

5 things to consider

when evaluating a Field Service Management Solution

01 CONFIGURABILITY

Can the solution meet the specific needs of my business or industry?

Your organization may have established processes that are unique to your industry. The mobile field force management solution you're considering should help you optimize these existing process workflows – not make them more complex.

For instance, is the product easily configurable? Can you customize workflows for specific jobs or roles? Also evaluate how difficult it's going to be when you want to add a new process, or make changes to an existing process. What's the best-case scenario? Being able to easily make these changes by yourself and have them apply to everybody involved, without depending on additional support!



02 INTEGRATION

Does the solution integrate easily with my organization's existing hardware and other enterprise systems?

If you've been in business for even a short while, you might already have various go-to applications including accounting software, CRM, invoicing, maintenance and ERP systems. When introducing a mobile field force management solution, it's critical that this integrates easily with these existing systems, applications (like an office suite) and mail servers (like Outlook) so that you don't have to re-wire the way your organization is already used to working. What's also important is that you don't have to invest in new hardware – such as high-end mobile devices – so that your teams can use the solution. Look for a platform-independent mobile field force solution that can work across devices.



Mobile 4G connections to grow from 203 million in 2013 to 1.5 billion by 2018



03 INSTALLATION & UPDATES

What delivery model does the product company offer?

From a resources perspective, how much time and money is going to be spent on getting the mobile field force automation solution up and running? How quickly can your teams begin using it? Will there be numerous phases involved to roll-out the solution across teams who might be scattered across the state or the country?

Today, it's becoming increasingly convenient to adopt cloud-based, on-demand enterprise mobile applications because of the associated benefits. For instance, because there is no additional hardware purchase involved, most SaaS-based vendors offer applications based on a monthly or annual subscription, making expenses more predictable. Whenever the need arises, you can choose to scale up (or scale down) the number of subscriptions based on your team size. The cloud-based infrastructure also makes it easier to update to the latest version of the application.



04 CONNECTIVITY

Can my field force still use the solution in areas of reduced or no connectivity?

If your organization operates in an industry that involves field teams going out into remote locations, then working with a product that has a high dependency on a live internet connection is going to be challenging. This problem also applies to field teams operating in areas that are often plagued by frequent network usage overload or network failure.

Evaluate if the product can continue to work without any network connectivity, and sync data later when a connection is found. Also check if the solution can support different types of mobile internet connections including, 2G, 3G, 4G and WiFi.



05 TRAINING

How much time will I have to invest in training my field force to use the solution?

When evaluating the right mobile field force management solution, ascertain how much time your team is going to have to spend in training sessions before they can use it. Factor in the time, effort and expenses involved in bringing your field team together for such a session, especially if they are spread across a large geographical area. Again, its important to stress how critical it is for the solution to be able to integrate easily with the way your teams already used to working, and the application should be intuitively designed to enable this. This is all the more important when you're evaluating a cloud-based application, because ideally, your teams should be able to just download the app and begin using it right away.



Gartner estimates SaaS sales in 2010 reached \$10 billion, and will more than double by 2015 to a projected \$21.3 billion