

Advancing Technology in Field Service

A Comprehensive Examination of the Field's Current Technologies, Capabilities, and Challenges for Workforce and Fleet Management



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About the Report

As the field service sector evolves, the adoption of advanced technology in areas like workforce and fleet management has become paramount. Field service organizations need a comprehensive solution that provides them with automation, data analytics, real-time reporting, monitoring, and workforce optimization capabilities.

This report explores the current state of fleet and asset management technology in the field service sector. It pays special attention to the capabilities field service teams currently have for optimizing the workforce, as well as what capabilities they lack and the pain points that are preventing them from achieving goals like cost reduction, risk reduction, compliance, and sustainability.

Executive Summary

Field service organizations have achieved a significant amount of visibility into their assets and their fleet operations. For example, 97% of the respondents to the study say they can manage their vehicles, assets, drives, and equipment from a single platform. Similarly, 93% have real-time visibility into the location of their assets on any given day.

However, most of the respondents feel that their spend management tools, driver monitoring tools, and workforce management software are lacking in key areas. Specifically, 59% say their workforce management technology is only somewhat effective at enabling them to optimize resource allocation, while 59% say their spend management tools are not very effective at helping them obtain fuels discounts.

Overall, field service organizations need solutions that address their key pain points. According to the respondents, they struggle most with rising fuel costs, operational costs from unsafe driving, and equipment theft, fraud, and unauthorized use.



Key Insights

Among the respondents:

Asset Visibility

97% can manage their vehicles, assets, drivers, and equipment from a single integrated platform.

93% have real-time visibility into the location of their assets on any given day.

Cost Mangement

59% say their spend management tools are not very effective at helping them obtain fuel discounts—24% say they are not effective at all.

41% say their spend management tools are not very effective at helping them obtain maintenance discounts.

43% say their spend management tools are not very effective at reducing losses due to fraud.

Their three most significant customer service and fleet management pain points are:

- Rising fuel costs (84%)
- Operational costs from accidents and unsafe driving (64%)
- Equipment theft, fraud, or unauthorized use (63%)

Safety & Compliance

55% claim their driver safety technology is not very effective and 22% say it is not effective at all at helping them predict high risks of accidents.

70% lack visibility into whether their drivers engage in wasteful practices such as idling, speeding, and making hard accelerations.

Sustainability

46% claim their current fleet, asset, and equipment management technology is not very effective in helping them achieve sustainability goals—16% claim it is not effective at all.

Workforce Management

77% say manual and timeconsuming administrative tasks are one of their current workforce management challenges.

59% say their workforce management technology is only somewhat effective at enabling them to optimize crew scheduling and resource allocation.

89% don't have access to real-time analytics and reporting capabilities that provide insights into workforce performance.

86% claim their workforce management solutions need to have mobile accessibility for employees to access schedules, request time off, and view workrelated information.

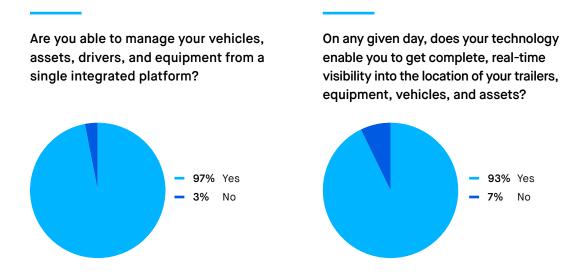
52% are not very satisfied (35%) or not satisfied at all (17%) with the level of automation and self-service features offered by their current workforce management systems.



Field Service Teams Can Track Their Equipment, but Lack Insight Into Future Risks with Costly Consequences

Technology advancements in fleet and workforce management have revolutionized the field service industry, offering unprecedented visibility into assets and operations. However, despite these significant strides, many service teams grapple with effective cost management.

This section of the report delves into the current state of fleet management technology in the field service sector, examining how these solutions not only enhance operational outcomes but also present opportunities for significant cost reduction.



At 97%, most of the respondents can manage their vehicles, assets, drivers, and equipment from a single integrated platform. Only 3% of the respondents don't have this capability.

