



Steps to Increase
Your Technicians'
Efficiency



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In your service business, technicians are the lifeblood of everything you do. You can run a plumbing operation or fix complex nuclear reactors, and that statement remains true. Your customers are ultimately judging you on their experiences because your product (to them) is the quality of service. Your back-office staff and management is involved in that, yes -- they talk to customers, too -- but your technicians are on the front lines of providing great service every workday.

As such, you need your technicians to be effective, efficient, and productive. If they're not, your business won't go very far. If they are, the sky is essentially the limit.

We put together three ways to increase the efficiency of your technicians, outlined below. You can also grab a quick visual reminder of these approaches at the bottom of this post.

1 Maximize the hiring process



Too often, hiring processes are rushed affairs. You might be down a technician because one unexpectedly quit, so you need to get a new one in quickly to manage your workflow better. We understand this concern, but rushing to hire the front lines of your customer experience isn't always the best move.

We aren't saying that "analysis paralysis" is the best idea either, but you need to try for employee referrals, vet candidates thoroughly, and put them through a hiring process based on real-world questions. ("How would you fix this customer issue?") Putting in adequate time up front to hire the right technicians will pay off in the long run.



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2 Integrate your business areas



One of the biggest reasons technicians aren't productive is because of silo-by-silo field service management, or essentially business areas not talking to one another successfully. Consider this: let's say you send a technician to fix a machine at a client's site. But let's say scheduling, dispatch, and inventory are handled by three different people and they use three different systems. (This happens more often than you would think.) Now the technician knows his or her appointment (good), but when the technician gets there, he or she doesn't have the needed tools (bad). Now he or she needs to go to HQ or a warehouse to get the tools (time cost) and the customer is annoyed (bad for your business).

This all comes from problems with integration. The easiest way to solve for integrative issues in a FSO is to use field service management software, which pulls together different business aspects -- inventory, customer data, scheduling, technician overtime -- and allows for quicker decision-making as a result. It also leads to better collaboration both internally (with your technicians) and externally (with clients). When a technician has full context on what type of client situation he or she is headed into, the technician performs better. It's that simple.



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3 Invest in training



Field service work is hard and there is often an assortment of day-to-day tasks. Clients need things urgently. It can often feel like other concepts, such as training and bolstering the skills of your technicians, can fall by the wayside. Don't let that happen. Training is actually the No. 1 factor that separates "great companies to work for" from "average companies to work for," and that's been proven by research. Another concept proven by research?

For many workers -- and especially service workers -- "opportunities for growth" in a job is more important than salary. Technology is shifting every day, which means there's always something new that technicians can learn about new machines, new products, new ways of fixing things, etc. Yes, training them on those "new" elements might make them more valuable to a competitor -- and that is a concern. But train them and treat them well (integrate their processes so they aren't frustrated!) and you'll see efficient, retained technicians all across your FSO.

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