FIELD SERVICE NEWS

think tank sessions

Executive Briefing: What is effective data use in field service?

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Introduction

The Field Service News Think Tank Sessions are a unique project where we bring together an intimate group of senior field service management professionals and pick apart some of the pressing issues facing the global field service industry across a days worth of detailed discussion and debate.

The topics are varied, in-depth and full of insight and Field Service News is proud to facilitate these sessions and share with our audience the learnings from these collaborations - which we present to you verbatim to ensure the insight from each panel of industry leaders comes to you undiluted and in its essential form...

In this ThinkTank session, the topic is understanding how we define effective use of data and understanding the barriers preventing field service companies from achieving this.

Having undertaken a deep-level FSN Research project in partnership with ServiceMax to identify how field service companies were utilising asset data, we had already explored whether data-driven service operations were becoming more prevalent amongst field service companies, recognised the benefits those that were doing so were experiencing and noted within the analysis that the majority of organisations, although having access to asset data, felt they weren't utilising it effectively. The key question to this latter point is, of course, why?

Now, in the intimate setting of our ThinkTank discussions, we have brought together a mix of industry professionals, all with deep levels of insight and differing perspectives, to explore further the question of what is effective use of data, how we can achieve this and what are the unforeseen barriers, both internal and external preventing so many companies from doing so.

The session aimed to explore further and debate the findings of the FSN Research study in the usual no-holds barred discussions between a group of service leaders whose opinion on the topic is as well informed as it is varied.

As is always the way of the FSN ThinkTank Sessions, the conversation moved rapidly across several critical talking points. There was polite friction, as opposing views were put forward and tested, and in some areas, we found consensus, while in others, we agreed simply on the further questions that need to be understood at the organisational level.

Here in this executive briefing report, we provide a summary of that robust discussion. Our ThinkTank members' words remain intact, without editorialisation, so you, as a field service management leader, can read their words verbatim and take the insights and important talking points on board directly.

As always, I hope you enjoy the honesty and directness of these discussions and find them of use to you in your role as a service leader.

Kris Oldland, Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Field Service News

FSN Think Tank Session, Online, August '22

In attendance:

Sumair Dutta, Senior Director, Product Marketing - Customer and Market Insight, ServiceMax

Mark Homer, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

Rajat Kakar, Managing Director, QuickWork EMEA

Chris Hird, Editor, Field Service News

Dave Hart, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

Daniel Kingham, Vice President and Head of Service Innovation and Design, Elekta

Mark Homer, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

Mark Wilding, VP Global Customer Transformation, ServiceMax

Terence Horsman, COO, Orca Service Technologies/MCFT

Clinten van der Merwe, EMEA Service Director, Smiths Detection

Are Digital Transformation Initiatives Stalling?

When the conversation within field service turns to the value of asset data, invariably, we talk about digital transformation projects. However, the reality is that the overwhelming majority of such projects appear to be taking longer than anticipated and, at worst, failing. Multiple respected data sources indicate that this is the case - but why? And perhaps more importantly, how can we ensure that our organisations don't become another statistic in the negative column?

Sumair Dutta, Senior Director, Product Marketing - Customer and Market Insight, ServiceMax

"Some research done by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) showed that roughly only 30% of digital initiatives met their objectives and goals. Some of the reasons for these failures are because these initiatives are being undertaken at an enterprise scale, yet different business units and how they execute such projects remain siloed.

"So while each organisation is on the surface driving towards a set of digital outcomes, there is no true unity between the different business units.

"One of the concepts we have been exploring for some time now is that of 'asset data gravity', which is where the data that is captured from a machine, from whichever source, be it manual or automated, can then be shared and collaborated on across the organisation with different business functions. Could this be the lever that can drive some of these initiatives forward? Can asset data used in this way be the unifying thread across departments for digital transformation projects?

"There are definitely, some more mature organisations that are doing a really good job of sharing and collaborating on that data in this way. However, there are equally a number of companies who continue to run to the silos. The critical question is why?"

