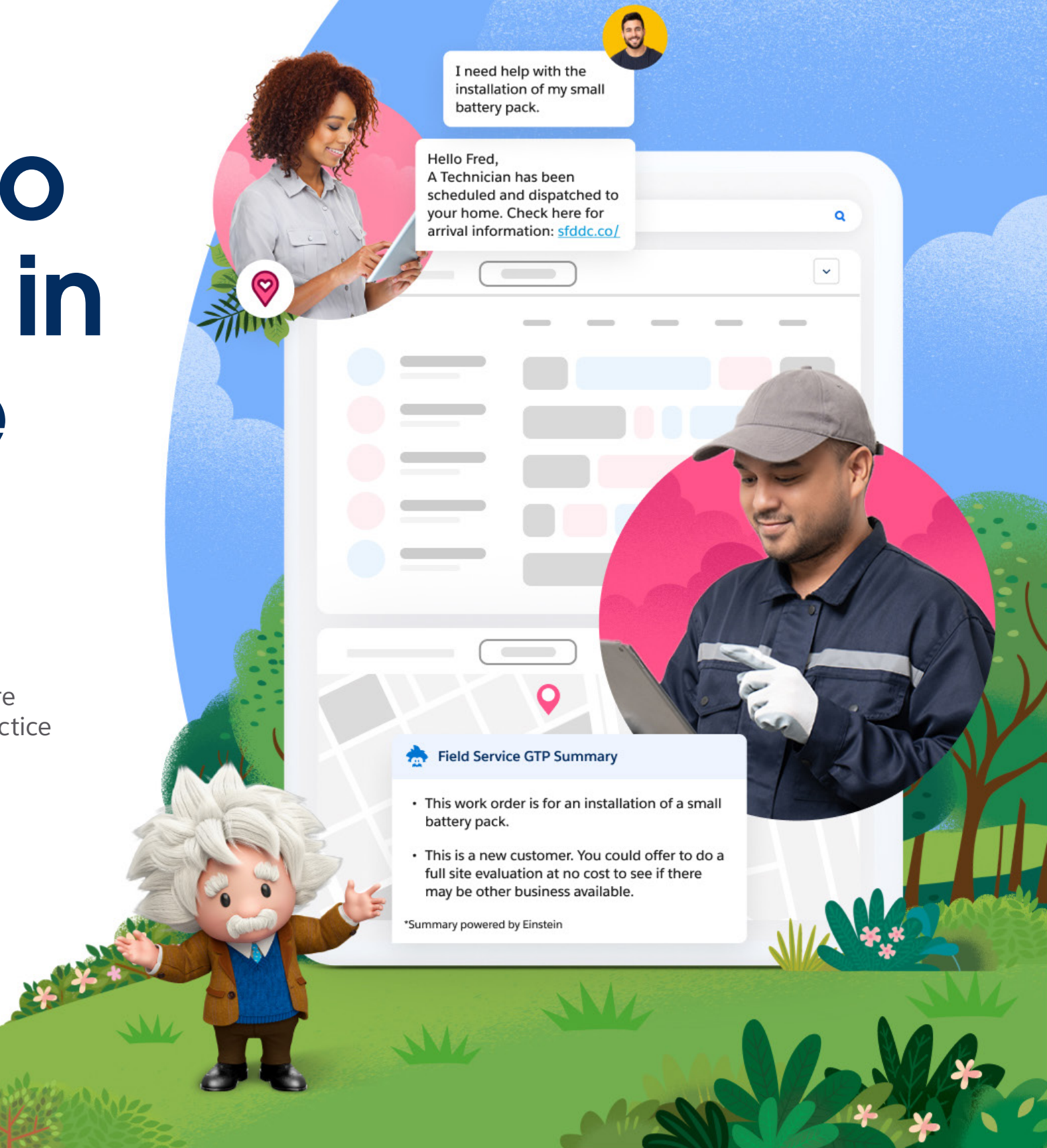




salesforce

Your Guide to AI and Data in Field Service

Learn how high-performing field service organizations are using AI and the power of data to generate revenue, practice sustainability, and help technicians do their best work.



Executive Letter



AI is disrupting every service organization, including field service. This is the one area of service where humans are the helm. Field service technicians are often the only connection with your customers. And there's not nearly enough of them.

