

Post Pandemic Preparedness Guide:

# FOUR LESSONS LEARNED FROM COVID-19 THAT ARE HERE TO STAY





Prior to February 2020, the world was changing at a rapid rate. Electric batteries were replacing combustion engines, Uber and Lyft were starting to replace car ownership, and service businesses moved at a steady pace to become more digital.

And then came COVID-19, and the rate of change increased in ways we never expected.

Within two months, mask wearing and social distancing became common practice. Our homes became offices, schools and fitness centers. And yet a year later, we have carried on and persevered.

The pandemic disrupted many industries and field service was no exception. It taught us the importance of the term “essential workers” and why it applies to field service workers across a variety of industries such as home repair and property & casualty (P&C) insurance. Despite the need for their services, we were reluctant to let anyone, even if they were essential, into our homes to repair an appliance or inspect the damage to our property.

We had to adapt and adjust to this new normal so that we could access services safely. Our field service and insurance providers responded by developing and implementing innovative solutions to the challenges presented by COVID-19. These solutions have proved to be so effective they will likely remain even after the pandemic becomes manageable.

**We predict that the following four changes that occurred during COVID-19 will remain and become the new normal.**

# 1

## Touchless Service Through Remote And Virtual Support

Before COVID-19, P&C insurance companies often relied on adjusters to travel to review and appraise damage, and organizations that repaired equipment dispatched service technicians for onsite maintenance. With the onset of COVID-19, many field service organizations (FSOs) rapidly moved away from in-person jobs and accelerated the implementation of technologies that deliver touchless or virtual services to customers.

Augmented Reality (AR) is one such technology. AR enables a collaborative visual experience between a person requesting help and expert assistance.

### FSOs have turned toward AR for four main reasons:

1. **Eliminate** travel time and expenses
2. Help **improve** productivity
3. **Offer** inexperienced technicians advice quickly
4. **Minimize** cycle time between an insurance claim inspection, adjudication, and payment

With consumer's increased reluctance to let people into their homes for fear of the virus, they became more willing to perform repairs themselves under the service technicians' or remote support experts' telephone guidance. For insurance related claims, policy holders also turned to technology, taking photos or videos of damage and submitting the data to support an insurance claim.

Often these approaches led to customer frustration and dissatisfaction because it was not easy to follow instructions solely based on a telephone conversation. Introducing AR was a game-changer for the P&C and equipment repair industry. Its ease of use and ability to visually receive help made consumers more confident in their ability to fix problems or document claims themselves.

When things return to normal, the P&C insurance industry will continue using virtual claims because it increases productivity, reduces costs, and saves time. According to consulting firm Capgemini:

**“Touchless claims can deliver a range of tangible business outcomes, including:**



**UP TO 4% improvement in the loss ratio**



**UP TO 40% decrease in loss adjustment expenses (LAEs)**



**10% reduction in claim intake costs**



**FASTER claims settlement enabled by straight-through processing**



**IMPROVED customer satisfaction through a differentiated claims experience”**

The equipment repair industry will also continue using AR because of its increased productivity and customer satisfaction.



*“The pandemic has been a catalyst for companies to accelerate planned digital transformations. Touchless service delivery, enabled by remote assistance software, allows a company’s experts to work virtually side-by-side with anyone needing help, anywhere in the world,”*

*- Gary York, CEO of Help Lightning.*



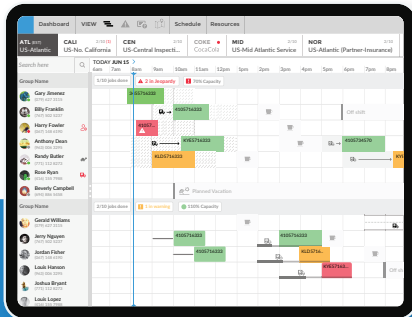
# Dynamic Scheduling To Improve Field Service Productivity



With the ongoing shortage of skilled technicians and the extra stress consumers are under due to the pandemic, job efficiency has become even more critical. Consumers are increasingly demanding more precise estimates of when they can expect the visit to occur.

The solution is to trust scheduling to a system that combines artificial intelligence, well-thought-out predetermined rules, and field service mobility. By implementing an optimized scheduling tool with robust features, organizations can improve the efficiency of daily jobs, travel times and customer satisfaction. With an integrated customer portal, customers have the ability to see an adjuster's or technician's arrival status in real-time and communicate directly with them if needed. For example, providing specific instructions such as "call me when you pass the library" or "enter through the garage."

