

The Numbers Behind First-Time Fix Rates You Should Know About

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One of the most important numbers any field service organization will tell you they track is their first-time fix rate. It's perhaps the most vital metric to gauge the performance of a service organization from every level, and with [field service management software](#) and [Business Intelligence](#), service managers can get the first-time fix rate down to a single technician, so that they know who the most productive technicians are, so they can make changes to alter the ones that aren't so high.

There are plenty of metrics to calculate that are important, such as workforce utilization, productivity, mean time to repair and on-time performance, but first-time fix rates are the true measurement of a field service organizations efficiency. A low first-time fix rate reflects poorly on the process in which an organization delivers service, which can negatively affect the customer experience, which could reduce the profitability of your organization.

Let's dive into the numbers behind first-time fix rates and see why they are so important to field service organizations who want to deliver exceptional service to their customers, without having to send multiple technicians, multiple times, for one service call.

17 Percent of Organizations Don't Track First-Time Fix in Field Service Software

In a recent survey by Aberdeen, 17 percent of field service organizations don't track their first-time fix rate. That's a decrease from their 2008 survey where 29 percent of organizations did not measure the important metric. That means 83 percent of service organizations are tracking first-time fix rates, many of which are using a [field service management software](#) to get as accurate a number as they possibly can.

It speaks to the importance of the metric when that many organizations are tracking it, because it is valuable and be a number that describes an entire organizations ability to deliver service effectively. It goes to the heart of many fundamental issues within a service organization, such as their ability to dispatch the right technician, with the right skillset to the job site, the ability to avoid idle times, parts and inventory issues, and travel times.

The Average First-Time Fix Rate is 75 Percent

In their 2013 survey, Aberdeen found that the average first-time fix rate is 75 percent, meaning three out of every four service calls is finalized in the first visit. But that also means that a quarter of all service calls require at least one more visit and depending on the number of service calls performed overall, that could be a significant number of calls that require a revisit by another technician.

In fact, Aberdeen found that on average, it took an additional 1.6 dispatches to ensure a complete resolution of the problem, which is costly, especially if the customer isn't on the hook for the cost to send another technician to the job, due to things such as the wrong technician being sent, or a lack of proper inventory or supplies.

With field service organization looking to retain customers by ensuring they are part of that 75 percent, many are turning to field service management software to cut down on potential dispatching flaws, such as sending a technician who doesn't have the right skillset to complete a call to a job. Or they are using a field service mobile app to ensure all the information or service history is available to their technicians to give them the best opportunity at finding a solution in the first visit.

Additional Dispatch Can Cost Hundreds to Thousands of Dollars

Aberdeen found in their research that the cost of a single truck operating falls between \$200 and \$300 per service call, depending on the industry and type of work being done. If your organization is doing 500 service calls a day, and has a first-time fix rate of 75 percent, that means 125 service calls a day need a second dispatch, which can cost anywhere between \$25,000 and \$37,500 combined for one additional dispatch, and some may need even more.

This can be an extreme cost burden for some field service organizations and start to have a cumulative effect on the service organization, because every additional dispatch is utilizing a technician on an old service call, and not something new. And the more service calls that are taking multiple visits, the less time there is for new work to be completed. In the above example, if 125 service calls need an additional dispatch, that field service organization who is doing 500 calls a day can now only take on 375 new calls, as their technicians must complete the 125 they haven't found a resolution to yet.

That means either the field service organization must take a loss in new revenue, have their technicians work extra time, or hire subcontractors to facilitate the demand. Therefore, field service management software is becoming an increasingly popular option because schedule optimization is especially important when having to deal with additional service calls. Dispatchers can still try and maintain their regular daily average of service calls, while filling in idle times with additional service calls, to ensure no call is missed.

First-Time Fix Rate is Especially Important to Customers

Putting aside the costs of additional dispatch and the productivity of technicians, first-time fix rates are especially important to your customers. Customers don't necessarily care about the rate itself, as they want one simple number— one visit, one resolution.

Aberdeen found that 57% of customer want better first-time fix rates, and their largest complaint is technicians can't find a resolution to their problem in one visit. That's enough for some customers to start questioning who they have providing their service, and they are willing to move on to another company who can offer a high fix rate. That can then be measured in loss revenue and just as important, customer retention. As first-time fix rates drop, so too does customer retention rates.

Field Service Software as The Solution

The three main reasons why there needs to be an additional dispatch according to Aberdeen is (51 percent) lack of proper parts, either because they are incorrect, or no parts are available, the (25%) technician doesn't have the correct training or experience, and (13%) not enough time to complete the task. All three of these can require additional visits and all three are avoidable, especially when using a field service management software to dispatch correctly.

Dispatchers can ensure the right technician is being sent to the job by using a skillset search to narrow down the technicians who meet the right experience and have the correct certifications or training to complete a job. A look into inventory and parts without the field service software can ensure that parts are available for a service call, prior to a technician going to the job site, and if not, the call can be rescheduled when parts are available. And with [mobile field service software](#), if a technician needs more time on a job site, dispatchers can rearrange their schedules with simple drag and drop tools, moving service calls to other technicians and optimizing their schedules to ensure there is enough time to complete all the work.

With first-time fix rates being so important to the field service industry, it is just as important to get a field service software that can calculate those rate numbers at the organizational level and down to each technician, while also offering solutions to help get that first-time fix rate percentage well above the average to retain customers and keep them satisfied.