Mark Homer, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"One of the challenges is we always come from the operational side of the discussion when it comes to asset data, rather than from the corporate perspective that data is an asset – i.e. we don't prioritise an economic understanding regarding the value of data.

"The issue is the way a lot of these transactional systems are explained, ultimately becomes the problem itself. This is because the sponsorship tends to be seen at the departmental or operational levels. Field service is something of an orchestration layer, it touches many parts of the business, so it has a genuine stake in many camps. However, the organisations that seem to have got to grips with this issue, the ones that really understand what data they have and how they're going to use it, tend to look at the organisation as a whole or even the eco-system as a whole- so not just their organisation, but also its supply chain and its partners.

"I wonder whether that's the point we should start at. Is data is an economic asset? I don't think we really look at this question enough in terms of how we can see the inherent economic value of the data. If we did, perhaps then organisations would put the necessary resources and adopt the right enterprise strategies to truly beneift from the data they generate."

Are Digital Transformation Initiatives Stalling?

Rajat Kakar, Managing Director, QuickWork EMEA

“To add to the data point that Sumair highlighted regarding the BCG study, there are a couple of other reports that show similar success rates in digital transformation projects.

“There is a McKinsey report that shows that around 70% of digital transformation projects will fail.

“There’s was also similar commentary from Gartner report which again showed that around 70 to 75% of such projects are failing. So it certainly does appear that there is a consensus amongst the major analysts on this point. It is therefore definitely one that needs to be considered especially when we factor in that currently almost the whole of the field service sector and indeed, the whole of industry at large, is investing very heavily in digital transformation.”

“As Chris [Hird] referenced in the introduction to today’s session, the current level of data generated this year is estimated to be 64.3 Zettabytes of data. In just three years, by 2025, that is predicted to more than double to 150 Zettabytes.

“That is an unbelievable amount of data, and we need to be able to deal with it, we need to be able to manage it, and we need to be able to run with it in a much smarter way. Data is absolutely going to be central to all industries and all economies, it already is, but the question we need to address is ‘are we prepared to handle and maximise the benefit of such huge increases in the volume of data?’

“I believe that as an industry, we need to start thinking about how to create multi-tenant environments.

“What a multi-tenant environment means is that, for example, in a set up where you have three systems, you have one area where data is coming from, and this data is then shared to a community of other devices or systems where the data is being sent.

“If we extrapolate this to an eco-system where fourteen systems are under the peer-to-peer connection, you would traditionally need ninety-one connections. In a multi-tenant space, you only need fourteen connections. This is why I think there needs to be a considered discussion around multi-tenant data solutions that make the process of managing data less demanding in terms of costs and compute resources.

“This might be one way of trying to tackle the business unit siloes often seen as a barrier to success for some companies regarding their effective use of data.”

Is a lack of trust in data holding us back?

One of the crucial points we kept returning to within the discussion was that all too often, there is a lack of trust in the data across different business silos. This lack of confidence in the data appears to be preventing organisations from fully embracing their digital transformation projects. Perhaps this is a crucial reason why so many fail. However, is that lack of trust warranted, and if so, what can be done to overcome it?

Chris Hird, Editor, Field Service News

"A couple of people have mentioned, having run the data through these various processes when an answer comes out, you can't trust the data. The critical question those in that situation must ask themselves is whether it is because they genuinely cannot trust the data. After all, the information and the data are fundamentally wrong, or is it more of a case that you don't like the answer that's coming out the other end?

"Because the way to overcome the problem in both scenarios is very different."

Dave Hart, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"I think one of the most significant issues that we haven't spoken about today and is often the elephant in the room is understanding who owns the data. Who has responsibility internally? From my experience, when I ran a service business, we had a master data management team, and having somebody in the company that owns the data is essential.

