

Optimizing Service Completion Time for Industrial Manufacturing Organizations

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In any industrial manufacturing organization, it's essential to keep all the various pieces of complex equipment running smoothly and in sync with each other. Without this equipment, operations cease – the business can't function, generate products, acquire revenue and most importantly, serve customers.

The industrial manufacturing industry is one that is built by driving equipment efficiencies, maximizing outputs, and optimizing production processes through advanced technology. When incidents like break-fix and other service-related events occur, the industry faces challenges in several key metrics. While SLA is undoubtedly an important metric, when the equipment is as complex and integrated into custom end-user solutions as almost every piece of industrial manufacturing equipment is, time-to-repair and first-time-fix rates are indicative to onsite success. It takes time for field engineers and parts to arrive on site, and even more for the proper corrective actions to be completed.

Digitalization efforts have helped reduce some of these inefficiencies in the field service process, but there is still room for improvement. In particular, organizations should have ways to augment their team when they need extra capacity; they want to optimize on-site efforts or free up existing staff to provide more value-added customer service. This is where a strategic partnership with a trusted third-party field service organization can really help.



Important Service Activities

When it comes to equipment service, a few activities stand out as especially important:

1. **Pre-Installation** – This stage includes a wide variety of equipment-related activities, such as staging the location, receiving equipment from shipping, inspecting it to make sure everything arrived intact and prepping all the components for assembly. There are a number of facility-oriented items such as proper flooring and weight support; proper ventilation and waste management; adequate power supply and access; rigging and wiring equipment in the places where equipment will sit; and more. Organizations usually complete this work as part of their pre-site survey efforts.
2. **Installation** – With such complex equipment, it's no easy task getting everything assembled and ready to go. Depending on the size and scale of the system, installations can take days if not weeks to complete.
3. **Commissioning** – It takes time to ensure that all systems and components are working as intended in their final operating environment. Most in-house service teams spend majority of their time on making sure the equipment is tested and functioning according to established plan requirements and end-users' expectations.
4. **Preventative Maintenance** – Advanced monitoring through digital technologies allows service teams to gather data on how their machines are performing and execute anticipatory maintenance and calibrations when they feel it's necessary. Despite this increase in knowledge, scheduling down time, isolating the specific area needing to be serviced and completing the service event are still incredibly time intensive tasks.

Challenges in Service Delivery

The constant challenge for industrial manufacturing organizations is executing all the above activities and responding to ongoing service needs without overburdening existing service staff. These organizations hire and acquire resources to handle the fixed needs they can plan for, not the extra things that come along. So, when those inevitable service events happen, existing resources are stretched extra thin to cover everything – or service events must be prioritized and ticket backlogs result. Neither situation is a good one for any organization and results in difficulties developing solutions to the problem.



The Benefits and ROI of Outsourcing Service

Through an outsourced service model, industrial manufacturers are able to optimize any single part or all of their complex field service processes. Organizations like Source Support Services, that have their own FE network and the infrastructure needed to support OEMs, bring value to industrial manufacturing organizations in several different ways:



It ensures organizations have the right people for the right job at the right time. Generally speaking, the field service workforce is aging; it's harder than ever to find, recruit and train quality FEs. By outsourcing, OEMs delegate this problem and don't have to worry about it themselves; they simply augment their team with whatever capacity they need at a particular time.



It's faster. Source has a network of FEs strategically located around the world and can be onsite as quickly as 4HRs or NBD of a ticket being created. Source also leverages a global network of forward-stocking locations in key locations, so that parts can be where they're needed as fast as possible. Organizations can significantly lower their time-to-repair and minimize end user downtime by partnering with a team like Source that can provide their targeted key metrics.



It's cost-effective. It's much more cost-efficient for an OEM to utilize a third party for the exact amount of help they need than to hire, train, maintain and support their own employed field engineer network.



It scales. When end-users need it, OEMs can simply add additional locations that they require instead of hiring and developing more infrastructure themselves. With this agility and flexibility, they always have the resources needed to handle all their service needs – and they eliminate backlogs and tough choices about what to prioritize.



It brings focus. Third-party service providers can be used for lower-level preventative maintenance, pre-install, install and break-fix tasks, freeing up existing staff for higher-value activities that bring more value to the business. We've seen it work best when in-house service staff can focus their time on commissioning activities and other strategic efforts. This also helps them balance the demands of their job and have a better quality of life.



It ensures quality. Scheduled disruptions of a manufacturing line to perform service or maintenance should never have to be a repeated event. When all of the above are in place, and the right people are doing the right service tasks, organizations have the best chance of achieving optimal overall equipment effectiveness from an availability, performance, and quality standpoint.

No matter what your service needs and challenges are, we stand ready to meet and solve them. We look forward to hearing from you.

For more information on Source's outsourced service model, please visit sourcesupport.com.