In conversations with researchers, respondents who can't manage all their assets from a single platform say they are struggling with solutions that they developed internally, or they haven't found the right provider to give them this capability.

Internally built solutions and difficulties finding the right providers has hindered asset management efforts.

"We haven't been able to identify the right solution provider, although there are many in the market."

- Vice president of operations, medical and scientific device company

These respondents say they currently use "GPS-enabled tools" as well as "a few automated tracking tools," but they otherwise lack an integrated system.



Because most of the respondents have visibility into their assets on a single platform, almost all of them (93%) also agree that their technologies enable them to get complete, real-time visibility into the location of their trailers, equipment, vehicle, and assets. This is encouraging given that this capability is critical to preventing unauthorized use, fraud, and asset loss.

We will learn, however, that although most companies have achieved basic fleet monitoring, management, and compliance capabilities, they are struggling in some areas, such as data analysis and cost reduction.

Which of the following are your three most significant pain points in terms of customer service and fleet management?

Rising fuel costs	
	84%
Unsafe driving and accidents cause increasing operational costs	3
64%	
Equipment theft, fraud, or unauthorized use	
63%	
Equipment failure or inefficient maintenance processes	
53%	
Inefficient fleet visibility systems hindering dispatch 14%	
Lack of accurate data to provide ETAs and delivery windows 11%	
Inefficient processes for tracking crews and hours 6%	
Missing documentation or proof of service 5%	

Researchers asked the respondents to select their three most significant pain points in terms of customer service and fleet management from a list of several options. Overwhelmingly, **the most significant pain point among the respondents is rising fuel costs (84%).** Most of the respondents are also struggling with increasing operational costs due to unsafe driving (64%), equipment theft, fraud, or unauthorized use (63%), and equipment failure or inefficient maintenance processes (53%).

Ideally, an organization's fleet management tools should be able to help address these areas. For example, with rising fuel costs as such a critical concern, field service managers should be able to turn to their spend management solutions to identify opportunities for savings such as fuel discounts.

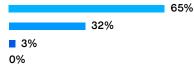
At 65%, most of the respondents agree that their current spend management tools are very effective in giving them a full view of their fuel operations. However, their current technology deployments are struggling in other areas.



How effective are your current spend management tool(s) in helping you achieve the following?

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not very effective
- Not effective at all

Obtaining a full view of fuel operations



Preventing transactions from occurring outside of approved locations



Most of the respondents say their tools are not very effective (59%) or not effective at all (24%) at helping them obtain fuel discounts, for example. Some of the respondents are also struggling to reduce losses due to fraud and obtain maintenance discounts.

About half of the respondents in each case say their tools are only somewhat effective at preventing transitions from occurring outside approved locations (50%) and reducing unauthorized spending (53%).

If organizations' existing spend management tools can't produce value in these areas, they might be missing out on additional savings. New fleet and workforce management technologies are the way to bridge these gaps.

The best fleet management solutions provide an end-to-end solution for managing fuel, maintenance, and operations costs. With powerful analytics capabilities, fleet managers have visibility into how their vehicles are performing and can identify areas of inefficiency.

Automated tools also allow them to schedule service and maintenance more efficiently, reducing downtime and ensuring vehicles are always running smoothly. Similarly, GPS tracking helps reduce costs through routing and scheduling optimization, and can even help keep drivers safe from dangerous driving conditions or other risks.

These technologies also increase employee productivity by reducing paperwork and administrative burdens like selecting the right vehicle for a job. This in turn can help reduce operational costs while increasing employee satisfaction.

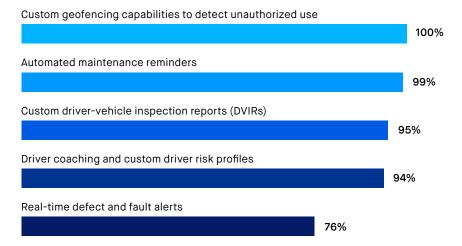


Organizations Still Struggle with Some Areas of Fleet Safety and Compliance

Companies with substantial fleets often leverage vehicle monitoring technologies to prevent unauthorized use and monitor telematics.