"Most organisations I talk to buy a big piece of software to help them solve all their problems. Then you see them two years later, and they say, 'we're not getting the value we expected.' They thought the application would do more for them, but more often than not, it's because they can't trust what's coming out of it. In these scenarios, often, nobody owns the data internally, so nobody is accountable.

"That was always interesting for me to note because I'd speak to these orgainisations and ask who owns the data? Who has responsibility for making sure it is well managed in their organisation? All too often I'd see a lot of people shaking their head saying, 'well, kind of nobody does in our organisation.'"

Daniel Kingham, Vice President and Head of Service Innovation and Design, Elekta

"We have pockets of very clear ownership and pockets where ownership of the data is completely distributed, and nobody's accountable, where everybody can edit and change information which can be a problem certainly.

"Also, in the past we've definitely fallen down the trap of thinking the system will solve all of our process problems and the result of that is today processes need to be evolved, because without good processes no system will overcome these issues."

Is a lack of trust in data holding us back?

Mark Homer, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"Another challenge that often gets overlooked is the human aspect. If someone doesn't trust the validity of data for whatever reason, the human instinct is to create their own, because that is a record they can trust."

Mark Wilding, VP Global Customer Transformation, ServiceMax

"I think one of the biggest challenges I faced when in global operational roles was data governance.

"You may have the same master data sitting in different systems. It could be other versions of ERP. It could be Oracle, SAP Microsoft Dynamics; you're using the data, but fundamentally, it's global data, its global standard partners, etc. However, if you don't have a global governance strategy, you end up with multiple variations on the data.

"Then, of course, if you try and use an analytical tool like Tableau or Power BI to create insights across these different geographies, regions or applications, you can't because the consistency of the data and in different pockets becomes an issue.

"That was, for me, one of the biggest challenges, and I believe companies need to try to overcome this by creating a definition of what the data is. What is the data definition? What are the boundaries, the governance, and the audit policies?

"How do we define the validation rules around these aspects to try and create the ability to utilise the data effectively so that even if one country is using Infor and another country is on the Dynamics platform, for example, it doesn't matter. Even if they have their own data warehouse that sits within each of those two ERPs, at least the consistency of the data is controlled and governed at a global level.

"I think it's imperative to do this both for improving the effective use of data today, but also looking to the future, with possible future growth, if you acquire companies that automatically creates further problems. You bolt on another set of data, and there is another set of behaviours and definitions, and it's a real challenge for you once again to reach any meaningful insights.

"You end up with fuzzy logic everywhere, so absolutely a strategic plan around defining data is needed for today and to future proof tomorrow. When it comes to data, you can't react to it if you can't believe it."

Clinten van der Merwe, EMEA Service Director, Smiths Detection

"Ultimately, it starts with how you define what it is you want to get from the data.

"The rabbit hole effect that many companies are going through is that they may have an ERP system, for example, but at an operational level, there is a lack of trust in the data in the ERP. Then you have another screw-on system, you add this on, you read the data, now you've got two different datasets, where you don't trust the data.

"So then you add another third system because you still don't like the definition that these first two give you. The result of this is that then you become entrenched in a silo. Your service is in a silo; your sales team don't like the data because they don't trust it, your programmes don't like it, and your financial team don't like it. It is not a good scenario at all, but I think this is where many companies are.

"I think what we really need is the solution providers really guiding some of these service companies in terms of better understanding of where it is they want to go and helping them start with a little bit smaller projects. Start by demonstrating what proper, effective use of the data can produce, and then start building upon that in an iterative form. I think with that type of approach it becomes much more achievable to break down the silos that otherwise may form."

Defining what effective use of data means

In the preceding FSN Research study, which provided much food for thought during this ThinkTank session, one of the key findings was that while many organisations had access to asset data, the majority stated that they didn't believe they were using it effectively within their organisation. However, as the discussion evolved, it became clear that 'effective' could mean different things in different companies...

