight captured in the

The Mobile Field Service Leaders vs. Followers Defined

In June and July 2014, Aberdeen surveyed 213 end-user service and manufacturing organizations to understand the key trends in the service market. The performance metrics used to define the Leaders (top 50%) and Followers (remaining 50%) among these organizations are:

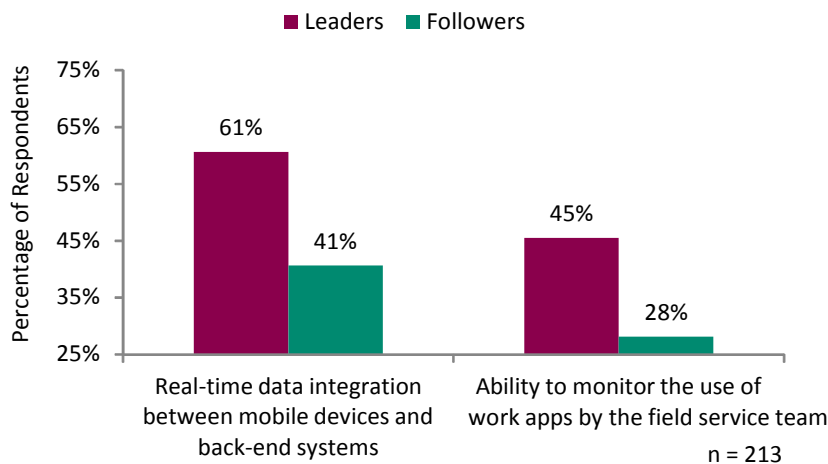
- 83% First-time fix rate, vs. 37% among Followers
- 80% SLA compliance rate, vs. 38% among Followers
- 6.2% average year-over-year improvement in workforce productivity (average calls completed daily), vs. 3.5% improvement among Followers

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field during a service call with the back office team (Figure 1). Mobile tools have equipped field service technicians with the real-time answers to the problem, helping them resolve issues on a first visit. Beyond the insights afforded technicians via mobility, they also now have the capability to avoid costly trips back to the office. No longer do technicians need to go into a physical office to clock in for work or take a day out of the field to attend a training session. This technology has also provided the back-office with insight into the work order; speeding up the administrative side of service. The back office is tied in to a real-time view of the service work order and the customer interaction.

➔ [Related Research](#)
 "Service Mobility: The Right Technology for the Tech"

Figure 1: Mobility Links the Field with the Back-Office



Source: Aberdeen Group, September 2014

A mobile device or application can only be useful if the technology is adopted by the workforce. If you leave your coat in the closet on a cold wintry day, did you really benefit from its purchase? In this same way, service organizations must ensure their field workers leverage the mobile tools and apps that they have invested in. Top performers are 61% more likely than peers to monitor the use of work apps by the field service team (45% vs. 28%, respectively). This may seem a bit like Big Brother

"Mobility in the field allows real time information, customer communication, invoice, and parts tracking, and time entry." - Manager, Mid-Size North American Construction & Engineering Company

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→ [Read the full report, “Voice of the Customer: Big Data as a Strategic Advantage”](#)

watching over you, but the goal of mobile tools should be to help technicians resolve more issues in the field. This capability does provide management and service leaders with the insight into the productivity of the field team. The ability to monitor performance is integral to ensuring that management can adjust resources in real-time and identify opportunities for training to improve productivity. Adoption of this technology is imperative if the service organization is going to continue to exceed the expectations of customers, (i.e., improved resolution rates).

The Mobile Impact on the Voice of the Customer

The customer is always right. This may be an outdated and overused maxim, but customers are still the lifeblood of many businesses. As seen in Aberdeen's [Voice of the Customer: Big Data as a Strategic Advantage](#) report (April 2014), the empowered customer has more clout than ever before. Their influence on their own share of wallet, and almost as importantly, their physical and social networks, has the ability to cripple an organization's financial viability. Not only do customers wield a large influence, the competition also has the ability to eat away at profits if the service organization doesn't excel in delivering resolution. OEMs and service organizations have begun to see the threat of third party service providers competing for business. Basic service levels are no longer enough, organizations must use technology to excel.

