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WHY YOU NEED WARRANTY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

When you know better, you do better.

“Your pizza in 30 minutes or less or it’s free.” There was a time when Domino’s Pizza set the standard for customer expectations. Now, Netflix and other streaming services allow customers to watch pretty much anything they want anytime they want. You can order something from Amazon and have it delivered the same day, within hours of clicking the purchase button. And customer expectations don’t stop with “Freaky Fast” from Jimmy John’s. Customers have come to apply those expectations to everything, including their expectations of your customer service.

For the most part, customers realize that, on occasion, “stuff happens” with a product that they purchased. For that reason, what sticks in your customer’s mind isn’t the problem that they had with your product, but how it was handled. That’s why a true post-sales warranty service solution is proactive, not reactive.

Being proactive means ensuring that from the initial call to the final resolution there is a defined process for every step along the way. The better the process is, the quicker claims get resolved – and time is of the essence with warranty claims. The longer they take, the more expensive they become.

Although we generally put processes in place, they are only as good as the humans that facilitate them. Field service software takes the reality of human error out of the equation – the platform drives the process of directing customer service to the next task before it is overdue.

Many ERP’s and CRM’s tend to be reactive when it comes to customer service. So often it’s the phone call from a customer that determines the next action in a warranty claim. (“What’s the status of my claim?” or “Nobody has called me to set up an appointment to fix the problem.”) Even worse, many companies are still managing everything on Excel spreadsheets and email. In either case, your customer’s experience is bad and your cost is high!

When technology does not fit your needs, it can feel like a waste of time. Having to change all of your processes to fit into software that was built for “everyone else” is counter-productive. At the same time, spending countless hours trying to translate your business requirements to a developer or software company can make you hate the software before it’s even built. Not to mention the dollars wasted paying those developers or

software companies their hourly rate to listen to you describe your business.

Technology shouldn't just make us faster, it should make us better! And it should help us make better decisions. Just think of all the ways that technology has impacted your own business - like the quality of your product and manufacturing facilities. The proper field service software solution doesn't just make your data secure; it is easy to use, generates reports that are meaningful, incorporates a true mobile solution for your field technicians (employee and 3rd party,) and utilizes a built-in customer survey.

Meaningful data and reports answers the important questions that finance, operations, and sales are asking. For example, can your current platform answer questions like these?

- *“How much are we spending on warranty and field service (parts, labor, and credits)?”*
- *“What product issues are driving our warranty calls?”*
- *“Are we seeing any recurring issues that the plant or our vendors need to address?”*
- *“Which of our customers have the highest warranty call volume?”*
- *“How much do we spend on warranty by customer?” (“Is it more or less than last year?”)*

A true mobile solution is a native app, not a web app, which incorporates logic-driven data collection forms, not fillable PDF's. Trying to use a web app relies on having service in a particular area. Fillable PDF's result in skipped questions and a lot of blank fields. Even worse are technicians with paper forms that get faxed to the office from the field and emailed photos (when the technicians remember to send them.) A true mobile solution incorporates features like these:

- An interactive dashboard showing workload, schedule & statuses
- Real-time alerts and notifications
- Intuitive and logic-based workflow forms
- Photo and signature capture
- Scheduling and Routing
- The ability to work online or offline

Imagine your customer service team receiving field reports as they happen in real time with consistent and concise information that empowers your office to make immediate decisions.

You need field service software for the same reason Uber drivers don't pick up rides in a tractor trailer – an 18 wheeler may eventually get you where you're going, but it's the wrong tool for the job.

ERP solutions are great for what they were intended – integrating purchasing, inventory, marketing, finance, human resources and sometimes sales. In the world of ERP's, the post-sales warranty and field service department is often an afterthought. The ERP solution for warranty and field service is either too bare, way over complicated or it requires 6-24 months of additional development at an exuberant hourly rate.

ERPs are necessary to run your operation, but that doesn't mean that you have to be stuck using them in your post-sales and service operations. The right Field Service Software tool can bolt right on to your ERP.

In this day and age, you have a lot of choices when it comes to software. But, when it comes to field service, there are very few that were designed and built specifically for collecting information on the initial call, assigning and scheduling field technicians, include a mobile app for field techs, and reporting back to the office once the work is done. And, after the case is closed, shouldn't you be able to see the cost of each case?

So don't just look for software. Look for field service software. Better yet, look for field service software that was specifically engineered for your industry. You should be able to start using the new software within a couple of weeks, not a couple of months...or longer.