These capabilities are now critical because regulations, insurance costs, and customer demands are more stringent than ever. Companies are also aware that unsafe drivers and vehicles can damage their reputations or lead to expensive litigation.

Which of the following capabilities do you have with your current fleet and asset maintenance technologies?



The respondents have several critical safety capabilities thanks to their fleet and asset maintenance technologies. In each case, all or almost all the respondents have custom geofencing capabilities to detect unauthorized use, as well as automated maintenance reminders, custom driver-vehicle inspection reports, and custom driver risk profiles for driver coaching. At 76%, most can also produce real-time defect and fault alerts for active fleet vehicles.

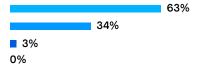
These results indicate that most field service organizations have implemented the basic technologies they need for fleet safety and asset maintenance. However, companies are facing deficiencies in other areas, especially when it comes to predicting future risks.

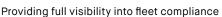


How effective is your current driver and fleet compliance technology in the following categories?

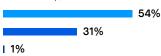
- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Not very effective
- Not effective at all

Automated unidentified trip matching









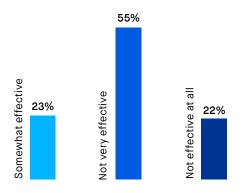
Most of the respondents say their driver and fleet compliance technologies are very effective at automated unidentified trip matching (63%) and providing full visibility into fleet compliance (63%), but these are the only categories for which a majority of the respondents find their technologies very effective.

In each case, most of the respondents find their technologies only somewhat effective at reducing hours of service (HOS) violations (57%) and reducing insurance costs (54%). Notably, **31% of the respondents say their technologies are not very effective at reducing insurance costs, while 1% say they are not effective at all.**

Although field service departments have made some progress with compliance technologies, they are still struggling with unnecessary risks and potentially high insurance costs due to ineffective solutions.



How effective is your current driver safety technology in helping you predict high risks of accidents?



Because of these deficiencies, most of the respondents have little confidence in their current driver safety technologies when it comes to predicting accident risk. Despite investments in fleet monitoring tools, too many companies cannot analyze data collected from telematics to make predictions about risky behavior on the road.

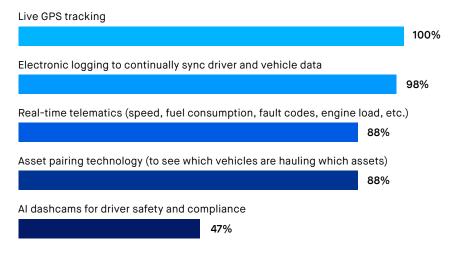
A slight majority of the respondents (55%) say their current driver safety technology is not very effective in helping predict high risks of accidents. Another 22% say their technology is not effective at all in this endeavor.

To resolve this issue, field management departments must consider investing in predictive technologies that can utilize data from telematics and other systems. This way, these businesses can detect patterns in driver behavior that indicate the potential risk of accidents before they happen.

This type of information could be used to alert supervisors and management about potentially dangerous driving practices, giving them the power to intervene and correct the issue before an accident occurs.

This capability, combined with other vehicle monitoring tools, would significantly reduce risk among drivers and the fleet.

Which of the following vehicle monitoring features can you leverage with your current technology?





Most field service organizations have already installed a range of vehicle monitoring features to help with driver safety and compliance. For example, all the respondents say they have installed live GPS tracking and electronic logging to continually synchronize driver and vehicle data. In each case, 88% of the respondents have also installed asset pairing technology and real-time telematics in their vehicles.

Asset pairing technology enables the company to monitor which vehicles are hauling which company assets. Real-time telematics monitors conditions like speed, fuel consumption, fault codes, and engine parameters. The latter is an important capability for safety and compliance purposes, but it can also help the company monitor sustainability metrics like carbon output.

