zinier

UNVEILING THE POWER OF THE BUY-TO-BUILD STRATEGY

Beyond the Build vs Buy Dilemma



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Introduction

In today's business landscape, companies often find themselves grappling with the age-old quandary of whether to build a solution from scratch or purchase an existing one. This perennial dilemma, known as the "Build vs Buy" conundrum, has long presented challenges and trade-offs for organizations seeking optimal outcomes.

However, there is a fast-growing third option that holds significant promise: the Buy to Build strategy.

This white paper aims to shed light on this emerging approach, which involves companies acquiring pre-built components and seamlessly integrating them into their existing systems.

By shifting the focus from ground-up development to strategic procurement, organizations can unlock a range of benefits, including substantial time and cost savings, while still retaining the ability to customize and adapt the integrated solution.

Within these pages, we will delve into the key advantages of the Buy to Build strategy, addressing the struggles faced by companies caught in the Build vs Buy dilemma.

Furthermore, we will explore the compelling reasons why embracing this approach, can deliver unparalleled results for enterprises.

Join us on this journey as we delve into the world of Buy to Build, unlocking new possibilities and revealing why it may be the best option for your organization.

The Build vs. Buy Conundrum

1. Market Dynamics in Field Service Management

The field service management industry has experienced significant evolution over the years, driven by advancements in technology and changing customer expectations.

The market size of the field service management industry has been growing rapidly.

According to a report by MarketsandMarkets, the global field service management market was valued at USD 3.0 billion in 2020 and is projected to reach USD 5.9 billion by 2026, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.1% during the forecast period.

Companies across various industries, including manufacturing, utilities, telecommunications, and healthcare, are recognizing the value of efficient field services in improving customer satisfaction, reducing costs, and maximizing operational productivity. In the past, traditional field service management practices relied heavily on manual processes, paper-based work orders, and limited visibility into field operations. However, with the advent of digitalization, cloud computing, and mobile technologies, the industry has undergone a transformation.

One of the key best practices that emerged was the adoption of integrated software solutions to streamline workflows, improve communication between field technicians and the back office, optimize scheduling and dispatching, and enhance overall operational efficiency. These solutions often include features such as real-time tracking, automated job assignment, mobile access to information, and analytics for data-driven decision-making.

Also, the increasing adoption of cloud-based solutions, the rise of IoT (Internet of Things) devices enabling remote monitoring, and the demand for enhanced customer experiences are driving the growth of the market.

The decision between "Build" (developing a custom solution) and "Buy" (purchasing an existing solution) for managing field services can be complex and challenging.

2. Buying a Solution: Cost Factors

Off-the-shelf products often come with significant upfront costs for reasons that revolve mainly around the development and time involved in perfecting these solutions, or at the very least, making them marketable for the general users. Here are some of the additional costs to keep in mind when you see the price tag of an off-the-shelf solution.

BUYING A SOLUTION

Cost Factors

Research and Development

Buying a tech solution involves extensive research, testing, and refinement. The upfront cost reflects the investment made by the company in designing and creating the product.

Quality Assurance and Compliance

Reliable off-the-shelf tech solutions undergo rigorous quality assurance and compliance testing. This includes testing for functionality, reliability, security, and adherence to industry standards and regulations. The cost associated with quality assurance and compliance efforts is factored into the upfront pricing to guarantee a reliable and compliant product.

Scalability and Support

Tech solutions are often designed to scale and accommodate future growth or evolving needs. Companies invest in building scalable infrastructure, server systems, and support mechanisms to ensure their product can handle increasing demand and provide ongoing customer support. The upfront cost covers the investment made in these areas.

Intellectual Property and Licensing

Some off-the-shelf products incorporate patented technologies or licensed software components. Companies may have to pay licensing fees or royalties to intellectual property holders, which can significantly contribute to the upfront cost of the product.

Brand Value and Reputation

Established companies with strong brands and reputations often command higher prices for their off-the-shelf products. Customers are willing to pay a premium for reliable and trusted solutions, and the upfront cost may reflect the value associated with the brand.

