

LEVERAGING SCALABLE TECHNOLOGIES TO EFFECTIVELY STREAMLINE SME OPERATIONS

Field Service Management for SMEs
Expo 2018

GeoOp.



10th Annual



FESM
Field Service Management
2018

As a business owner leading teams of field technicians the biggest opportunity to grow your business, increase profit margins and deliver better services lies in leveraging cloud based solutions, mobile apps and digital technology that will help streamline operations – ensuring your technicians are where they need to be on time and equipped with the right tools for the job, and that your customers are receiving a superior experience.

Ahead of the **Field Service Management for SME's Expo 2018** we chat to **Eduardo Rodrigues**, Business Development Manager at **GeoOp**, a cloud-based job management software provider for SMEs. In this article Eduardo explores some of the key challenges affecting SME operations, and delves into how emerging technologies be scaled and effectively leveraged by SMEs to streamline operations and increase productivity.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY CHALLENGES FACING SME'S WHEN IT COMES TO FIELD OPERATIONS?

Working day in and day out with a number of SMEs we see trends emerging amongst most operators. These business owners are investing a lot of time and money on new employees and new technologies in an effort to grow their business, but they're struggling because the fundamentals are wrong. Despite the investments and increasing job numbers, they're stuck with old, inefficient methods of operating.

Most of the companies we deal with, they are in a stage where they want to scale the business, but what they have in place is paper-based processes or a mixture of different processes, some paper, some digital. For example, they may have already a digital calendar, like Outlook or like Google Calendar, that they use to do the scheduling, but the other part of the job, let's say, the record keeping for the job, it's still done on paper, or the way they communicate with their workers around the schedule, they're still doing it via text messages and via email.

What this creates is sparse operational methods which lead to inconsistencies. Thus, to deliver greater productivity and customer service they need to be operationally efficient, and to be operationally efficient, attentions need to be shifted from manual activities into more revenue-driven digital activities that create greater consistency and transparency around operations.

HOW CAN EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES BE SCALED AND EFFECTIVELY LEVERAGED BY SMES TO HELP OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?

The market nowadays is full of different tools - some are more mature than others, some are not as mature, just like the businesses themselves. The challenge then is to find a tool that aligns with the level of maturity that their business is at as not to have an overutilised or underutilised tool.

Once onboarding the right tool, and again, this is important, you need to find the right tool and onboard it completely, not onboard a number of tools, business managers need to jump in with two feet. Gaining buy-in and managing employees is key. Upskilling and training staff to gain the maximum value out of the tool and using it completely to begin optimise internal processes with ultimately have a huge impact on productivity, employee experience and customer experience.

CASE STUDY



GeoOp.

Auckland Council's Animal Management department is incredibly busy. Its 40 animal management officers (AMOs) are constantly travelling across the large council area in New Zealand's North Island, dealing with issues such as aggressive dogs or wandering stock. As well as handling thousands of regular jobs, it responds to about 400 cases every month that require a rapid response.

The pressure to perform quickly in a crisis is essential, which is why the council is pleased GeoOp and Navman are on its side. Daniel Hadfield, who is team leader for the council's dispatch team, says a reliable and easy-to-use mobile workforce management system has been vital to its success.

"We use GeoOp to pass along requests for service to our AMOs out in the field," Daniel says. "All of our officers are equipped with smartphones as well as our dispatch team. When a request for service comes through, the dispatch team puts all the information into the fields provided in GeoOp, using the council system alongside to match reference numbers."

Daniel says once a job is assigned, AMOs update their work status and do all of their reporting onsite. "When the AMOs are out on the road, they can be taking photos, taking notes and getting signatures. Everything they need to keep track of is put into GeoOp, which packages it all together.

CASE STUDY



TCVneo operate all over Victoria installing and maintaining antenna, aerials and cabling for commercial and domestic customers. Prior to digitising the business ran on a paper based system with clients faxing jobs that were then printed, scanned and re-faxed to field technicians. All data entry off faxed sheets was also manually entered into Excel spreadsheets to keep the business updated with job statuses. This proved time consuming and a massive resource drain, says TCVneo Operations Manager Tod Gudde.

Tod continues; "a number of GeoOp features appealed to us upon assessment of the service including compatibility with both iPhones and Androids... [and] GeoOp's Offline-Mode feature – which was also a major draw for TCVneo."

As Tod explains; "s lot of our jobs are in far rural areas and it is important to have an app which works when there isn't any phone coverage. If we don't get a good phone signal out in the field, GeoOp automatically goes into flight mode. You are still able to continue with the job as usual; take photos, make notes, etc, however the information is sent through once the phone catches the signal again."

GeoOp Solutions have helped TCVneo streamline manual job dispatch, documentation, filing and archiving. As such TVCneo have significantly reduced their admin resources and found 100% savings.

WHAT AREA OF OPERATIONS PROVIDES THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY FOR SMES TO IMPROVE OVERALL EFFICIENCY?

The biggest opportunity for any business, whether in field services or otherwise, is customer experience. Providing a superior customer experience is emerging as a key differentiating factor in a crowded and competitive environment.

At GeoOp we always tell the businesses we work with to put themselves in their customers' shoes. When you ring your bank or your insurance company you expect to receive answers about your affairs and about your account on the spot – you don't want to be put on hold, and you definitely don't want someone to go digging through paperwork and call you back 24 hours later.

By putting your clients at the heart of everything you do you're better positioned to deliver the ultimate client experience. Really it comes back to that age old adage; 'right people, right place, right tools, right time.' But you can only create this ideal balance by being operationally efficient. To achieve that you need to take advantage of digital tools that will not only equip your technicians with the right information, but will also elevate your business's status in the eyes of the client.

WHAT STRATEGIES CAN MANAGERS USE TO MOTIVATE AND ENGAGE THEIR WORKFORCE?

People get stuck in their ways and like to work in a way that's familiar – often encouraging employees, especially those who have been onboard for years, to change their habits in favour of something new and foreign that requires them to learn new skills can be challenging.

The best way to get employees onboard with new systems and processes is to highlight the benefits – not just for the business, but for them individually. Employees can either see the glass half full or they can see the glass half empty. That new mobile app? It could be 'big brother' always watching, or it could be an efficient, portable and convenient way to get paperwork done digitally and get them home to their families sooner.

Vendors working collaboratively with business owners to really highlight these benefits is key to selling new processes to employees and to securing their buy-in early.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF ATTENDING THE FIELD SERVICES FOR SMES EXPO 2018?

From an SME business owner or manager's perspective, I think this event provides a really great opportunity to meet with peers and to communicate and collaborate with companies that are maybe one level above and learn about their growth journey, or one level below and share your expertise and experiences.

With a number of different businesses each sharing their individual stories, pain points, lessons learned and best practice strategies the event provides an ideal learning platform. Moreover with a host of expert vendors present any SME owner is likely to find the right solution to launch their business into the future and really optimise operations.

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If you're interested in hearing more about leveraging technology to streamline field services, improve customer experience and increase technician productivity then join us at the **Field Service Management for SMEs Expo**.

The event held on the 17th of April at Dockside in Sydney CBD has been specifically tailored for business owners from electrical, plumbing, construction, coating, waterproofing and more, to explore how to increase profit margins by improving the effectiveness of field technicians.

Register your spot at this one of a kind event now!

Don't miss your opportunity to NETWORK, CONNECT and LEARN with senior business leaders, small business owners and field service professionals at the largest gathering of field service professionals in Australasia.