



Keys to Successful Field Service Software Change

As field service businesses grow and evolve, and as the industry itself continues its rapid transformation, the software needs of companies change.

The chronic shortage of skilled labor across industries is a defining feature of the global employment market in recent years. Nearly seven in 10 employers in the skilled trades report¹ difficulty hiring workers, with half of employers affirming that labor shortages are negatively impacting their company's growth. As retirements cascade² over the coming years, the crisis will accelerate.



68%

of companies have struggled to hire skilled workers¹



52%

of skilled trades employers say a lack of available workforce is stunting their growth¹

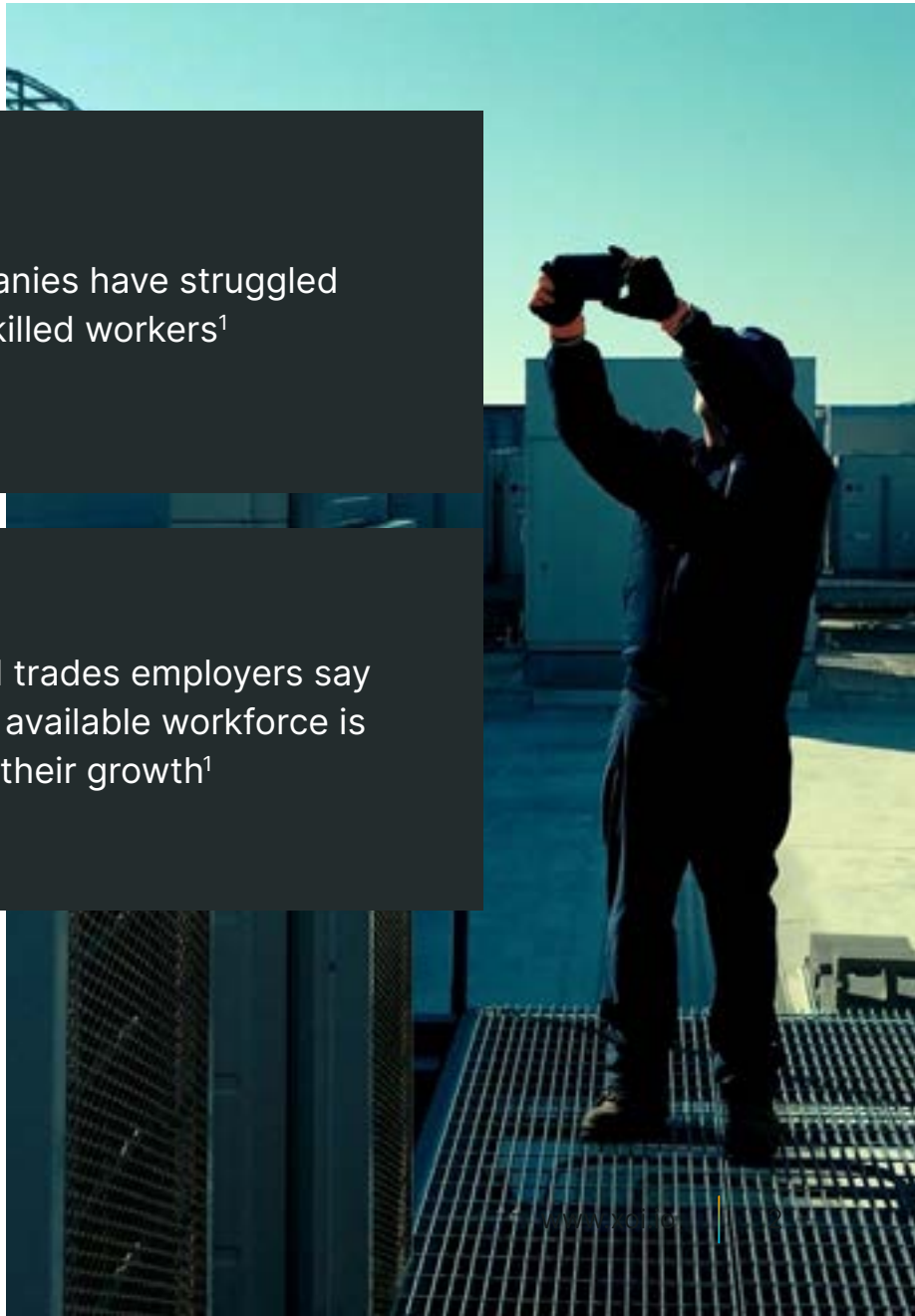
¹ [angi.com](https://www.angi.com), 2021

