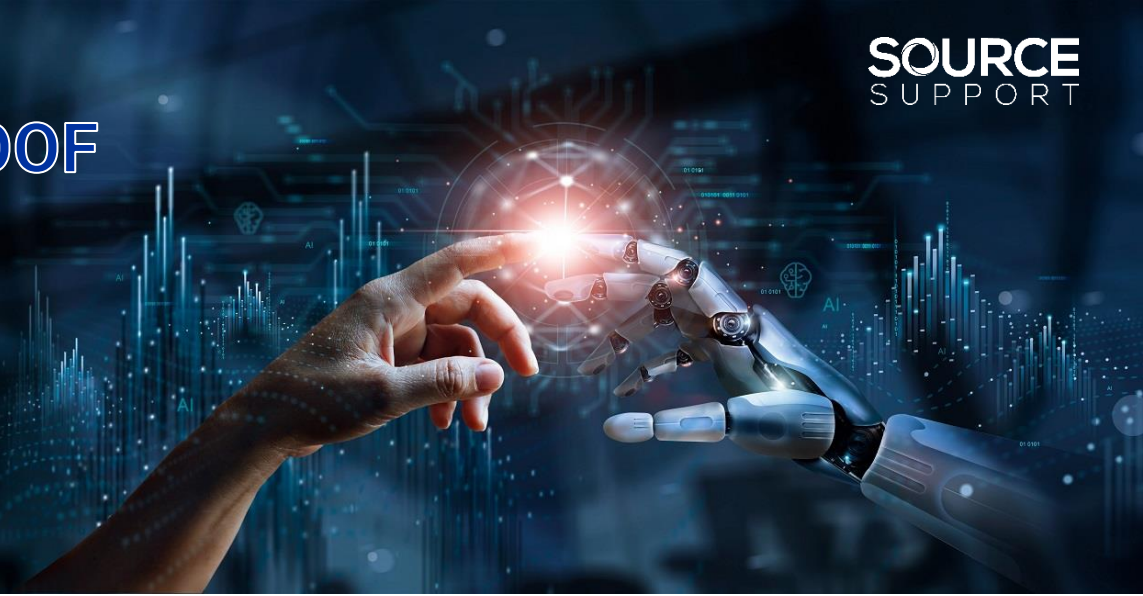


FUTURE-PROOF YOUR FIELD SERVICE OPERATION



Executives and managers in field service have essential responsibilities to their organizations. First, of course, they must build a team and an infrastructure capable of delivering timely, quality service to end-users in the present. Simultaneously, they must future-proof their organizations by ascertaining how field services are changing and preparing their organizations to maintain or even improve their service no matter what comes along.

With regard to the latter, there are some trends signaling how the next 5-10 years may unfold. Some of the biggest are:

- **[Jobs and the Macroeconomy](#)**. According to the [Service Council Voice of the Field Service Engineer 2023 report](#), there are about 8.8 million job openings in the United States and only 5.7 million unemployed workers. Also, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the labor force participation rate is expected to drop from 62.2% in 2022 to 60.4% in 2032. This is due mostly to younger generations entering the job market at a slower rate than before, and large numbers of Baby Boomers retiring. The big point that's clear from these statistics: it's already hard to hire and retain good workers, and it's only going to get harder as companies invest more to attract the talent they need.
- **[Engagement Crisis over Retirement Crisis](#)**. Field Service organizations have struggled with an aging workforce that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lately, that trend has shifted to be more of an engagement crisis with consequences just as serious for field service organizations and the industry at large. Service Council's 2023 report indicates that 45% of field service engineers either do not know or do not anticipate being a technician for their entire career. Furthermore, there's serious engagement erosion in the industry; 13% of FEs reported being less engaged by their jobs and careers in 2023 than in 2022. It's becoming harder to find people to do field service work – and who are happy in those roles over the long term.
- **[Knowledge Transfer Management](#)**. The combination of early retirement and declining workforce engagement has created a disruption in the knowledge transfer from one generation of workers to the next. This leaves many OEMs and service organizations with significant knowledge gaps that are both expensive and timely to replace. According to TSIA's webinar,



[“The New Driving Forces Behind a Great Employee and Customer Experience,”](#) 50% of organizations use scattered or siloed knowledge management practices. This increases the chances of significant knowledge loss in the event of individual retirements and resignations.

- **Artificial Intelligence.** As with all new technologies, AI has already changed how many organizations operate and conduct business. Field service organizations need to identify, adapt and integrate AI as it makes sense to help streamline their data-driven tasks. Whether it’s analyzing usage trends to develop customized predictive maintenance schedules, quickly generating education materials based on existing workflows and processes or helping end-users create work orders, AI can quickly become a useful tool for optimizing various tasks.

Service Infrastructure Models

Due to the variables above, and potentially countless more that only the future can reveal, future-proofing your service organization is an incredibly difficult task. Field service leaders can choose to proceed on their own, but outsourcing and augmentation have quickly become viable (and in some cases better) options that drive revenue efficiency, improved customer KPIs and even employee satisfaction.

Here are some reasons why we recommend augmenting your field service needs:



It scales better. When organizations need more resources, they simply add them. It could be a centralized service operations team, access to parts and logistics services or more field engineers in a specific part of the world. The right service provider will have the bench strength that OEMs need and the ability to deploy it efficiently.



It’s cost-effective. Besides being nimble, it can be far less expensive and more efficient for a third-party organization to build and maintain a FE network than for an OEM to do the same. Of course, if OEMs spend less on field service, they pass those cost savings on to end-users – and gain a competitive advantage.



It helps existing staff use their skills and talents better. Most of the time, OEMs delegate lower-level preventative maintenance and break-fix work to their trusted third-party service organizations. By doing this, OEMs free their internal teams to focus on higher-value activities that bring more value to the business.



It’s faster. At Source, we have a network of FEs strategically located around the world, and we can guarantee someone will be on-site with an end-user within four hours of a ticket being created. We also have parts standing by at forward-stocking locations in key places, so they can be where they’re needed as fast as possible. On-site service isn’t going away, and neither are the challenges that go into delivering it. Third-party service organizations like us optimize the entire lifecycle of a field service event for OEMs across the world.

Future-proofing an organization is really hard work – but it is possible to do it well. Leaders should always be on the lookout for data, analytics or their own observations about what the future may hold, and then prepare as much as possible. They also should surround themselves with as many seasoned experts as they can. The more an organization has, and the more available resources they have to choose from, the more likely the organization will successfully navigate inevitable challenges they

couldn't have seen coming. Based on our extensive collective experience, this is the best way to future-proof any service function.

For more information on Source's augmented service model, and how Source works with OEMs to future-proof their field service functions, please visit sourcesupport.com.