It's worth noting that while off-the-shelf products can have significant upfront costs, they also provide advantages such as customized deployment, proven functionality, and ongoing support.

3. Building a Solution: How long will it take?

Time to identify your organization's workflow processes and develop the software that optimizes them. Remember, software optimization is an ongoing process. As your organization evolves, new workflow processes may emerge, and existing ones may require updates.

Regularly reassessing your workflow processes and adapting the software accordingly to ensure continuous optimization and efficiency gains is a never-ending story.

Here are just some staple steps to consider:

- ☐ Identifying an organization's workflow processes and developing software to optimize. You begin by analyzing and documenting your organization's existing workflow processes: Identify key tasks, dependencies, bottlenecks, and pain points. This analysis will provide insights into areas that can benefit from optimization through software.
- ☐ Next is engaging relevant stakeholders, including department heads, employees, and end-users, to gather their input and understand their requirements and objectives. These objectives will guide the software development process and frankly speaking, it's what everybody wants.
- ☐ Based on the workflow analysis and stakeholder input, create a detailed list of software requirements of features, functionalities, user interfaces, and integration points becomes possible.
- ☐ Developing a comprehensive training plan is needed to onboard users and ensure they understand how to effectively utilize the software to optimize their workflow processes. Once the software is deployed, continuously monitoring its performance and gathering user feedback with analytics and reporting mechanisms is helpful for user-experience fixes– identifying areas for further optimization and planning for future updates or enhancements.

All of the above could happen as fast as six months and as long as five years depending on the complexity and functionality of the solution being built. Building takes time, too little or too much and it won't go as planned.

A small price to pay for a perfect solution–or is it?

4. Building a Solution: Core Competence vs. Best Experience

If the solution you are looking to develop is not in the area of your organization's core competence, it can indeed pose challenges in delivering the best experience. But with the right approach, collaboration, and support, it is possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome. Here are a few considerations to keep in mind:

BUILDING A SOLUTION

Core Competence vs. Best Experience Considerations

Expertise and Resources

Developing software solutions outside your organization's core competence may require specialized expertise and resources that you may not possess internally. A lack of domain knowledge and experience can impact the quality and effectiveness of the solution. Consider partnering with or hiring experts in the relevant field to ensure a higher chance of success.

Outsourcing or Collaboration

If your organization lacks the necessary expertise, consider outsourcing the development of the software solution to a third-party vendor or collaborating with a technology partner who specializes in that particular area. This approach allows you to leverage their expertise and experience, ensuring a higher probability of achieving the desired outcomes.

Thorough Vendor Selection

If you decide to work with a vendor or partner, conduct thorough research and due diligence to select the right one. Evaluate their track record, portfolio, and expertise in the specific domain or technology you require. Look for references and customer testimonials to gain insights into their capabilities and the quality of their work.

5. Summary

When you purchase an off-the-shelf solution, you're acquiring a pre-built product or software that is designed to meet the needs of a wide range of customers. These solutions are often developed with a set of standard features and functionalities that are intended to be applicable to a broad user base. While providers enable some customization, the solution won't be custom-built for you

The advantage of using an off-the-shelf solution is that it requires less customization compared to building a custom solution from scratch. However, it's important to note that off-the-shelf solutions may not perfectly fit your specific requirements or business processes. There might be some limitations or features that are not available, and you may need to adapt your workflows to fit the capabilities of the solution. Customization options may be limited to predefined settings or configurations.

In contrast, a custom solution is built specifically to meet your unique needs, offering more flexibility and tailored functionality. It can be costly and time-consuming to develop, but it allows for greater control and customization to align with your business processes precisely.