Notably, only 47% of the respondents currently use AI dashcams for driver safety and compliance. This technology monitors driver behavior, automatically detecting risky behaviors like distracted driving and drowsy driving. Unsafe driving behaviors such as close following, cell phone use, hard breaking, hard cornering, hard accelerations, and seat belt violations can significantly impact employee health and safety while also putting assets at risk.

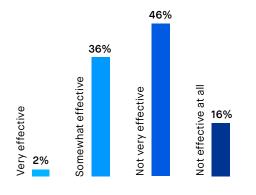
These results suggest that field service organizations have made significant progress in onboarding fleet safety and compliance technologies. However, more companies should investigate AI dashcams as a possibility. This technology can be a significant asset in coaching drivers to avoid risky behaviors while on the road.

Over 60% of Field Service Departments Say Sustainability Technology is Ineffective at Reaching Sustainability Goals

The field service department plays a primary role in helping the organization become more sustainable. Each time a field service vehicle responds to a service request, it contributes to the company's overall carbon footprint.

Fleet and workforce management solutions can assist in reducing "truck rolls," thereby reducing carbon output. They can also introduce new efficiencies to help the company coach drivers and technicians in using sustainable practices in the field.

In your view, how effective is your current fleet, asset, and equipment management technology in helping you achieve your sustainability goals?



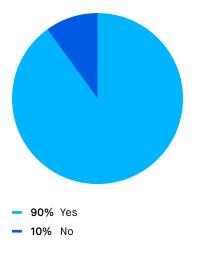
Unfortunately, most of the respondents aren't satisfied with their current fleet, asset, and equipment management technologies in their ability to help them achieve sustainability goals. Specifically, 46% say their technologies are not very effective, while 16% say they are not effective at all.





This suggests that most of the technologies in place lack the reporting capabilities to help the department monitor sustainability metrics like carbon output and waste production. The solutions could also lack the ability to offer viable alternatives for routing and scheduling.

Can you use your current fleet management technology to coach drivers in reducing wasteful practices such as idling, speeding, and making hard accelerations?



Nonetheless, 90% of the respondents agree that they can use their current fleet management technologies to coach drivers in reducing wasteful practices such as idling, speeding, and making hard accelerations. As we've learned, most companies have installed onboard telematics into their fleet vehicles as well as monitoring technologies that can help coach drivers in safety practices.

Among those respondents who don't use fleet management for this purpose, many say they do have "policies in place," to address this issue.

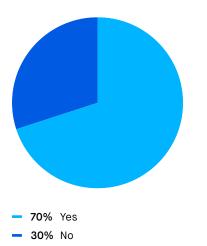
"We have coaching programs and modules that need to be completed and passed by drivers for this purpose," says a safety director at a transportation company.

Similarly, a fleet department head at a utility company says, "We only have internal training programs based on fuel tracking reports that assist us right now."

Training and coaching programs are important to achieving sustainability metrics. However, these respondents could be leveraging their fleet management technologies to generate real-time data and proactively improve their driver's sustainable practices based on documented activities in the field.



Do you lack visibility into whether or not your drivers engage in wasteful practices such as idling, speeding, and making hard accelerations?



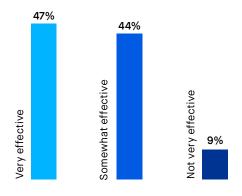
Indeed, **70% of the respondents say they lack visibility into whether their drivers engage in wasteful practices, such as idling, speeding, and making hard accelerations.** This suggests there is a gap in their ability to address and detect waste, even if they do have coaching and learning programs in place. By taking advantage of fleet management solutions, these companies may be able to gain real-time visibility into driver activities and better coach them on improving sustainability metrics.

Overall, the data from this survey shows that while there is some use of fleet management technologies in reaching sustainability goals, most organizations could benefit from improved visibility and better reporting capabilities.

Workforce Management Tools Aren't Providing Real-Time Analytics and Reporting Capabilities

Large field service operations need detailed reports to properly track assets and personnel, and custom reporting tools are essential for handling the data generated by those operations. For example, with Motive's fleet management solution, field service operators can connect the department's assets, access critical real-time information, and automate administrative, scheduling, and reporting processes.

