

SERVICE MOBILITY: THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY FOR THE TECH

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Report Highlights

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Eighty-two percent (82%) of sampled firms state that mobility is a strategic initiative for the service organization in 2014.

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The top strategic action for sampled firms is to improve data integration between the field and back office systems.

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Leaders are 49% more likely than peers to integrate data from mobile devices with back-end systems (i.e., ERP, CRM).

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Leaders are 71% more likely than Followers to have a standardized mobile strategy across the organization (48% vs. 28%, respectively).

This document highlights the key trends in field service driving further interest in and adoption of mobility. This report will also take a look at what capabilities are necessary to successfully deploy mobile tools.

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The importance of the technician to the success of the organization has led to the search for ways to equip them with the right tools.

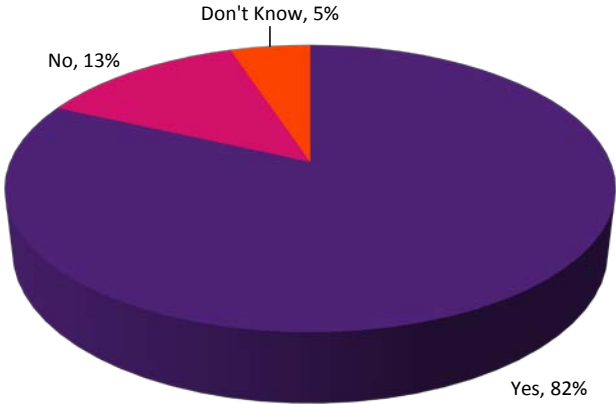
The desire to differentiate from the competition has never been more important for the viability of a business. Historically, an organization would manufacture a product and they alone would be responsible for fixing it if there was a problem. But as the service side of the business becomes more lucrative, more companies have identified service as a way to drive recurring revenue streams. Aberdeen's March 2014 [State of Service Management: Roadmap to a Profitable 2014](#) report showed the rapid increase in competition for service revenue from year to year. As a result of these new competitive factors, service organizations need to continuously evolve and enhance their ability to deliver the level of service that customers expect and are willing to pay for.

Mobile Still Has a Strategic Place in Service

Many firms have identified the field service team as a channel to not only deliver service but also interact with the customer. The importance of the technician to the success of the organization has led to the search for ways to equip them with the right tools. These tools must help these valued resources excel at their jobs while also providing invaluable insight to the rest of the organization.

➔ [Related Research](#)
"State of Service Management: Roadmap to a Profitable 2014"

Figure I: Mobility a Strategic Initiative in 2014



Percentage of Respondents, n = 213
Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2014

Research Fact

Average age of field service technician - 32 years old

Percentage of field workers over 60 years of age - 8%

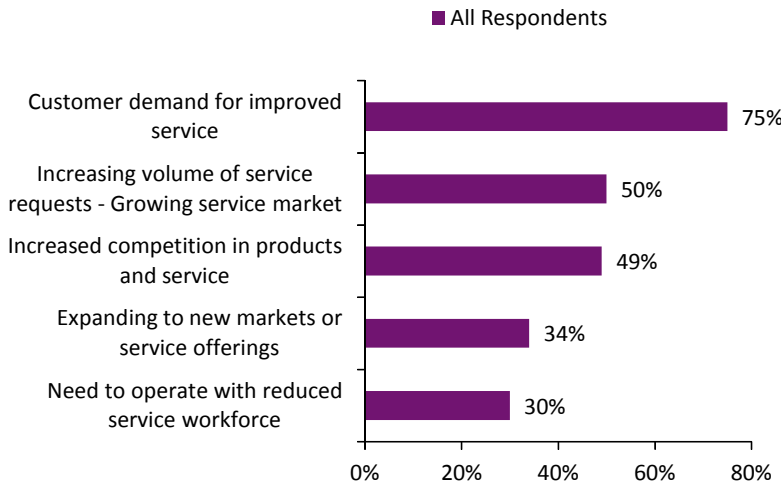
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The proliferation of mobile devices in the consumer and business world has made the concept of mobility ubiquitous for many. As seen in Aberdeen's *Field Service 2014: Access to the Right Information Empowers a Results-Driven Workforce* report, a top strategy of leading performers is the continued investment in mobile tools to provide technicians with better access to information. But this should not discount the evolving nature of the technology and its strategic benefits that have yet to be maximized. Particularly for the service organization, mobility still plays a role in strategic vision in 2014 (Figure 1).