Chris Hird, Editor, Field Service News

"In the FSN Research study we produced on this topic, one of the statistics was that somewhere in the region of, 57% of field service companies stated that asset data was available to them, but they felt they were not using it effectively.

"There's a couple of important questions that this statistic raised that I feel we as an industry need to address. Are we collecting too much data, and are we collecting the correct data? Additionally, how do we as companies define what is effective?"

Daniel Kingham, Vice President and Head of Service Innovation and Design, Elekta

"The challenge we've had in that respect is that everybody talks about data. Big data has been a big thing for a long time, so everybody thinks they understand what's needed to make it valuable and to turn it into an asset. We continually battle at all levels of our organisation against people saying, well, if we can get something, let's get everything.

"It's cheap storage, so nobody cares about who's consuming it, and more importantly, what they're getting from it. I think that's where we've had some success putting limiting factors around data usage and asking those questions. Who's going to consume the data, and what are they going to be doing with it? What's the output that you want to achieve?

"Because our customers don't want data put in front of them, they want actionable next steps. They aren't interested in seeing data presented; they want to know what that leads to.

"We saw the same with predictive maintenance; when we started, we did three big data, proof of concepts.

"One of them lasted for 18 months. It was successful in so far as it was able to use the massive datasets that we had to do a single predictive use case., Yet it wasn't viable to scale up.

"What we learned through that activity was that actually, when it comes to the knowledge we have around a product and the data that comes from our products, it is much more important for us to refine it at source. We discovered that it is far more effective to work towards a use case as the reason to get connected, rather than collect the data and then try and work out what you do with it."

Defining what effective use of data means

Mark Wilding, VP Global Customer Transformation, ServiceMax

"In my previous role, I was responsible for the global service leadership, and the challenge was data strategy, particularly developing a master data strategy.

"By that, I mean, what are you defining as your master data? What are you defining as the golden threads of data that you feel you can make decisions from?

"I found that you've got to work backwards and ask reflective questions to help you build a map to get you where you want to be. What is the underlying strategy of your vision? What exactly are you trying to do? What insights are you trying to get? What decisions are you trying to improve upon? What revenues are you trying to launch?

"If you can work backwards from these questions you are better positioned to understand how you can develop an approach that offers insight to drive a strategic vision around efficiency, reliability, and revenue."

Rajat Kakar, Managing Director, QuickWork EMEA

"Given just how much data is being created today, if a company is now just taking the approach of they 'have' data, if they're just happily collecting and making data, without considerations of what they are doing with it, eventually, they will start running into problems.

"They will never be able to reach a point where they can say, 'Okay, I need to have this information, this is viable for me and provides what I need for my business, and I need to get access this data in this given application or particular location.

"Even if they can achieve this currently, not too far down the line, they will suddenly get stuck in a loop of not being able to handle the volume of data they have, and they will not be able to manage the data they have.

"At this point they might look at the problem as needing more storage or needing faster compute power. This is a challenge many companies will face although we are starting to see better thinking emerge around how to handle data – both from technology development but also around rethinking processes."

The importance of establishing a use case

When discussions around the use of data within the field service sector first raised their head, everybody in the industry rushed towards embracing a holy grail of data-driven predictive maintenance fueled by the emerging potential of the IoT. However, as we've worked our way towards becoming more data driven we see the importance of establishing a clear use case for data applications and for keeping things somewhat simpler than we perhaps first imagined...

Sumair Dutta, Senior Director, Product Marketing - Customer and Market Insight, ServiceMax

"I think when we started as an industry looking at data, many companies talked about wanting to build predictive models. There was a common thread of discussion across the sector around generating predictive insights, utilising predictive analytics and IoT.

"However, for many companies who did some great work in this area, still they often found that while the model did its job, the scalability or the impact of that perhaps wasn't as powerful as was hoped in that they, for instance, able to sell predictive solutions as well as they may have anticipated at the outset.

"We typically have found that use cases that might be slightly simpler, whether it's a commercial use case, such as a sales model or even a specific customer use case, where customer facing data and customer insights are generated- from a customer experience perspective these might be more impactful."