This is happening at a time when customer expectations for faster and more personalized field service are higher than ever. Fortunately, today's innovations in AI make it easier to address these challenges while setting up your mobile workers for success.

And AI will continue to advance. But at the end of the day, it's humans who remain at the helm, making sure customers get the superior experience they expect and deserve.

Taksina Eammano

EVP & GM
Salesforce Field Service



What you'll find in this guide

Based on research conducted by Salesforce, this guide looks into the latest trends in field service at a pivotal moment of change. Here are some of the key themes we uncover:

- How service organizations are addressing a shortage of skilled field service workers in the face of extraordinary customer expectations
- Why data integration is key to creating a unified view of the customer so technicians can deliver an even better customer experience
- How top-performing field service organizations are using AI right now – and why so many decision makers are doubling down on this technology

Data in this guide comes from our double-anonymous “State of Service” survey of over 5,500 service professionals. The survey was conducted from Dec 8, 2023, through Jan 22, 2024 with respondents from 30 countries. See our [State of Service](#) report for the full methodology.



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Executive summary

Amid an ongoing skilled labor shortage and rising customer expectations, 74% of mobile workers report increasing workloads – a recipe for burnout. If businesses want to scale successfully, they need to invest in mobile workers.

Alongside appreciation and development opportunities, organizations can support technicians by making their jobs easier. How, exactly? Start by connecting trusted data in your CRM to AI.

Mobile workers spend just 32% of their time interacting with the people they serve – the remaining 68% is spent on tasks like manually entering case notes. By introducing data-driven tools that simplify processes (like generative AI), mobile workers can spend less time on administrative tasks and more time doing what they do best: serving customers.

Keep reading for field service best practices and tips for how you can join the 79% of service organizations investing in AI.

01 **An aging workforce, shrinking labor pool, and burnout hampers meeting customer expectations.**

The growing shortage in skilled labor comes at a major inflection point for the field service industry. **Fifty-six percent of mobile workers report experiencing burnout on the job.**

02 **When data is connected, mobile workers are at their best.**

Poor data quality is one of the biggest challenges affecting field service organizations. **Seventy-seven percent of mobile workers say better access to other departments' data would improve their work.**

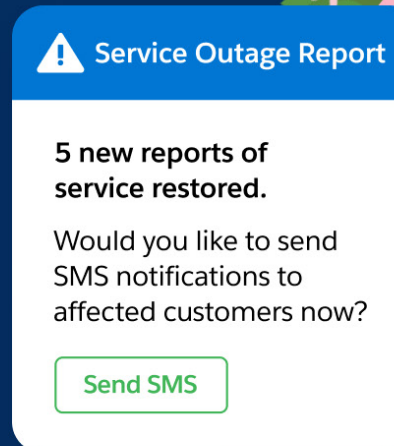
03 **The benefits of AI are emerging – and they're compelling.**

AI is gaining significant traction for good reason. **Seventy-eight percent of mobile workers in organizations with AI say it saves them time on the job.**



1

Short-staffed teams face sky-high expectations



01

Workloads are rising amid a shortage of skilled labor

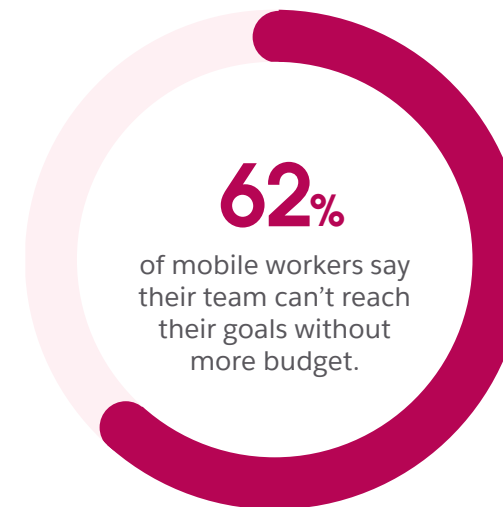
Job openings in installation, maintenance, and repair occupations are expected to grow by about 582,100 each year between now and 2032 in the U.S. alone.* Meanwhile, applications from young people seeking work as skilled tradespeople dropped almost 50% from 2020 to 2022.**

This growing shortage in skilled labor comes at a major inflection point for the field service industry. Ninety-one percent of decision makers at organizations with field service say mobile workers are critical to scaling their business. That might explain why technicians are busier than ever: 74% of mobile workers say their workload is increasing, and 73% say they support more products and services than they did a year ago.