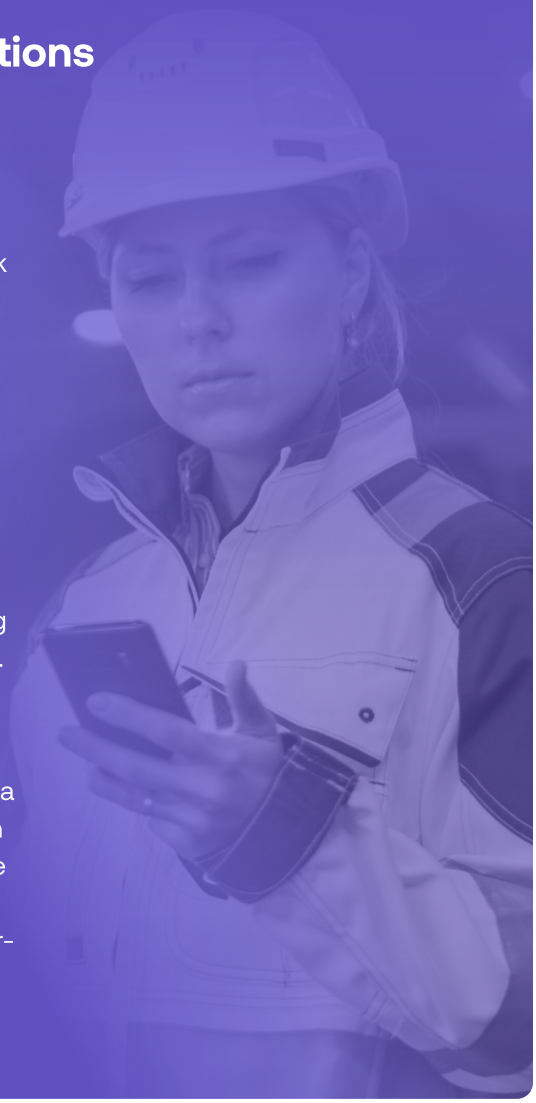
Key Requirements for Field Service Solutions

Field service technicians encounter various technical problems and challenges while working on-site. That is why Field Technicians need to have strong problem-solving skills to analyze complex issues, identify root causes, and implement effective solutions.

This ability to think critically and adapt to changing situations can further be supported with technology that is capable of troubleshooting, diagnosing, and resolving technical issues efficiently.

This is where the decision of either Buying or Building becomes critical in answering the question: Will this help frontline users to do their jobs better?

Key Requirements for Field Service Solutions



Connected

The solution chosen should connect all departments to coordinate with frontline users both in the field and in the office. Connected tech solutions enable organizations to break down barriers, streamline processes, and drive effective collaboration, leading to improved productivity, enhanced decision-making, and a superior overall customer experience.

Automated

The tech that allows integrations, automation, and systemic dissemination of processes and procedures from topline to frontline. Through automated workflows, the system can generate purchase orders based on inventory levels, triggering automatic replenishment and ensuring a smooth supply chain.

Customized

The tech that you can build to fit your needs, is bought not as a canned solution but as an ever-evolving customizable solution to address current and future problems and opportunities. The tech solution should empower organizations to build tailored systems that precisely fit their unique needs, providing an ever-evolving and customizable solution to address current challenges and future opportunities.

The ability to connect, automate, and customize solutions allow organizations to optimize processes, improve productivity, and deliver better outcomes. It ensures that the technology aligns with their unique requirements and workflows, rather than forcing them to conform to a one-size-fits-all approach.

Customized tech solutions empower organizations to be agile, responsive, and future-ready. They provide the foundation for sustainable success by enabling organizations to tailor their technology infrastructure to their specific needs, driving efficiency, and supporting strategic goals.

That is why the decision to either BUY or BUILD is one major decision and undertaking that is not to be taken lightly. And in the ever-increasing need to be first, different, and fast–buying or building is not going to cut it anymore. Hence a third more efficient, all-encompassing option: Buy-to-Build.