For these reasons, service organizations must ensure they meet and exceed the expectations of the customer - namely resolve issues in a timely manner. Top performers understand this customer promise and have re-trained their focus from solely looking at internal operational metrics to also ensuring they improve customer-facing metrics through the use of mobile tools (Figure #2).

Fast Facts:

Metrics highlighting performance of Leaders vs. Followers:

Leaders

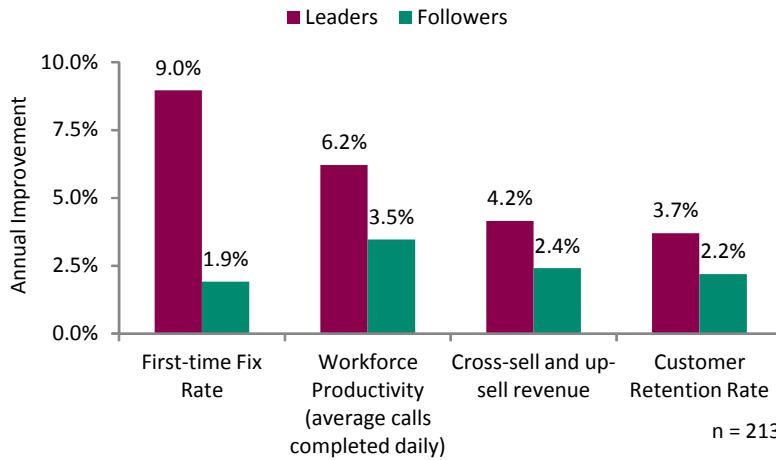
- Customer retention rate - 68%
- Wrench time (Time spent on work (no travel) / total time) - 51%

Followers

- Customer retention rate - 52%
- Wrench time (Time spent on work (no travel) / total time) - 42%

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Figure 2: Achieve Customer Value, Not Just Efficiency



Source: Aberdeen Group, September 2014

"Mobility helped us achieve increased uptime for customers via improved response / restore time or remote phone support, troubleshooting and resolution. We have also been able to improve efficiency through knowledgebase development and sharing." - Manager, Mid-Size North American Industrial Equipment Manufacturer

➔ **Operational efficiency and productivity.** Workforce productivity and wrench time have been key measurements of field service success for a long while. The ability to use mobile tools to remove the administrative tasks of completing a work order is one of the key reasons many organizations embark on the mobility journey. Also, mobility enables a more collaborative team in the field. Technicians can connect with other technicians to solve problems collaboratively and reach resolution without having to leave a job site to get the answer. Paper-based processes have been the impediment of timely, efficient, and accurate processing of work orders. And once again, in an ever more competitive environment, service organizations cannot afford to be slowed by paper.

➔ **Link to profitability.** Mobility is not only a way to avoid the costs associated with running a paper field operation; it also has the opportunity to drive revenues from cross- and up-sell activities. The data captured in the field has the opportunity to open up a wealth of insight into

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equipment, parts, and the customer. The technician is often viewed as the face of the organization, as on a daily basis they're in front of customers installing, maintaining, and servicing equipment. This interaction point is critical and cannot be wasted. Top performing organizations maximize this interaction to not only ensure technicians resolve issues, but that they also have their eyes and ears open to the needs of the customer. For example, while on site, a technician can identify that the reason a piece of equipment keeps failing (or is underperforming) is because it is not being used correctly. This is a chance to inform sales of an opportunity to sell / offer additional training services.

→ [Related Research](#)
"Fixing First-Time Fix: Repairing Field Service Efficiency to Enhance Customer Returns"

→ **Drive the service experience in the age of the customer.** First-time fix rates have a direct correlation to customer satisfaction and retention. Fixing an issue the first time a technician is on site ensures that customers can once again become productive in their own businesses. As seen in Aberdeen's [Fixing First-Time Fix: Repairing Field Service Efficiency to Enhance Customer Returns](#) report (March 2013), organizations that were able to achieve an 80%+ first-time fix rate saw a much greater satisfaction and retention score as compared to those who did not achieve this level of performance. Mobile technology enables technicians with the right information at the time of need to resolve issues the first time. Without mobile access to real-time information or remote experts, technicians would be burdened with sifting through outdated paper manuals or work instructions, only lengthening the process to find the right answer, if they find the answer at all.

