



---

## ***Why These Three Steps Will Lead to Greater Field Service Efficiency***

By Mark Forrest, General Manager, Trimble Field Service Management

The pressures of running a fleet leave managers little time for strategic changes because they spend most of their workday reacting to the constant demands of tracking and maintaining field service vehicles and keeping drivers on schedule. To make things as efficient as possible, managers have learned that they need to easily capture and consolidate vast quantities of data produced by in-vehicle devices and the handhelds of mobile workers.

Doing so requires reliable systems to capture, analyze and turn data into actionable business intelligence, so managers can manage by exception rather than instinct. For instance, information from location technology and 3D mapping helps optimize routing, saving on vehicle maintenance and fuel, while data from fleet and workforce management systems facilitates operational changes to boost productivity.

Fleets in a range of industries, including HVAC, typically enjoy double-digit percentage gains from implementing these technologies. A study by NDP Consulting found that GPS technology produces 11 percent savings in labor costs, 13 percent in fuel and 13 percent in vehicle maintenance and repair. In addition, field service managers have learned that workforce management software can boost productivity by more than 10 percent and dispatch efficiency by at least 20 percent.

Here are the top three lessons that successful managers have learned from implementing these technologies:

### **1. Capture Data and Execute It**

Information collected from a fleet's various systems, including GPS navigation and vehicle tracking, workforce management and billing applications, provides valuable insights about vehicle use, staff behavior and dispatcher efficiency. Savvy field service managers know that tracking and acting on data such as delivery time stamps, time spent at each customer site, routing records and daily logs, can exponentially improve operations.

Undesirable behaviors such as personal use of vehicles and habitual speeding, as well as inefficiencies such as dispatch taking too long to answer driver calls or routing them through busy intersections, can be corrected to eliminate waste, save fuel and minimize overtime. In addition to real-time and data collected daily, managers have learned to compare historical with current data to spot patterns and identify areas needing improvement, all of which leads to better service and happier customers.

### **2. Optimize Routing**

Advances in location technology, 3D mapping, geolocation and telematics are allowing field service managers and dispatchers to fine-tune routing to save fuel, improve delivery times and control vehicle wear and tear. GPS data lets managers review and compare routes that drivers actually use with assigned routes that take into account multiple factors, including point-to-point distances and traffic patterns.

Optimal routing isn't all about the shortest distance, so efficient route planners also pay attention to hourly, daily and seasonal traffic patterns, road construction, proximity between customer locations and staff shift. Field service managers have learned that route optimization generates quick ROI on technology investments and is instrumental in modifying driver behavior.

### **3. Manage the Workforce**

Efficiently run companies have learned to recognize that they need reliable systems to optimize their operations, and one such system is workforce management, which gives managers and dispatchers real-time visibility into the work schedules and activities of their field workers. Integrated with fleet management software, workforce management helps companies react quickly and reduce overtime by assigning in-day worker schedules based on real-time information they receive about their mobile workers.

Successful field service managers know that information collected throughout the workday about dispatch efficiency and field service workers' activities allows them to compare planned work with jobs that are actually completed. They can then adjust schedules and – when necessary – reassign work to ensure quality of service, worker productivity and – ultimately – enhanced customer satisfaction.

For more information on Trimble Field Service Management, visit [www.trimble.com/fsm](http://www.trimble.com/fsm).