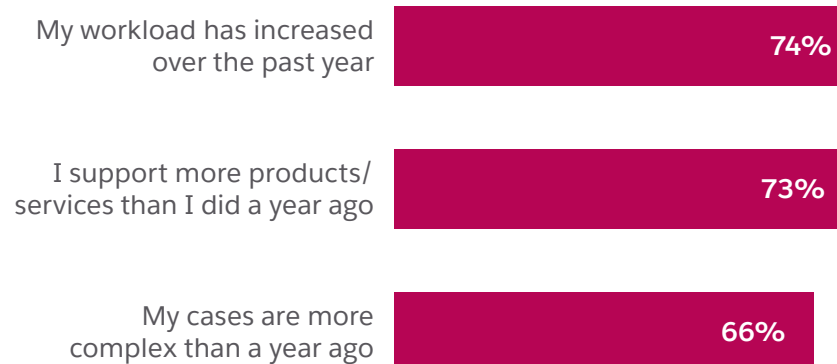
*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

**NPR

Case Complexity and Supported Products Are Increasing



Mobile Workers Who Say the Following



Customers want a next-level experience, and want it now

According to service decision makers, “improving customer experience” is the #1 priority for service organizations – even more important than cutting costs.

Unfortunately, customer expectations aren’t what they used to be. About three-quarters of mobile workers say demands have risen across multiple fronts: this puts technicians under immense pressure to deliver an exceptional experience under extraordinary constraints and makes proactive service even more important.

“**Today’s customers want a more personalized experience. That makes quality field service more important than ever, because technicians are sometimes the only company representatives that customers actually meet.**”

ED HORNE

VICE PRESIDENT DIGITAL ARCHITECTURE,
TRANE TECHNOLOGIES

Field Service Contends with Speed and Personalization Demands



[Salesforce State of the Connected Customer, August 2023.](#)

Mobile Workers Who Say the Following



Mobile workers report high levels of burnout

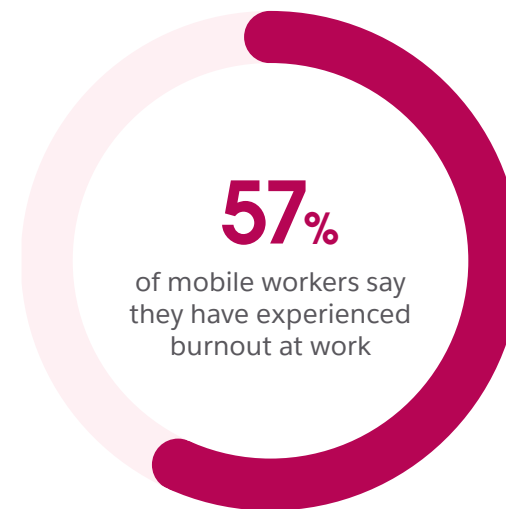
Field service isn't just about delivering a great customer experience. It's about connecting customers to essential services and helping businesses get up and running. Plus, when disaster strikes, mobile workers often play a major role in restoring power to communities in crisis – and helping people get back to their day-to-day lives.

But those efforts can take a toll. The majority of mobile workers report experiencing burnout on the job, underscoring the importance of helping field service teams feel valued and appreciated every single day.

“ Burnout is a big problem in field service because of both physical and mental stress. It's important to watch for signs on your team and make positive changes.”

DAVID QUINE
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER,
VINEBROOK HOMES

Challenging Work Environments Take a Toll



Top 5 Service Challenges

- 1 Keeping up with changing customer expectations
- 2 Pressure to reduce costs to serve
- 3 Budgetary constraints
- 4 Ineffective or inefficient processes
- 5 Insufficient tools and technologies

Base: Decision makers





Taksina's Takeaway

5 ways to show appreciation to your mobile workforce

Even the simplest gestures can help boost morale, reduce turnover, and combat burnout. Here are a few simple ways to show your field service team how much you appreciate their hard work.