Mobility Must Keep Service Ahead of Customer Expectations

Will customers ever ask for service to devolve or become slower? Customers will always want more for their dollars, sometimes even if they are not actually paying for the service. In regard to field service, the top pressure facing service organizations that is leading them to focus on mobility is the customer demand for faster service (Figure 2).

Figure 2: A Need for the Speed of Mobility



Percentage of Respondents, n = 213

Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2014

➔ [Read the full report, “Field Service 2014: Access to the Right Information Empowers a Results-Driven Workforce”](#)

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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The true value in mobile tools is the ability to provide insight and intelligence to workers, in real- or near-real time, while in the field.

Mobile tools not only enable field workers to turn more wrenches, they also give them the real-time intelligence to know how to better serve the customer. For example, a quick look at service history on a mobile phone can inform a technician in route that the customer has called the helpdesk multiple times complaining of a product / equipment failure. This is invaluable information that can help the technician approach the customer with a bit more care; insight that wouldn't be available in route if the technician was tethered to a static paper schedule. The concerns around customer expectations are exacerbated by the fact that service requests are increasing and the competition has an eye to take market share. These three factors make mobility a must for field service organizations that want to continue to be in business in the coming years.

Mobility also allows organizations to do more with less. This mantra is thrown around quite a bit in business, but service organizations often find that they are pulled into new markets as a result of a product sale. Mobile technology equips a dispersed team with up to date information and the ability to communicate and collaborate across distances. Furthermore, in Aberdeen's February 2014 [field service research](#), two of the top pressures facing organizations was an aging workforce and worker turnover. It is no easy task to replace a field service technician. In order to ensure that the wealth of knowledge from these employees is captured and passed on to the next crop of workers, organizations must leverage mobility in the field.

Mobility is More than a Device

Much of the buzz around mobility and deploying new technology is around flashy new devices that have ever more processing speed. But inherent to this buzz is the fact that any technology will eventually become obsolete. The true value in mobile tools is the ability for this technology to provide insight and

→ [Related Research](#)
 "Field Service 2014: Access to the Right Information Empowers a Results-Driven Workforce"

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intelligence to workers, in real- or near-real time, while in the field.

Table I: Key Strategies to Link the Device and Technician to Resolution

Top Strategic Actions	Percentage of Respondents, n = 213
Improve data integration between the field and back-office systems	62%
Provide service technicians with work-related information in real-time	44%
Leverage a mobile strategy across the entire organization	42%
Enable real-time tracking of technicians, parts, and products	38%
Establish systems and metrics to track service performance in real-time	35%

Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2014

Furthermore, mobile tools can enable better visibility into status, location, and performance of field assets (i.e., people, parts, equipment, products). As noted earlier, customers want service to be delivered faster, and this trend will not subside. In order to continue to deliver the level of service that customers demand, the service organization must move beyond antiquated processes, such as managing work orders via paper. Mobile technology allows field service to become more standardized while making data usable across the organization. No longer is a paper work order stuck to a clipboard or a particular customer insight locked away in a specific technician's head.

From Paper to Productivity

The goal of improved service for the customer starts with some key leading indicators: worker utilization and worker happiness. Leaders outperform Followers in many key metrics, not the least of which is the proof that exceptional field service aided through

"Mobility enables us to deliver information in a timely manner, better dispatch the field team, achieve better profit per visit, and increase the safety of workers." - Manager Customer Support, Mid-Size Oil & Gas Company

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These additional metrics were not used to define Leaders and Followers but further highlight outperformance in year-over-year KPI:

Leaders

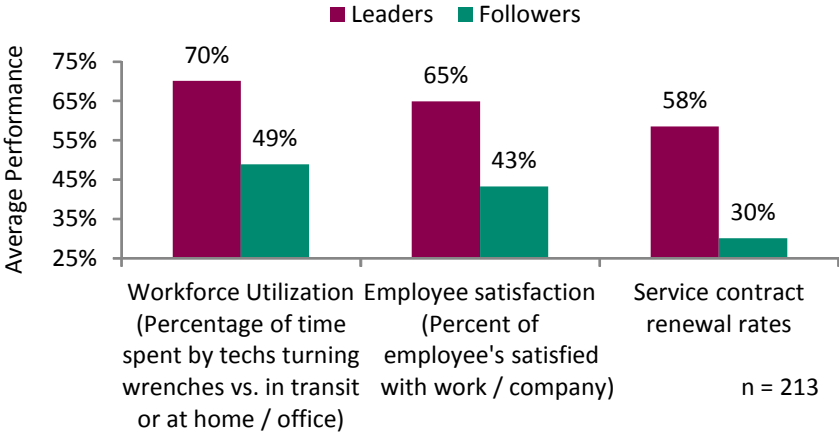
- Customer Satisfaction rate - 9.3% improvement
- First-time Fix rate - 9.0% improvement
- Mean-time-to-repair - 3.5% improvement
- Cross-sell and Up-sell Revenue - 4.2% improvement

Followers

- Customer Satisfaction rate - 4.8% improvement
- First-time Fix rate - 1.9% improvement
- Mean-time-to-repair - 2.6% improvement
- Cross-sell and Up-sell Revenue - 2.4% improvement

mobile devices works (see renewal of service contracts with customers). Happy and productive employees will go that extra mile to not only do their jobs but, even more importantly, work hard to positively overwhelm the customer (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Top Performance Buoyed by Mobility



Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2014

Fast service isn't always great service, but through the use of mobile tools which can remove tedious administrative tasks, technicians can focus on the customer. Furthermore, mobility provides technicians with detailed customer, product, and equipment information, which make technicians experts in the field who are better equipped to solve problems the first time.

Successfully Deploy the Value of Mobility

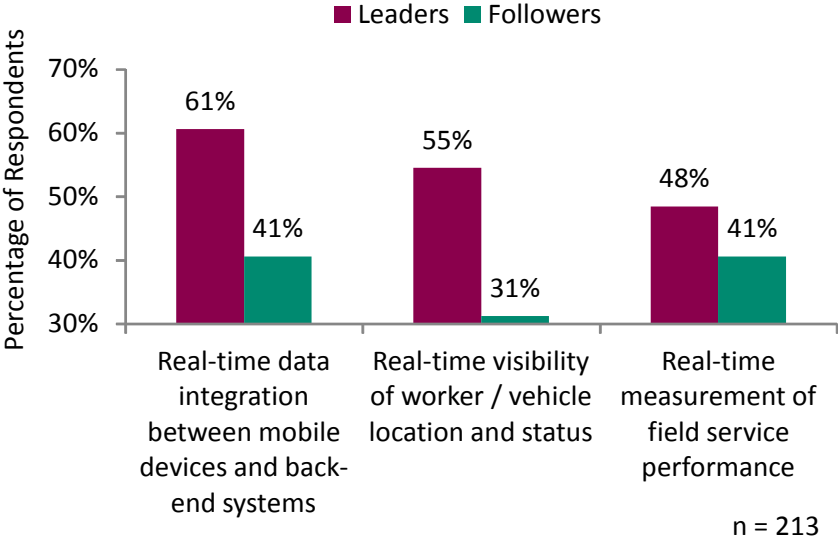
Heightened performance in KPI is not a by-product of plugging in mobile technology alone. Top performing organizations implement strategic internal capabilities to ensure that a mobile strategy is maximized by the field to resolve customer issues efficiently.

➔ **Turn Real-time Data into Real Action** - Moving from paper to a mobile device unveils a wealth of data for the

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service organization. But this real-time insight into the field can get lost if it is not tied to other systems within the organization's technology infrastructure. Leaders are 49% more likely than peers to integrate data from mobile devices with back-end systems (i.e., ERP, CRM) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Mobility Opens the Eyes to Insight



Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2014

This integration provides teams outside of service with insight into field performance, customer data, and the status of service delivery (i.e., vehicle location, work order status). Without this integration, functions like sales, marketing, or engineering will not be able to benefit from field insights.