Mark Homer, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"The trouble is that in our world a lot of what we need is transactional data at the point of need. For example, we all send people to addresses.

"What's interesting is when you look at an asset record, it will state where an asset is located. When you sometimes look at the work instructions provided on the work order, the actual journey travelled and where the engineer parked compared to where the actual asset is located are often entirely different.

"I think that's another important challenge in that there is a granularity of the data needed by the persona at the point of need and this is sometimes very different to what the corporate view or the transactional view is at the ERP level. From a scheduling optimisation perspective, the most valuable aspect is that granularity, which can really be crucial in improving marginal responsiveness."

The importance of establishing a use case

Daniel Kingham, Vice President and Head of Service Innovation and Design, Elekta

"In our scenario, we didn't go towards the simpler use cases, perhaps we should have, but we took a different approach of realising that there was gold in our data, but our machines are incredibly complex- they've got many, many moving parts.

"Because of this complexity, we were training third parties on how machines work, to understand the data. So our approach instead was to recruit internally and have somebody we could train to become a data scientist who knew the machines and the data from scratch. And that's what led us down the path we followed.

"We took this route as a proof of concept. We hired somebody with the view that they try this for one year, and if it's ultimately unsuccessful, then we've learned something else, but they won't be let go. Six years later, that team is now five strong, and we have automated everything they have developed over time. Today, they continue to do new creations, and we automate and use AI to evolve what they start.

"However, it was all about getting the right skill set and people that understood the data that enabled us to move forward rather than starting with mostly anomalous cases.

"Interestingly, with some of the relatively complex but manual activities, we tried to automate them with AI initially, and that was successful to a certain extent, but that also forced us to reflect that some of this can be done a lot more simply than we had initially approached it. For example, we've been able to automate using people with Python skills rather than having full-on AI specialists. That's been quite a steep learning curve in that over the last year, we were expecting a very skilled part of the organisation to help us, we didn't get the help we needed, and we realised we could do a considerable amount ourselves.

"We've become good at fail, fail fast, and then try something different.

"Also, we've done exactly as a business what Mark described earlier. We've now put in somebody who's accountable for data governance, and their primary remit isn't really the day-to-day go-to person for data governance; instead, they are the person that you take the continuous problems to, and they help find the root cause.

"However, that's been missing across the organisation on the broad level, whereas my team have been the people that determine what data they want from something and how they will use it. So they're both the consumer and the designer, and that's unique, really unique in our organisation.

"We are allegedly a pleasure to work with, with our BI teams, for example, because we know the constructs of everything that we're touching. We know the foibles, and we know all of the ways the data is formed. Whereas in other parts of our organisation, we've got people that want the answers and when they find the data is not consistent, they give up and walk away.

"That's the challenge that we've had in my team, we've had to actually establish ourselves as part of the data strategy and help drive it rather than being somebody that just wants the outsider view."

Dave Hart, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"Data for the sake of data is no good to anybody. But the data that gives you insights and insights that are valuable to your customer is where the rubber meets the road for me.

"That, for me is what makes you [Elekta] really sticky as a solution, because I know you're in a very highly regulated but highly competitive marketplace and anything that adds additional value like that is really gold."

What do our customers expect in terms of data?

While many of the challenges around data management discussed within the industry appear to be related to internal processes, the ultimate end goal of many digital transformation projects is to serve our customers better and do so more effectively. This is often the driving factor in adopting a data-driven approach, but what exactly do our customers expect from us in terms of the way we handle and utilise data...

Chris Hird, Editor, Field Service News

"A lot of the discussions around data and effectively using data tend to lend towards the internal questions. How do we work out what data we need? And that might vary from the field service department to the marketing department to the governance department; who's trying to piece it all together?

"However, I think it is also important to step back and consider within that process building how do we better understand what our customer requirements are."