**Optimized scheduling has a measurable impact on field service productivity and customer satisfaction, including:**



27%  
improvement  
in Net Promoter  
Scores



45%  
increase in  
jobs completed  
per day

By completing more jobs per day, field service organizations can do more with fewer technicians, a required capability during the pandemic height due to technicians calling out due to illness or quarantine. The need for dynamic scheduling will certainly continue post-pandemic to deal with the ongoing labor shortage trend facing the field service industry.

# 3

## Blended Workforce To Cope With Labor Shortages

**For many years the field service industry has supplemented its direct workforce with contracted (i.e., contingent or alternative) workers. There are several reasons why service businesses turned to contracted workers before COVID-19, including:**



It is a cost-effective approach for supporting customers in remote locations.



They can often service older, out-of-production products; training new engineers on these products is an inefficient use of time.



For P&C insurance, contracted claims adjusters help reduce direct costs because they only get paid when there is work for them to complete.



They help fill labor gaps resulting from the variability/seasonality of service demand.

According to the consulting firm Deloitte, contracted labor often improves organizational performance. For example, 49% of companies that utilized freelance workers report a positive impact on performance.

As a result of COVID-19, contracted labor increased significantly due to direct workers' unpredictable absences due to sickness or quarantines through exposure to the virus or from the unknown duration of travel bans. When workers were out, there was no clear indication of returning to work, which directly conflicted with the customer's expectations for prompt service.

A [field service management](#) system that focuses on enabling a blend of internal and contracted labor can help overcome these challenges and much more.

# 49%

of companies that utilized freelance workers report a positive impact on performance.





# 4

## Virtual Payments For Your Customers And Independent Service Partners

*“Implementing a FSM solution that can process virtual payments quickly has become a best practice and will help retain good third-party technicians.”*

Before COVID-19, traditional paper payment methods often sufficed. Customers would be happy to sign an invoice or hand over a check to the in-home technician.

With COVID-19 touchless or virtual payment methods have become more popular. Touchless transactions provide both parties with peace-of-mind and removes another worry about virus transmission.

Service providers are following suit by providing consumers with access to self-service or virtual payment options. Leading service management software vendors like [ServicePower](#) offer a built-in customer portal to centralize customer interactions, including mobile payments using credit/debit cards and mobile wallets. The choice lets the customer choose whichever way they want to pay and adds to their overall satisfaction.

Additionally, when using a blended workforce, timely payment to technicians is vital. In today’s tech-savvy world, paper checks in the mail are no longer ideal. Implementing a FSM solution that can process virtual payments quickly has become a best practice and will help retain good third-party technicians.

It is important to consider implementing a service management solution that can process both virtual payments from consumers and electronic payments to contingent workers and independent contractors.

*“We’ve seen two years of digital transformation in two months.”*

*- Satya Nadella, CEO, Microsoft*



Successfully implementing the four changes described in this eBook requires digital or operational technology such as the [suite of FSM products](#) from ServicePower. Once implemented, these solutions positively impact companies and the customers they support. More specifically, these solutions help decrease cycle time associated with critical business processes. They also lead to an increase in both employee and customer loyalty.

Many field service managers and executives wonder what things will be like post-pandemic. They wonder if it will remain practical to continue to manage the business the same way they’ve been doing it since the spread of the virus. We believe the measurable benefits of these COVID-19 triggered solutions combined with the fact they are effective regardless of whether there is a pandemic or not provide compelling reasons to use these solutions post-pandemic. Indeed, these have become the new normal and are here to stay.





# About Blumberg Advisory Group

Blumberg Advisory Group, Inc. is a leading research and consulting firm in Field Service Industry and a pioneer in helping companies manage service as a strategic profit center. Blumberg is uniquely qualified to position its clients strategically to meet current challenges and new growth opportunities through their relationships and experience. Blumberg works to improve its clients' profits through strategic service, assisting in developing and implementing profitable business strategies based on the principle that service is managed best as a separate, strategic, and profitable business. Learn more: [www.blumbergadvisor.com](http://www.blumbergadvisor.com)

## About ServicePower

ServicePower is a leading field service management software company focused on providing an exceptional customer experience while delivering significant operational efficiencies. Trusted by field service organizations around the world such as GE Appliances, LG, AIG, Allstate, and Siemens, ServicePower offers the only SaaS platform that helps companies efficiently manage both employed and contracted workforces. ServicePower also offers a fully managed network of contracted service providers to enable on-demand field service delivery in urban and hard-to-reach locations across North America and Europe.



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