How effective is your current workforce management solution at integrating with other systems such as payroll, time tracking, and HR software?



мotive

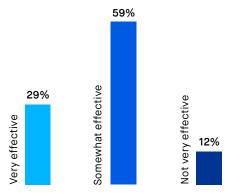
Most workforce management solutions have come a long way in terms of integrating with other technologies. Almost half of the respondents (47%) say their current workforce management solutions are very effective at integrating with other systems. Another 44% say their solutions are somewhat effective at integrating with other systems.





This suggests that most solution providers have prioritized integrations as a selling factor for their technologies. Management software that is isolated from other solutions is ineffective, as it creates data silos and prevents automation and self-service programs from being viable across the company.

How effective is your current workforce management technology at enabling you to optimize your crew scheduling and resource allocation?



Nonetheless, fewer respondents are satisfied with their workforce management technology in terms of optimizing crew scheduling and resource allocation. **Only 29% are very satisfied with their current scheduling and resource allocation capabilities** while most (59%) are only somewhat satisfied.

Field service workforce management technology must optimize crew scheduling and resource allocation by providing users with a clear view of resources and labor assets across the enterprise.

Through effective data management, the technology should be able to reduce administrative costs significantly in the long run. When selecting a field service tool, it is important for field service leaders evaluate whether its features fit the organization's needs and goals, such as automated scheduling and routing, task assignment tracking, job cost estimation, real-time visibility into operations, and more.

Most importantly, the solutions should enable the enterprise to overcome common challenges in field service.



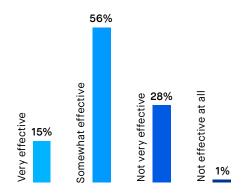
Which of the following workforce management challenges do you currently face?

Manual and time-consuming administrative tasks	
77	%
Lack of visibility into labor costs and productivity	
39%	
Compliance with labor laws and regulations	
38%	
Inefficient crew scheduling 17%	
Difficulty tracking and managing employee hours 6%	
Difficulty managing shift rotations and employee availability 4%	
None of these apply. 9%	

More than three-fourths of the respondents (77%) say they are still challenged by manual and time-consuming administrative tasks. As we will learn, many of the respondents aren't satisfied with their current workforce management solutions due to a lack of key capabilities, such as automation and data analysis.

Indeed, 39% say they struggle with a lack of visibility into labor costs and productivity, while 38% say they struggle with compliance.

How effective is your current workforce management technology in helping you optimize labor costs and improve overall productivity?



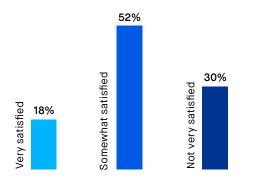
For example, most of the respondents (56%) agree that their current workforce management technologies are somewhat effective in helping them optimize labor costs and improve overall productivity. However, only 15% say their technologies are very effective, while 29% believe their tools are not very effective or worse.



Workforce management technologies must be capable of optimizing labor management by facilitating more efficient scheduling, providing real-time analytics, accurately tracking time, forecasting labor needs, managing compliance, enabling employee selfservice, and supporting training and development. Although the respondents' tools are effective in some areas, they are not effective in other critical areas.

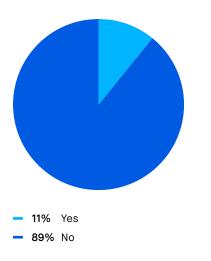
One of the primary challenges among the respondents is an inability to analyze and use data.

How satisfied are you with the accuracy and reliability of the data provided by your current workforce management system?



Most of the respondents agree that the data they receive from their solutions is at least somewhat accurate. Specifically, 52% are somewhat satisfied with the accuracy and reliability of the data provided by their current workforce management systems, while 18% are very satisfied.

Do you have access to real-time analytics and reporting capabilities that provide insights into workforce performance and productivity?



However, too many field service organizations lack the analytical capabilities to make use of this data.