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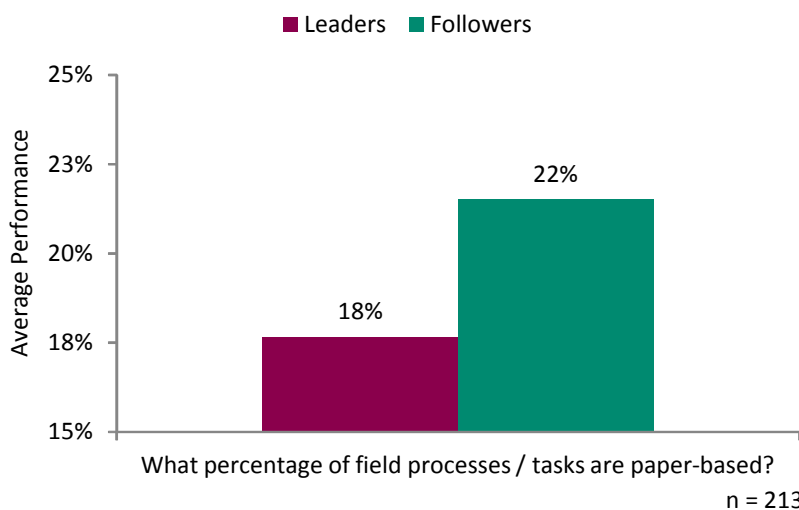
The Link between the Customer and the Service Organization Hinges on Mobile Access to Insight

As organizations look for mobile tools and apps to enable more intelligence, service organizations must continue to view mobility as more than cool devices. The integration of data captured in the field via mobile devices is invaluable, not only for service excellence, but for the entire organization. It is imperative that organizations make service data available to other teams within the organization to maximize the value of the insight AND to deliver the products and services customers want. Top performing organizations have been able to do both, and a few best practices they exhibit are outlined below:

- ➔ **Provide technicians with the right information in the field.** Paper is still prevalent within many field service operations. Approximately, twenty percent of all field tasks are still paper-based within sampled organizations (Figure 3).

"Mobility has helped us improve the quality of the customer experience by offering real time updates as to status and disposition, complete and granular information on the customer asset base, and metrics to manage SLAs." - General Manager, Large HVAC Company

Figure 3: Move Away from Paper



Source: Aberdeen Group, September 2014

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Technicians need accurate and up-to-date information in order to excel at their jobs while in the field. Top performers understand the link between access to real-time information and delivering exceptional field service and thus they have heavily invested in mobile tools. With, on average, 20% of field tasks still being paper-based, there is still room to improve. Mobility has the opportunity to help organizations continue to reap the rewards of timely information to the field team, which in turn has a huge impact on the customer.

- **Information held in a silo is a waste of time, money, and insights.** The entire organization can use the service data being captured by the field team. Customer and equipment data has the ability to spark insights into new products, services, and campaigns, which benefits the organization in revenue opportunities. This interaction also helps customers get access to products and services that will help improve their productivity and business goals. Service is a partnership between the customer and the organization, but without the real-time use of data, the opportunity to evolve quickly will be lost.
- **Resolve the customer issue, getting there on time is only a piece of the puzzle.** Too often service organizations think customers only care about you meeting the stated service windows outlined in SLAs. These are important, but what good is having a service technician arrive within a 4-hour window if they cannot actually resolve the issue, ultimately leading to a second visit? Mobility provides technicians with the intelligence and connection to remote expertise that can help them resolve issues, even ones they have never seen before, the first time.

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit www.aberdeen.com.

Related Research

[Service Mobility: The Right Technology for the Tech;](#) August 2014

[Service Lifecycle Excellence: Resolution at the Heart of Service;](#) July 2014

[Voice of the Customer: Big Data as a Strategic Advantage;](#) April 2014

[State of Service Management: Roadmap to a Profitable 2014;](#) March 2014

[Integrated Service Management: Connecting the Contact Center with Field Service for Improved Resolution;](#) February 2014

[Field Service 2014: Access to the Right Information Empowers a Results-Driven Workforce;](#) January 2014

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