Terence Horsman, COO, Orca Service Technologies/MCFT

"I think the only way to truly answer the question of 'what data do your customers require' is to work with your customers.

"There may be value in your data set that internally you wouldn't even recognise. For example, MCFT maintains commercial kitchen equipment and fridges, and we work very closely with several OEM partners to provide warranty services.

"One of the questions that keep coming up is, from an OEM point of view, how do we determine whether a particular call was a valid warranty call or was actually operator misuse? This happens all the time; for example, when a customer installs a fridge in a non-ventilated area, the temperature goes up, and all of a sudden, the fridge fails.

"It may seem like a basic issue, but believe me, it happens all the time. In such a scenario, the OEM doesn't want to pay the bill for the warranty calls. So we work very closely with OEMs, in that case, to think about going beyond the data silos between our two organisations and delivering them data in a format that they expect so that they can make that decision a lot easier.

"Eventually that's adding a lot of value for them and for the end customer. So from our point of view, working directly with customers whilst working on projects is definitely a way forward to creating more value out of the datasets that we owe."

What do our customers expect in terms of data?

Sumair Dutta, Senior Director, Product Marketing - Customer and Market Insight, ServiceMax

"The FSN Research report talks about some of the things customers are looking for and are beginning to demand more and more, and it's no surprise that the number one answer was faster service. I think we all would anticipate that response, but what does that mean for us as service providers?

"Do we need to shift to remote service? Do our technicians need to get there faster? Do we need to have greater parts availability? Is it just faster response times or are we are we moving further towards customers actually looking for better outcomes?"

Daniel Kingham, Vice President and Head of Service Innovation and Design, Elekta

"It comes back to that question of what do you want to achieve? What does the customer want to accomplish with the data as well?

"Where we have secondary or tertiary uses of data, we've found, through working with some of our sales organisation, that we're able to do a layer of business development for some of our customers using the data we have. We never designed the data for that purpose, but it's quite fascinating to sit down and discuss the use of our products over the last five to ten years.

"The sales team were very apprehensive initially. Their view was that if we presented this to customers, and they're going to start challenging why we've got this data, or where do we get it from? However, not one customer has challenged that and every single one has opened a very different discussion on what they should be doing next."

Mark Homer, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"In terms of technology usage, we are seeing growing uptake in video, the use of video, the use of imagery, the use of photography.

"Anecdotally, we had a smart meter fitted recently, and I was amazed at how many photographs the engineer took pre, during and after to prove evidence that he'd done the work.

"I thought that's fascinating and obviously somewhere that is a set of data being stored, that's likely to be mined via some sort of machine learning tool to tag it in particular way. But again, it was a third party contractor providing evidence to prove that something had been done accurately successfully, and really trying to minimise the effort required to type out a report. It got me to thinking that maybe we'll see new data types as clearly, there are new attributes coming."

The internal and external factors impacting the effective use of data....

As we have seen so far in this briefing report, one of the most significant issues that appear to be preventing organisations from effectively utilising the data at their disposal is a lack of trust in the veracity of the insights such data sets might yield. However, when seeking to overcome these challenges, we must also acknowledge that there are both internal and external factors that are at play that must be fully understood...

Chris Hird, Editor, Field Service News

"One of the areas we were interested in exploring in the initial study was whether the challenge around effective asset data analysis was more centred around deploying new technology or fresh processes. From the discussions today and in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study, it appears to me that the technology is there, and that is perhaps the easier part of the equation.

"However, coming up with processes to ensure that the technology and data is used correctly is the wider challenge many service organisations face."

Clinten van der Merwe, EMEA Service Director, Smiths Detection

"Our customers, as you can understand, are pushing to 100% uptime availability for the equipment. It is becoming a big part of the discussion because we operate critical infrastructure equipment running in airports.

"Certainly, for our organisation, that is where the customer drive is, although a significant challenge for us is that the industry as a whole is highly regulated. Therefore airports don't allow us to tap into their networks from a remote standpoint because they want to have them in a closed loop, so it's complicated for us to move to remote service delivery.