Introducing the New Model: Buy-to-Build

1. What is Buy-to-Build?

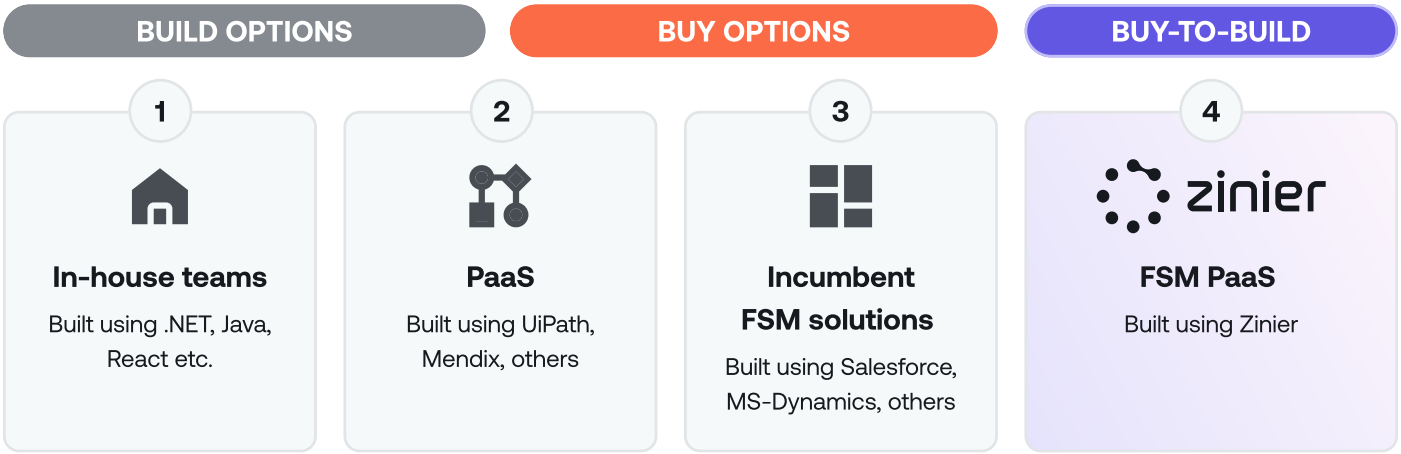
When a business experiences growth, there are several possibilities to consider when selecting a technology solution. Typically, the decision-making process involves weighing the pros and cons of buying an off-the-shelf product versus investing in the development of a custom solution as outlined below:

	PROS	CONS
Build	**Customization and scale:** All the functionality to operate exactly the way you need **Greater control:** Full control over user options, security measures, and system updates **Competitive edge:** Competitive advantage by leveraging the most efficient and scalable technology **Guaranteed integration:** Seamless integration with any existing software, tools, and processes already in use	**Significant upfront cost:** More than an off-the-shelf product **Time to build:** Time to identify your organization's workflow processes and develop the software that optimizes them **Domain expertise may be missing:** Solution may not be in area of core competence of organization, and hence may not get the best experience
Buy	**Lower upfront cost:** Typically cheaper to buy and implement **Rapid deployment:** If an existing solution meets most of your needs, there may be little point investing time and money in development **Updates, new features and ongoing maintenance:** Third-party providers want to stay competitive. They will maintain and often update the solution with new features and functionality **Built usually by domain experts:** Likely to be built by domain experts bringing in best practices for the domain	**Less customization:** While providers enable some customization, the solution won't be custom built for you **Less control:** The vendor controls the solution's updates, volume capacity, and functionalities **Compatibility and connectivity issues:** Pre-built software may not be compatible with other programs, devices, or products that you are using today — or that you may need to implement in the future

Doing a quick glance on the Pros and Cons of Building vs. Buying, we are left to wonder: what if there was a third alternative that married the best of both worlds?

This is what we call the Buy-to-Build. The Buy-to-Build alternative involves partnering with a solution provider that has both platform capabilities (PaaS) AND field service expertise that can be leveraged to build out a solution.

In summary, here's an overview of the different software solutions companies can choose from:



2. Benefits of the Buy-to-Build Strategy

Ultimately, a software solution with prebuilt FSM capabilities and an option to customize represents the best of both worlds. And buying to build using *Zinier* allows to take advantage of purpose-built field service solutions on a modern platform.