“When you're in the field doing jobs, people notice. You can really make an impact. And the relationships you make can be hugely rewarding.”

GREG BANKS
ENGAGEMENT MANAGER,
CIRRIUS SOLUTIONS

1 Personal development opportunities.

Invest in your team's growth by offering paid time off for learning. [Trailhead](#) is a great way for your team to build skills.

2 Skills exchange sessions.

Skill-sharing helps your mobile workers learn from each other – and builds camaraderie in the process. This can be done in-person or virtually. You can also encourage technicians to connect with peers outside your organization by joining the [Serviceblazer Community Trailhead](#).

3 Health and wellness initiatives.

A healthy team is a happy and productive team. Prioritize the well-being of your employees by offering benefits like gym memberships or wellness stipends.

4 Monthly achievement awards.

Regular recognition boosts morale and motivates your team.

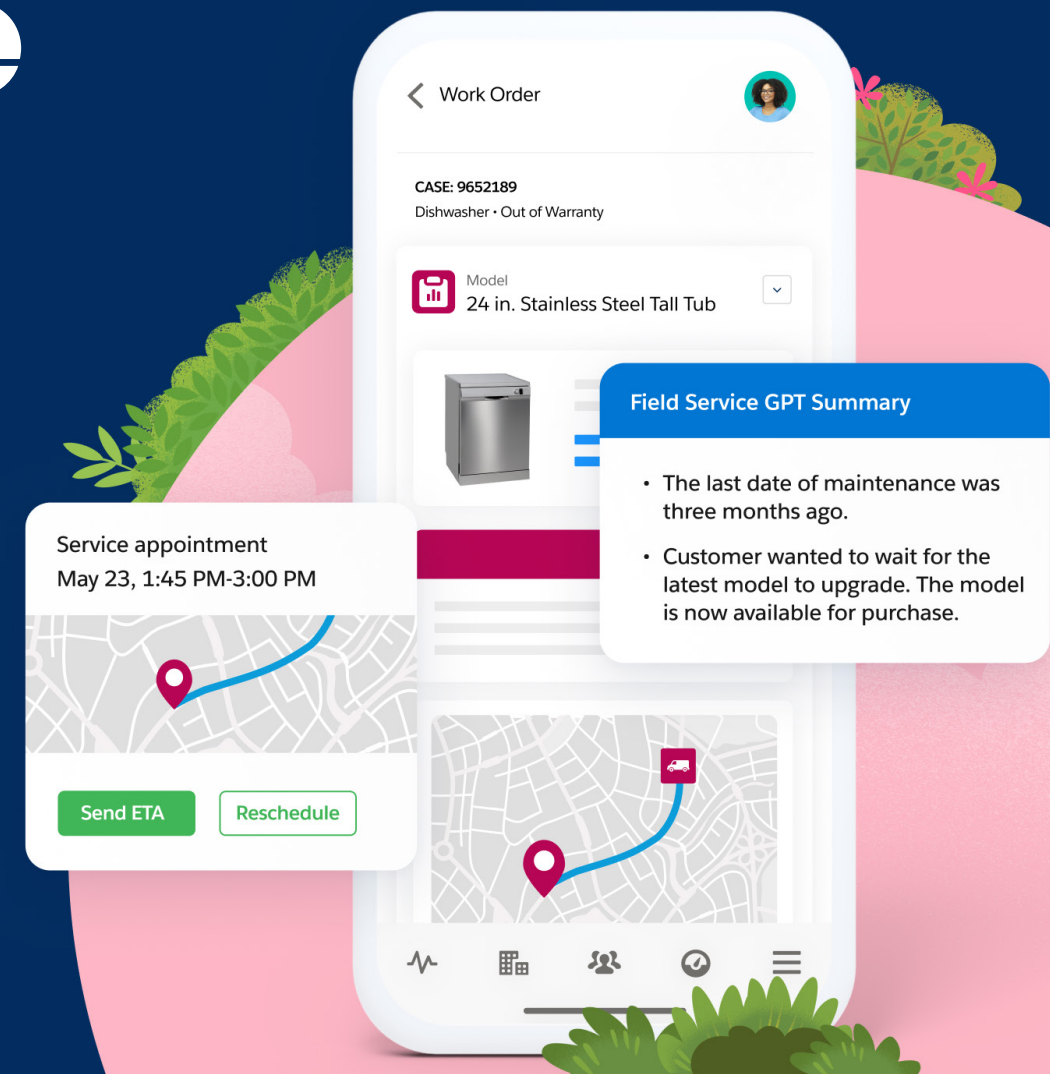
5 Field service management technology.