"There are things that we could do as an industry that would allow us to perform better in terms of predictive analytics, but at the moment, in order for us to actually get better uptime availability, we have to throw people at this. You have to have twenty four by seven a person standing almost next to that machine can respond within 15 minutes and can have that machine up and running very quickly. It's a difficult challenge to get this balance, and unfortunately, it's the beast of the regulated market that we have."

The internal and external factors impacting the effective use of data....

Sumair Dutta, Senior Director, Product Marketing - Customer and Market Insight, ServiceMax

"Some of these contracts that are based around near 100% uptime or 15 minute SLAs tend to assumes that the service provider has enough engineers and they have the parts readily available. Yet, of course, what we saw over the last few years with the with the pandemic was that some of these things weren't as accessible.

"Now in the wake of the pandemic, the 'new' industry might be very different, but it seems still that there is a lot of discussion around the challenge with parts and the challenges with people and how some of those external pressures are impacting the types of transformation initiatives, whether that is data driven, technology driven or whatever business process changes we are discussing here."

Dave Hart, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"I think more often than not, the problem [regarding trusting data] is that you can come up with thirty reasons why that data can't be trusted for it. For example, let's say the data shows service revenue is declining. However, if you go look at the master data records, you can see that a lot of our contracts are not being cleansed correctly.

"Therefore, if the department that has ownership of that data got their processes in order we would not see such a negative impact on the service revenues that you are being challenged on. That example for instance is precisely in line with many conversations i've personally had with the CEO in a board meeting when I'm having to justify my service teams performance and explain why the numbers are the way they are.

"Therin lies the problem. I think there's for every interpretation of the data you give me I can probably give you ten reasons that I can counter with that point to a lack of truth in the data. That's the difficult reality with trusting data across different business units."

Terence Horsman, COO, Orca Service Technologies/MCFT

"The way we approached this [building trust across departments] internally was for our BI experts work on a weekly basis directly with the operations team. We took this approach because when we released the first dashboards, obviously, the first thing you're going to hear is, 'oh, this is rubbish. And this one, you know, this job wasn't beyond SLA, because x, y, and z etc.'

"What we did was really stick to an iterative development process and every week, the conversation would be 'oh, you've got a reason why this data is wrong? Great, let me fix it straightaway'"

"Then two days later, we come back with another version. We did this slowly and steadily and this was really I think the transformation journey for which took around six months to get everyone on board with the approach and we reached an outcome that everyone can trust in and really depend on."

"I would even say the business wouldn't be able to operate now without these levels of insights and I think that's quite a powerful transition that we've gone through, but it requires constant work because as soon as you have that one job or that one P&L that doesn't match up in accordance with expectations, you're back down to zero in terms of that level of trust with users."

Do we still have a supply chain hangover after the pandemic?

In one respect, it is understandable that most companies are looking forward now after the pandemic. Indeed, from an emotive point of view, we must be able to move on in order to heal. Yet, there remain essential lessons from the challenges of the last two years that we must learn from, particularly around the supply chain that got disrupted on a global scale. Similarly, there remain lingering fears that we may see such disruption again, so we must be ready for it...

Clinten van der Merwe, EMEA Service Director, Smiths Detection

"The biggest thing for us [in tackling supply chain issues] was to rethink what we do regarding refurbishment. Instead of just having a full spare parts replacement, we began looking at sub-component replacements on a spare part. This is certainly something important for us, and it helps with sustainability.

"I think this is probably the biggest denominator for us at the current moment, because spare parts are getting harder to come by, you know, so it's better to refurbish and repair whatever we can. This has also had a positive impact on our engineer efficiency as well as because our engineers when they sit in the airport can actually do some of the repairs on some IT equipment."