A comparison of the different approaches and summary of the benefits of Buy-to-Build are outlined below.

	BUILD OPTIONS		BUY OPTIONS	BUY-TO-BUILD
Relevant criteria	**In-house teams**	**PaaS**	**Incumbent FSM solutions**	**zinier**
FIELD SERVICE EXPERTISE • Value-chain coverage • Purposely built for field service • Single interface for field service orchestration	Field service experts not trained to support software projects	Does not offer any FSM modules and expertise. Platform limitations may include scalability, offline capabilities.	Field service experts with a wide coverage of value-chain. Out of the box FSM modules.	• Field service experts with a wide coverage of value-chains. • Out of the box FSM module
MODERN TECHNOLOGY STACK • Modern multi-cloud infrastructure • Native mobile app with consumer-grade UX/UI • REST-based APIs	Typically built on legacy technology stacks – heavily dependent on large IT teams – difficult to hire and retain	Low-code developers to consult with field service experts	Built on legacy technology stacks, vast integration experience	• Modern and open technology stacks, easily configurable (using low/no-code) • Follow agile development cycles
UNIFIED PLATFORM • Event-Driven Architecture (EDA) • Automation workflow builder • Integration with AI/ML services	Not configurable and scalable to manage multiple work streams	Cannot adapt to hierarchical organization structures to support multiple divisions and work streams	Multiple work streams can be configured but not scalable to support multiple divisions	• Event-driven architecture with a unified platform to support multiple work streams and hybrid workforce

BUY-TO-BUILD

Key Benefits of the Buy-to-Build Strategy

- ☑ Realize value quickly, solve today's problems and future-proof investment.
- ☑ Utilize FSM features developed for field services, regularly enhanced and tested in real deployments.
- ☑ Manage all business divisions on a single platform with unique workflow and integration requirements.
- ☑ Conduct changes at scale using Zinier's no-code low-code tooling (StudioZ) with evolving business requirements.

3. Comparing Implementation Approaches

In addition to the solution itself, the implementing approach with a Buy-to-Build solution like Zinier, comes with additional benefits when compared to implementing traditional build vs. buy solutions.

Here's a quick overview comparing implementation approaches.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE OVER THE YEARS

Implementation choice	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	Notes
In-house solutions LONG TIME TO REALIZE VALUE	**Ideate and build** Dedicated development team	**Build and Use** Dedicated dev team skilled in server, web, mobile, design, qa	**Maintain, Enhance** Dedicated dev team skilled in DevOps	FSM Vendors typically have taken 4-7 years for delivering matured products and modules to the market (e.g. scheduler)
PaaS solutions LONG TIME TO REALIZE VALUE	**Train and build basic web/mobile Apps** Dedicated dev team skilled in low-code	**Build and use FSM Apps** Dedicated dev team skilled in low-code	**Build and use FSM Apps** Dedicated dev team skilled in low-code	Customers have encountered platform limitations as they are not built for FSM application (e.g. PowerApps cannot load more than 2000 records)
Incumbent FSM solutions EXPENSIVE TO ENHANCE AND ADAPT	**Customize and Use**	**Costly Enhancements**	**Costly Enhancements**	May not fully align with existing investments and heavy reliance on IT teams for changes and enhancements
zinier **Buy-to-build solutions** REDUCED TIME TO VALUE WITH LOW COST TO ENHANCE	**Customize and Use** Initial Implementation cost to match workflow and integrate with existing solutions	**Easy to Enhance** Inherit product and platform enhancements Low cost Self service changes to keep solution relevant	**Easy to Enhance** Inherit product and platform enhancements Low cost Self service changes to keep solution relevant	Ready to use FSM modules that can be enhanced easily using the low-code/no-code builder

Ultimately, Zinier's Buy-to-Build implementations offer the most flexible solution – a solution that can not only be tailored to your organization's specific business needs, but a solution that helps you reduce time-to-market and costs both initially and as your needs evolve.