² [Alaniz, achrnews.com](https://www.achrnews.com)



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The growth of the global market for field service technology

The global market for field service technology is growing at an average rate of

2021

\$3.2 billion

11.9%

2026
(Expected)

\$5.7 billion

These conditions are driving rapid technology adoption as well as fast-paced developments in technology designed for the industry. As the most immediate solution to the continuing labor shortage, the global market for field service technology³ is growing at an average rate of 11.9%. Estimated at a total value of \$3.2 billion in 2021, it is expected to be worth \$5.7 billion by the end of 2026.

Employers are looking for tools that help them meet customer demand and keep up with changing expectations. Technology providers are exploring ever more advanced applications, including artificial intelligence, machine learning and the Internet of Things to deliver solutions to contractors and their teams.

Increasingly, field service technicians expect enablement tools that empower them in the field. The emerging class of tech-enablement solutions streamline connections on the

jobsite, enhancing technicians' productivity and efficiency. As software platforms evolve, the needs of technicians in the field are accelerating the pace of implementation. More companies are adopting technology, and companies that are already using field service technology are incentivized to frequently review and update or upgrade their existing tools.

Unfortunately, changes in technology often result in major disruptions to established processes. Many software providers offer limited training and support after a switch, leading to confusion and frustration on the part of users. As a result, adoption across the company may lag, diminishing the value of your investment. Ultimately, an unsuccessful technology change can introduce new inefficiencies, adding time and increasing the risk of human error as team members continue (or even return to) completing labor-intensive administrative tasks by hand.

³ www.marketsandmarkets.com, September 2021

It doesn't have to be this way. Done right, there's nothing scary about managing your company's field service software change. You can enter the process with full confidence that your team will buy in from the start and you'll see immediate returns.

With the right technology partner and a clear plan, most companies can initiate a successful software change with confidence.

Choose an ecosystem, not a platform

Field service technicians often use multiple apps on a job. Repeatedly jumping back and forth between apps is not only tedious and time-consuming. It increases the risk of error. The secret isn't finding a single app that does everything. Look for one platform that easily, intuitively connects with best-in-class solutions. A suite of industry-leading software options creates a 360 degree view of your organization and gives your team instant access to all data related to a job.

Choose software designed for the people who use it

In our industry, techs are frequently overlooked when organizations make technology purchasing decisions. Too often, the technology needs of office staff and the operations team are prioritized over those of technicians. Techs struggle with applications that don't address the challenges they encounter on the job. In their experience, new digital tools don't make their jobs easier. Instead of streamlining their workflow, field management technology can add to it.

Choose a software partner that provides ongoing support

Training will have a profound impact on employee adoption. Visible investment in their success drives full, enthusiastic adoption. But software change is a process. No amount of advance planning can prepare users for all the surprises that any platform is capable of in the real world. Once a new solution is in place, techs will need a range of support options available, depending on the situation. Any reliable provider should offer ready, transparent access to email, chat, telephone, and self-directed resources (start guides, troubleshooting tips, videos) for all user support needs.

