Field Service

In the Cloud

Field Service in the Cloud

The cloud-based software revolution is drastically changing the landscape for Trade & Speciality contracting businesses with field staff.

The days of running multiple systems to handle essential business tasks like scheduling, invoicing and service management are fast becoming a thing of the past. Instead, field reps are accessing everything they need from the palm of their hands thanks to cloud-based technologies that are leading a revolution in connectedness and mobility.

And a move to the cloud does not necessarily need to cost big bucks. In fact, many companies are finding that they are reducing their IT operating costs and increasing profits.

Connectivity

Smart trade companies leveraging these technologies are transforming the customer experience while building super-efficient workforces that are more effective and empowered than ever before. Improved connectivity means less time in the office. Field reps are free to focus on the activities that really count – solving customer problems, building strong relationships and increasing their number of visits.

Accessibility

One of the key benefits of cloud computing for trade companies is the accessibility of crucial business data. An early finding of a survey by Field Service News shows that 68% of businesses considering a move to the cloud are doing so because of the "easy remote access that the cloud offers". An opportunity for trade and speciality contracting businesses that are yet to embrace the cloud is to make customer, service and product more readily available to field reps.

The pace and volume of change across products, service processes and assets presents a key challenge for many trade and speciality contracting businesses in terms of keeping their field reps up-to-date and operating with the most current data and other technical assets. But the cloud helps to overcome these challenges by ensuring that this information is centrally located and easily accessible.

Efficiency

The benefits of centralized data accessible via any Internet-enabled device are a two-way street for trade and speciality contracting businesses. Field reps have everything they need for a successful service call immediately available to them.
Reps can quickly and easily:

• Access customer service history
• Check information about key customer assets

• Review the most recent technical specs
• Schedule follow-up visits
They can receive notifications on their mobile device, schedule calls and collaborate with peers.

Focus on what matters most

Admin and paperwork is often the most tedious part of a field reps life. It's time consuming and takes the focus away from service delivery, and is therefore frequently de-prioritized. A connected field team that is powered by cloud technology has all of their information organized, and can complete their admin requirements while still on the customer site – leading to improved service delivery and more meaningful insights for operations teams.
In head-office, operations staff monitor can:

• Service calls in real-time
• Schedule and reschedule customer appointments
• Proactively plan using real-time data and insights
• Forecast stock levels

Through improved connection and collaboration with the field reps, your operations team can be in a much-improved position to forecast demand, prioritize resources, and have access to the latest service histories – all of which can ultimately transform the customer experience.

Often these types of head office and field tasks are spread out over a multitude of systems that are not integrated, therefore requiring double handling and other inefficient work practices. A cloud-based platform like simPRO brings the crucial aspects of the business together, in one place.

Are you at risk?

One of the chief concerns for trade and speciality contracting businesses considering a move to the cloud is the security of their data. Security continues to be a key consideration for many organizations moving from an on-premise solution to a cloud-based application.

Interestingly, security often features as the top reason for moving to the cloud, and one of the top reasons for not moving to the cloud. Of the Trade Service companies that have not yet moved to the cloud, 48% cited security concerns as main obstacle in the Field Service News survey.

But data hosted in the cloud is usually significantly more secure than data stored in on-premise solutions – either in the office or on shared virtual servers. Cloud application providers like simPRO take data security seriously. In fact, we have invested heavily to ensure that our customers benefit from the same infrastructure and security protocols as large banks, utilities and mining companies.

We recently published a white paper that details the measures we have in place to ensure our customers' data remains secure and accessible – even in the event of catastrophic data center failure.

Cost misconceptions

The costs associated with implementing a cloud-based solution can also be a key concern for businesses considering the transition from on-premise applications. But IT operating costs are often shown to reduce – having a positive impact on the bottom line.

Migrating to the cloud can be very cost-effective. The cost alone of licensing is frequently less than the traditional on-premise models. Cloud applications are typically sold on a 'per user, per month' subscription basis – therefore providing customers with a high level of control over IT spend. User licenses can usually be easily transferred when employees leave or change job roles.

The application provider manages the infrastructure. Therefore trade and speciality contracting businesses can reallocate the resources typically engaged to manage on-premise infrastructure. The costs associated with the infrastructure are included in the subscription. Therefore there are no hidden costs associated with security, infrastructure, servers or other resources.

This is a particularly attractive benefit for small to medium organizations who can instead focus on core, revenue-generating activities.

Conclusion

The tremendous capability, powerful functionality and the relatively low costs of cloud mean that even small to medium Trade Service companies can benefit from the technologies once reserved for the large organizations that had the big budgets to suit. Cloud has, in many ways, leveled the playing field.

Cloud based technologies like simPRO offer an enormous level of benefits to trade service companies and overcome many of the common challenges that have persisted for years. A more connected workforce – both customer facing and back office – can transform the customer experience.