How to Successfully Implement Buy-to-Build

Indeed, for many enterprise companies, it is beneficial to move beyond the traditional "build vs buy" dilemma and implement a Buy-to-Build solution.

If you've made the decision to move forward with a Buy-to-Build strategy, how can you put yourself in the best position to make the implementation a success? These steps can help:

1. **Have a clear understanding of the project requirements:** Have a clear understanding of the project requirements: Project requirements help define the goals and objectives of the initiative. Understanding these requirements ensures that any solution, whether built or bought, is aligned with the overall business strategy and addresses the specific needs of the organization. So make sure you take the time to clearly define the requirements and business objectives BEFORE deciding on a solution.
2. **Consider long-term flexibility and scalability:** After understanding of the project requirements, you will want to consider the customization needs required in the future and which requirements are necessary to ensure not only flexibility, but also scalability. Doing so will help in evaluating whether existing solutions can meet those requirements or if you have to prioritize building those out. For example, if seamless integration is critical, it is important to evaluate which solutions can meet those requirements out-of- the-box and which ones require integrations to be built on top.
3. **Leverage agile methodologies:** You may think you know your project requirements, but when you start customizing and testing the solution, new challenges and needs always arise. Furthermore, your business needs may also change over time, making it important for your solution to be able to evolve as well. That's why it's important to take an agile approach to delivery. At Zinier, we deliver what we call Value Releases using agile methodologies. We operate in 2 week delivery sprints and show you progress and collect feedback after every other sprint. Taking an agile delivery approach, serves two purposes: first, it helps you delivery value as soon as possible. And second, it ensures collaboration and alignment along the way so you can continue to modify and optimize the solution incrementally.
4. **Have a strong management team in place:** You will need a good team in place to manage priorities and ensure value is delivered with each implementation release. This team should have a clear sense of the project requirements and the long-term vision of the project. If the solution is expected to evolve significantly over time, the team needs to act with conviction and leadership to ensure resources stay true to delivering features that align to the company's objectives – especially when new feature requests inevitably pop-up.
5. **Communicate and collaborate across teams:** You will inevitably be working towards a deadline. To get there, collaboration and communication across teams is critical to defining realistic project timelines and evaluating the implementation effort required to meet those timelines. As part of that process, cross-functional teams will need to work hand-in-hand to define the functionality, features, and scope of the project so that the micro aligns to the macro.