Mark Homer, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"I'm definitely hearing a lot about component repair at the moment and I think for some engineers, they're quite enjoying it. Definitely, component repair is probably the name of the game right now alongside obsolescence management so - recognising high value, high risk parts and again this all comes back to data in terms of asset fleet analytics."

Daniel Kingham, Vice President and Head of Service Innovation and Design, Elekta

"General supply chain constraints are causing problems without predictions; on the fact that even if we can predict they fail, we can't necessarily supply the part.

"However, what we've done concerning that is turn the data to the logistics team so that we give them the insight of what's likely to fail, and they can plan the capacity based on it.

"We've also changed the prioritisation of those parts, so where we can't refurbish and can't get parts to site, we're constraining them on the basis that engineers like to stockpile and to order things when they know there's a supply constraint. So we're able to give a lot more guided information to say actually, we don't believe you need this yet. So far, it is an approach that is working."

What are the barriers for designing for serviceability?

Perhaps one of the most significant discussion points in our industry's embryonic conversations around harnessing data and the power of IoT was that we would be designing assets ready for predictive analytics and maintenance. However, this has yet failed to materialise anywhere near the anticipated scale. So the question remains - why aren't we designing assets to be easily serviceable?

Sumair Dutta, Senior Director, Product Marketing - Customer and Market Insight, ServiceMax

"There are a lot of fascinating statistics in the research; I think the one that stood out to me was that 57% of companies have access to data but cannot use it effectively.

"A second one that I picked up on quite heavily during our conversations was centred around organisations building new assets, only 40% of those assets were going to have connectivity or telemetry built into them. That to me seems like a very, very wasted opportunity."

Dave Hart, Managing Partner, Field Service Associates

"I found the data point of only 40% of new products being connected quite startling because you would imagine these days that companies would have got to have a handle on that point quickly. The insight from equipment can be astounding if you get your data management right and you have a strategy about what you're going to do with the data.

"I am just intrigued why more products aren't connected and more products aren't designed for service, I've always find that quite strange in organisations."

Daniel Kingham, Vice President and Head of Service Innovation and Design, Elekta

"Certainly, our battle is always time to market.

"You have got to get new functionality and new features out and for us certainly clinical focus is more important than what happens after the clinicians got their hands on it. Even if the revenue from service life is bigger than the product it is still the product sale that is the primary driver for everything."

What are the barriers for designing for serviceability?

Clinten van der Merwe, EMEA Service Director, Smiths Detection

"For us, it is the customer demands for specific requirements within our products.

"In a high-security environment like airports, it's all about the detectability, i.e. what threats you can detect in the back-end of the asset. This is the critical question in our sector- what are the threats? You design your equipment around that instead of looking at the serviceability. Once you have a designed unit so it can pick up a threat, the development and design team will put the machine together. Afterwards, service has to come in and then see what we can do with the system to maintain it.

"Our industry is very regulated, so when a unit does go through ECAC or TSA approval you need to make sure that that unit has the required detectability and unfortunately, the regulators don't care about the serviceability of the unit- they just care about the detection capabilities of the unit."

Sumair Dutta, Senior Director, Product Marketing - Customer and Market Insight, ServiceMax

"It's a slightly cynical view, but design for service has now become designed for circularity, but there's very little being changed on the background.

"I'm hopeful that maybe some of the things from a regulatory point of view, perhaps the right to repair movement, might change that perspective.

"Equally, some of the things around sustainability if these goals are actual and not just 'greenwashing' as people like to call it, might change some of this because I do see all of these linking together. However, at the moment I does seem that the messaging is still a little bit further ahead than the actual execution when it comes to design for service."

About ServiceMax

ServiceMax's mission is to help customers keep the world running with asset-centric field service management software. As a recognized leader in this space, ServiceMax's mobile apps and cloud-based software provide a complete view of assets to field service teams.

By optimizing field service operations, customers across all industries can better manage the complexities of service, support faster growth, and run more profitable, outcome-centric businesses.

For more information, visit @ https://www.servicemax.com/

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