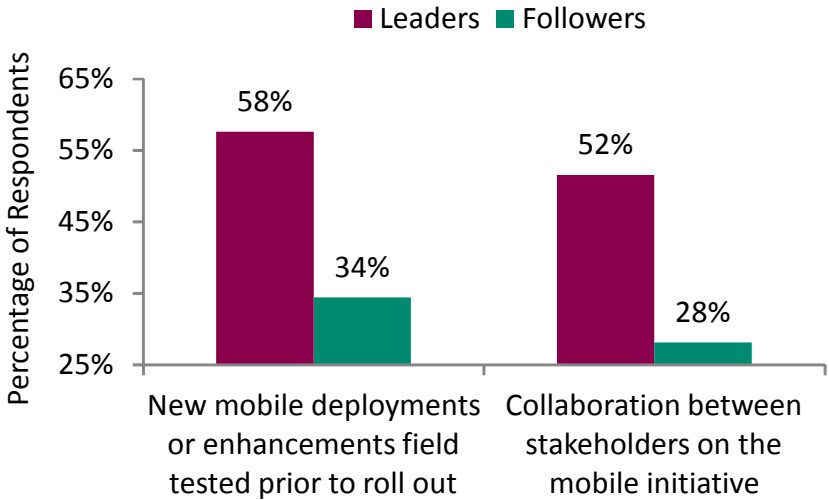
➔ **Pilot the Way to Mobile Success** - Technology initiatives can be a tricky endeavor. Much like our personal and consumer devices, mobile tools for field service often have more capabilities than what is used to support daily tasks. For this reason, Leaders work with the front-line

"Increased mobility leads to increased productivity - tracking, information handling, and completed jobs." - Director Field Service, Manufacturing Company



team and other stakeholders to pilot mobile technology prior to deployment (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Prepare in Advance to Maximize Mobile Deployment



n = 213

Source: Aberdeen Group, July 2014

When technicians don't see direct returns in regard to efficiency and productivity gains, they can get discouraged, which will negatively impact overall ROI of the solution. No one enjoys the frustration of learning something new, especially when accustomed to a certain process over a long career. In order to avoid this lack of adoption, organizations must get the entire team on board for the value and the need to leverage mobile tools. Many technicians want to do what is right for the customer, thus showing the link between a mobile strategy and improved service efficiency will help seal this case.

➔ **Organization-Wide Mobile Strategy** - Mobile technology is not just about a device. Mobile tools must be

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accompanied by a clear strategy to maximize the value across multiple groups within the organization. Leaders are 71% more likely than Followers to have a standardized mobile strategy across the organization (48% vs. 28%, respectively). As seen in Aberdeen's [State of Service research](#), top performing organizations ensure that the entire organization understands the value of service and works together to improve products and the customer experience.

→ [Read the full report, “State of Service Management: Roadmap to a Profitable 2014”](#)

Excel at Making Mobility Key to Service Excellence

In order for mobility to avoid the buzzword wasteland, organizations need to see a direct impact on what matters to the top and bottom line - profitability. The key link to profitability is delivering the level of service that customers are willing to pay for. This valuable service is not the historical view of service, which was reactive, now service must go above and beyond. To reach this level of success, service firms should follow a few best practices implemented by the Leaders:

- **CSOs drive service initiatives in mobile strategy.** The chief service officer within an organization must ensure that a mobile strategy isn't just a product spend from IT. There must be a clear strategy that understands the ramifications and opportunity of real-time insight into technicians, customers, products, vehicles and equipment. A senior leader also will understand that all things, even mobility, must come back to the customer and, in turn, profitability.
- **Build buy-in from the front line.** A strategy is only as good as the workers that embrace it. Many initiatives have failed as a result of not gaining buy-in from the stakeholders, who ultimately have to use the tools being

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implemented. Therefore, it is integral that service organizations work with front-line employees in regard to the identification, selection, and deployment of any mobile technology. If the technician is involved in building the mobile strategy, they are more likely to work to maximize the value of the technology for the organization.

- **Make data a source of insight for learning, training, and improvement.** Data stored in a knowledgebase at headquarters is a waste of time, money, and effort. Top performing firms empower the organization to enhance products and service through the data captured in the field. Customers might let you get away with failure once, but they expect the service organization to continuously improve. In order to improve, the entire team needs to be tied into service excellence.

Leaders have been able to leverage mobility to predict and prevent failures, but when failures do happen, they ensure that technicians have the information to resolve the issues the first time.

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

Related Research

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

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

[*Employee Engagement in Field Service: Create a Culture of Learning*](#); February 2014

[*Third-Party Field Service: Work Together to Deliver High Level of Quality*](#); February 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

[*Field Service Impact on Europe: The Revenue Approach to Service Excellence*](#); December 2013

[*Secrets to Optimize Field Service for Better Customer Experiences*](#); September 2013

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