Conclusion

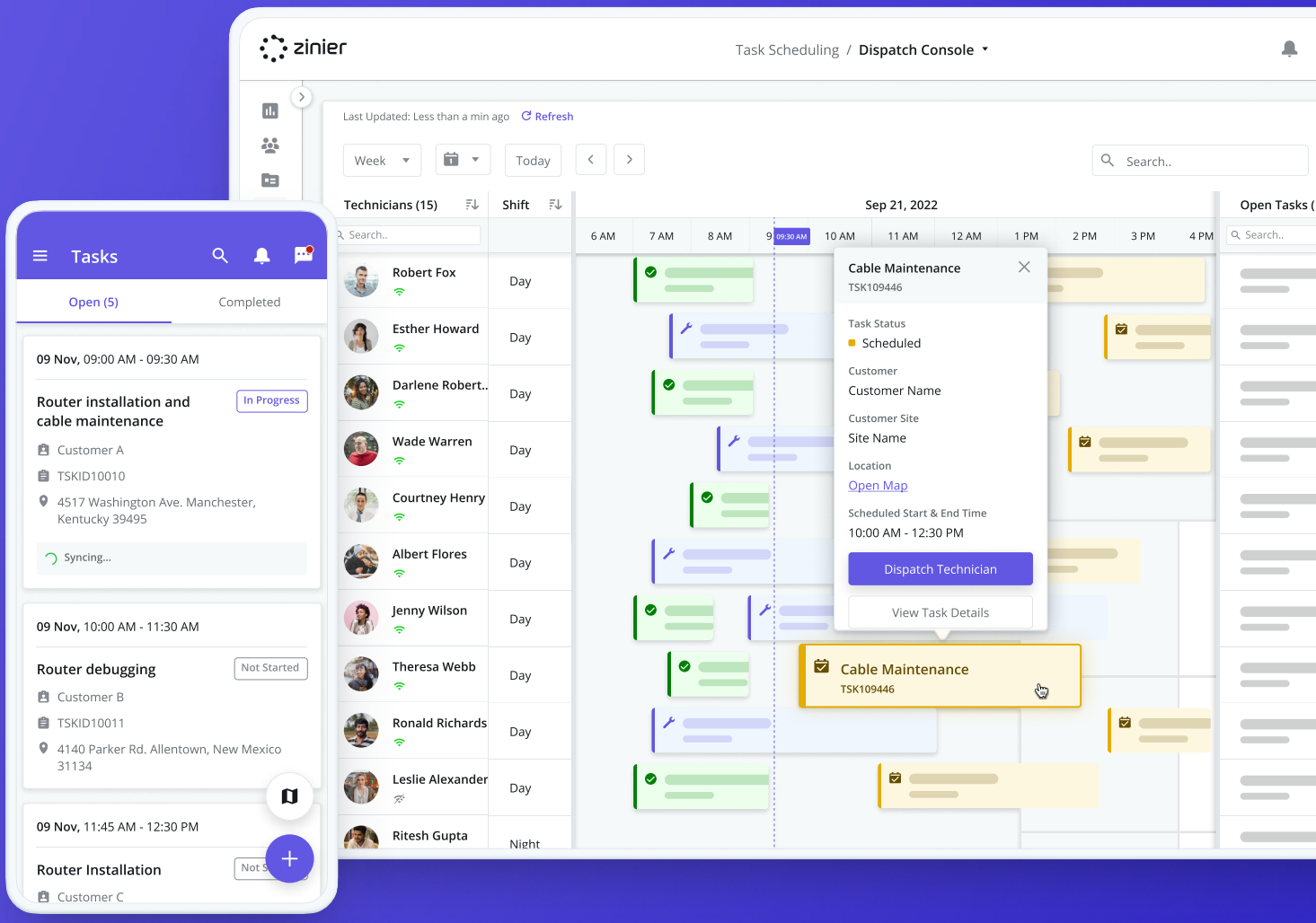
In today's rapidly evolving technology landscape, customized tech solutions play a vital role in empowering businesses to thrive and stay competitive. The new technology world of business demands solutions that are tailored to specific needs, agile, and capable of leveraging the latest advancements. Moreover, customized tech solutions cater to the growing demand for personalized user experiences.

In today's customer-centric era, businesses need to deliver solutions that resonate with their target audience and provide exceptional user experiences. Customization allows for the incorporation of specific features, intuitive interfaces, and personalized interactions, resulting in higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.

However, it is important to strike a balance between customization and efficiency. While customization brings immense value, it should be approached judiciously to avoid over-engineering or excessive costs.

From the Buy vs Build dilemma to a Buy-to-Build strategy–we learned that there is always a third and best option to take. These decisions can empower organizations to align their technology with specific needs, innovate, differentiate, and deliver exceptional user experiences.

By leveraging customization, businesses can adapt to the ever-changing market landscape, harness emerging technologies, and drive growth and success in the dynamic business environment of today and tomorrow.



About Zinier

At Zinier, we are committed to the success of the world's deskless workers. We are on a mission to enable these 2.7B deskless workers to achieve greater success for themselves and the world around them. Guided by a deep understanding of the world of deskless workers, we orchestrate workflows that help field service organizations stay in full control of and have complete visibility into the field execution process.

Zinier is a cloud-based Field Services platform that helps telecommunication organizations with network assurance, fixed-network pre-enablement and consumer installs. Our web and mobile app automates key back office tasks, provides technicians a seamless way to record their work in the field, and improves your customer experience. Through the use of no-code tools, our platform offers you out of the box software to help scale telecom operations and field execution workflows that can be tailored to meet your business process needs.

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