In one of the most notable results of the study, almost all the respondents (89%) lack access to real-time analytics and reporting capabilities that provide insights into workforce performance and productivity. This represents a significant deficit in field service organizations' workforce management capabilities.

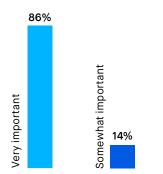
Real-time analytics allows managers to monitor their workforce's performance proactively, so they can identify inefficiencies, bottlenecks, or areas of underperformance. This information empowers them to make immediate adjustments to improve productivity.





Furthermore, real-time analytics can provide insights into service delivery times, customer satisfaction levels, and other key performance indicators (KPIs) related to customer service. This can help the department to improve its results for customers, drive profitability, and even empower technicians.

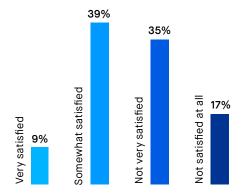
How important is it for your workforce management solution to have mobile accessibility for employees to access schedules, request time off, and view work-related information?



All the respondents agree that it is at least somewhat important for their workforce management solutions to have mobile accessibility for technicians and drivers, including 86% who say this is very important. This capability enables employees to access schedules, request time off, and view work-related information directly from their mobile devices.

These results are indicative of the mobile nature of field service. Every technician now has a smartphone. They need an intuitive and user-friendly app that they can download to their device to access work-related information instead of having to go through manual or analog processes, such as calling dispatchers or managers on the phone.

How satisfied are you with the level of automation and self-service features offered by your current workforce management system?



Only 9% of the respondents say they are very satisfied with the level of automation and self-service features offered by their current workforce management systems. Most are either somewhat satisfied (39%) or not very satisfied (35%). Notably, 17% say they are not satisfied at all with the level of automation offered by their current workforce management systems.





Based on all the results of this section, it's clear that too many field service operations are struggling with solutions that lack the key features they need to effectively manage the workforce. Although the respondents say some of their solutions' capabilities, such as systems integration and scheduling, are effective, they face significant challenges regarding data collection, data analysis, automation, and time-consuming manual processes.

These respondents are ready to adopt a new solution that satisfies these needs, especially the need to reduce manual processes through automation and self-service. Members of the field service department must be able to schedule and manage the workforce through familiar devices like smartphones quickly and effectively. They should be able to collect data on field service activities easily, so it can be analyzed and used for process improvements, coaching, and transformation initiatives.

Conclusion: Field Service Teams Must Implement Smart, Automated Processes for Workforce and Fleet Management

In their final line of questioning, researchers asked the respondents to describe what improvements they'd like to see to their current fleet, asset, and equipment management technology.

The responses reveal a consistent trend towards the integration of advanced digital solutions such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), cloud analytics, real-time reporting, and digital communication, to enhance the functionality of current technologies. Respondents also underscored the importance of digital upgrades that lead to improved sustainability, more reliable connectivity, and enhanced predictability.

An increased call for AI integration suggests a desire for smart, automated processes that can boost productivity, improve accuracy, and offer predictive analytics. The mention of cloud analytics and real-time reporting indicates a need for instant access to critical data and metrics. As we learned from the report, the lack of real-time data is a significant problem for the respondents' workforce management capabilities.

Additionally, respondents showed a clear inclination toward sustainability solutions, reflecting a growing awareness of environmental responsibility in the field service sector. The demand for better connectivity and predictability is indicative of the need for uninterrupted, real-time access to information and the desire for foresight in decision-making regarding sustainability.

For field service organizations, these insights shed light on the potential areas of technological investment that could improve service outcomes, reduce operational costs, and improve employee experiences. Embracing these technological trends could also significantly contribute to the sustainability efforts of these organizations, thus promoting environmentally conscious operations.