Invest in opportunities for microlearning

When technicians are invested in the field software they use, it amplifies the technology's potential as a training tool. Techs who truly engage with technology are more likely to benefit from its learning features and see exponential upskilling results, regardless of their experience level. Truly innovative platforms deliver support and equipment information in formats designed to elevate technician skills, not just provide a quick fix in order to close out a call. Every time a tech troubleshoots a new issue or solves a problem, that becomes a data point for that company. No other company has it, and that team has instant, democratized access. And the tech has added to his or her knowledge of the field with firsthand experience.

Getting Started

Once you set out to change software, you've got to have a plan to navigate all the stages you'll encounter and work towards optimization of your new technology. Having a plan complete with the right tools, training, and support will go far in mitigating fears and setting employees up for a successful transition.

Technicians can't flip a switch and seamlessly go from one way of doing things to a totally different way. As a rule, they take pride in their work and value their knowledge and experience. In the field, they're the experts. They expect you to trust them to get the job done right – and to provide the tools they need.

Software change, regardless of how well it is managed, can throw teams for a loop. Take in the situation from their perspective and you'll be able to create a plan that will help them accept and even embrace the change. Consulting frontline team members and demonstrating leadership-level support have been shown to be the two most effective methods for successful technology change management, according to research.⁴

⁴ raconteur.com

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Identify your needs

Take time to review your needs and goals before selecting your new field service software. Honestly review your team's performance, how they use their current solution, what it does right and where it falls short. Request feedback from team members and managers. Align the options available with where you want your company to be a year from now. Look for software that works for your team and serves your goals.

Engage your team

You're going to need some champions on your side. Leverage key staff members and department leads by convincing them of the benefits brought on by the new system. When they see how it benefits them, they will work hard on your behalf to convince the folks in their respective departments to get on board with it as well.

Demonstrate buy-in at the top

Leaders, management and team members must all commit in order for a new solution to be smoothly and effectively implemented. Make sure executives and management show a company-wide commitment to the new software. Top-down enthusiasm not only serves as an example; when leaders and managers are engaged with your company's field technology, it facilitates smooth, efficient implementation.

Implementation

A fully successful technology implementation is an efficient one. A solution that slows your team down before helping them get more done can create more problems than it addresses, and may never be able to convince your team to universally adopt it. So you need a strategy to ensure team members perform productively even during the transition (while allowing for normal expected setbacks). One way to tip the scales is to consistently communicate from the beginning of the progress the jobsite advantages techs will experience. Incorporate training early on that specifically demonstrates the higher efficiency possible for employees, and with that, the increase of time available for them to reach more customers, close more deals, and deliver higher quality results.

Make a plan and commit to it

Action gets results. Steer your actions in the right direction and stay the course. Expect some reluctance and resistance. Acknowledge it and hear your team members' concerns. But don't let turbulence upset your careful planning. Stay committed to the plan and to making the transition necessary to hit the goals you were after in the first place.

Identify concrete, measurable goals

Work with your leadership and management team to develop real, achievable ways to measure success, based on past performance. And commit to full implementation of the new solution in order to collect sufficient data to judge the results.



Account for different learning styles

As you're evaluating your team's skills and engagement with the new technology, remember that no single metric measures learning progress for everyone. In addition to generational differences, there are learning style differences. Some people retain information best by reading or listening to a lecture. Others need hands-on experience in order to learn best. Neither way is better or worse. They're simply different ways people are wired to absorb information.

Microlearning on the job

Digital learning and support in the field offer flexible, customized training to match with the range of experience and learning styles you'll find on most trades teams. It is also a critical tool for connecting with young talent. The tech-savvy jobseekers of Generation Z expect employers to provide personalized technology solutions. They also expect companies to empower them with skills that will prepare them to grow in their career. Effectively targeting that audience is a key strategy for closing any skilled trades gap.

Proper change management can dramatically increase your company's chance of reaching its goal. Take time to invest in a proper management process and plan and implementation will be faster, more accurate and comprehensive, and result in long-term adoption, improved team morale and measurably more efficient results.

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