Key Suggestions

Invest in real-time workforce, asset, and fleet analytics. This technology is instrumental in providing immediate insights into workforce performance and productivity, allowing for timely adjustments to enhance service delivery. In turn, these improvements foster customer satisfaction and elevate the organization's overall performance. Implement mobile-friendly features into your workforce management processes. This will enable employees to

access schedules and workrelated quickly, and allow them to request time off directly from their smartphones, making management more efficient. Prevent fraud by obtaining better asset visibility, driving metrics, and detailed safety analytics. Most of the respondents agree that equipment theft, fraud, or unauthorized use are significant pain points and lead to costs.

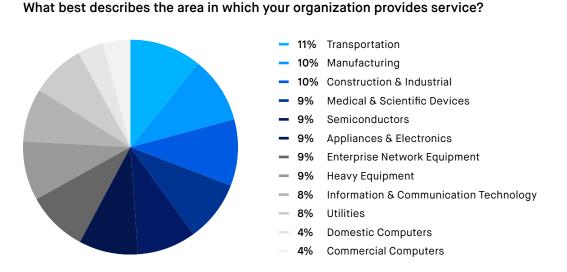
Automate internal processes and launch self-service programs for customers. The current level of satisfaction with automation and self-service features is low amongst field service organizations. To rectify this, organizations should aim to automate as many processes as possible and introduce selfservice options. This will reduce manual processes, improve efficiency, and ultimately lead to higher satisfaction levels. Obtain real-time sustainability metrics. Field service organizations need to invest in technologies that collect, analyze, and report sustainability data. Armed with this data, organizations can make informed decisions regarding their assets and fleets that boost their sustainability efforts while also protecting them from unnecessary costs.





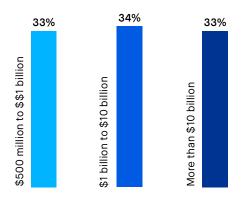
About the Respondents

The WBR Insights research team surveyed 100 field service leaders from across the U.S. and Canada to generate the insights featured in this report.



The companies represented in the report provide service in a variety of industries, including transportation (11%), manufacturing (10%), construction and industrial (10%), medical and scientific devices (9%), and the semiconductor industry (9%), among others.

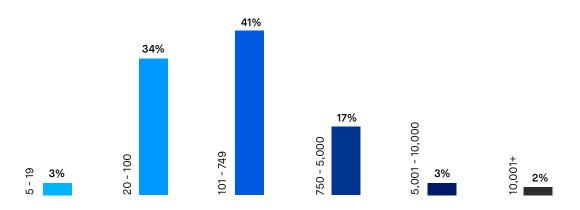
What is your company's annual revenue?



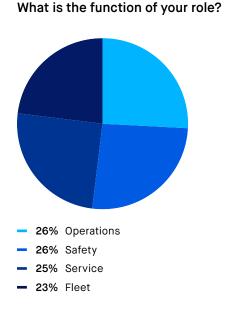
The companies represented in the study are about evenly-split in size, as measured by annual revenue.



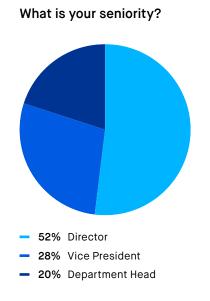
How many vehicles or assets does your business have?



At a total of 63%, most of the companies represented in the study have more than 100 vehicles or assets under management. This includes 2% of the respondents whose companies have more than 100 vehicles or assets under management.



The respondents occupy roles in operations (26%), safety (26%), service (25%), and fleet management (23%).



Most of the respondents are directors (52%). The remaining respondents are vice presidents (28%) and department heads (20%).



About the Authors



Motive empowers the people who run physical operations with tools to make their work safer, more productive, and more profitable. For the first time ever, safety, operations and finance teams can manage their drivers, vehicles, equipment, and fleet related spend in a single system.

Motive serves more than 120,000 customers – from Fortune 500 enterprises to small businesses – across a wide range of industries, including transportation and logistics, construction, energy, field service, manufacturing, agriculture, food and beverage, retail, and the public sector.

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We launched Field Service in 2002 and have been dedicated to supporting the growth of the service industry ever since. What started off as 100 people in a room discussing the future of service has become 500 senior-level service executives being inspired while learning and developing their company as well as their careers.

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