Above all, arm your mobile workers with technologies that help get them home in time for dinner – safely.



2

When data is connected, mobile workers are at their best



Inefficient processes keep mobile workers away from customers

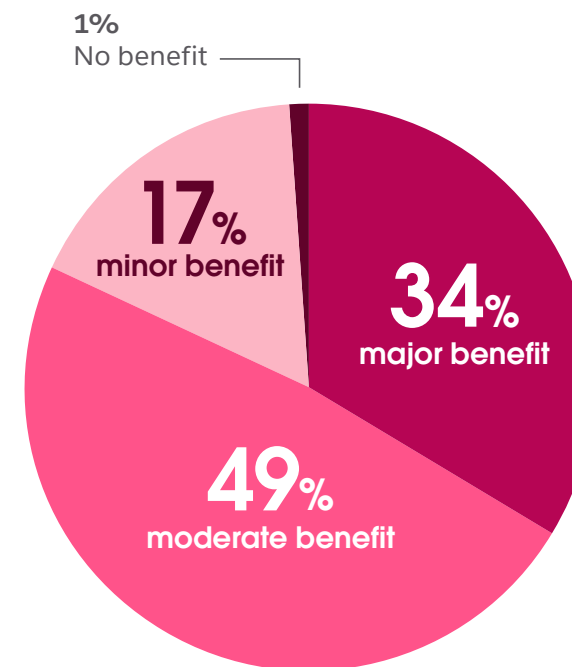
Mobile workers are often the only company representatives customers ever see. Ironically, technicians in the field say they spend only 32% of their time interacting with the people they serve. The remaining 68% of their time is spent on tasks like manually entering case notes, performing administrative tasks, and attending internal meetings and trainings.

Another blocker of productivity is disjointed processes. Forty-five percent of mobile workers say they have to toggle between multiple screens just to access the data they need to do their job.

Mobile workers at organizations with automation say the technology better enables them to focus on customers.

Automation Enables More Personalized Service

Extent of Benefit of Automation on Focusing on Individual Customers



Base: Mobile workers at organizations with process/workflow automation.



02

Easy access to trusted data improves mobile workers' productivity

According to mobile workers, after budgetary constraints, the biggest challenge affecting their organizations is a tie between disconnected data sources and poor data quality and reliability. This may explain why 38% of mobile workers say it's hard to get a full view of a customer's interactions with their company.

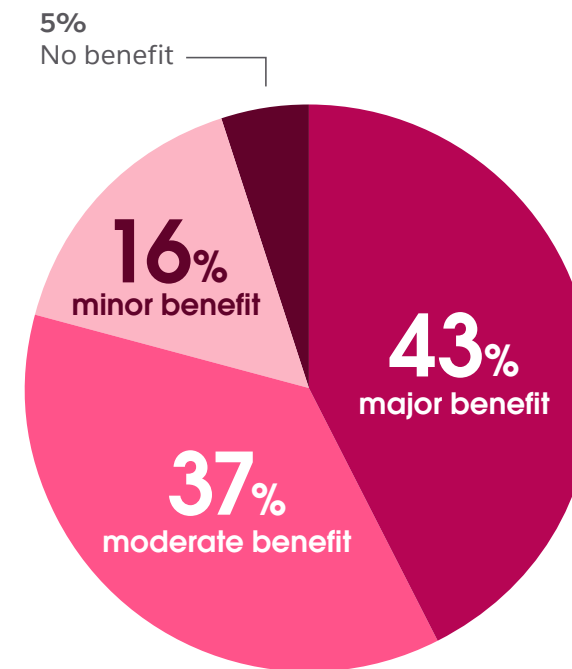
77% of mobile workers say better access to other departments' data would improve their work.

Again, the right technology could offer a solution here. Mobile workers at organizations with automation say the technology helps them feel more connected to other departments. This could help improve asset service management by letting automation reorder parts, schedule preventative maintenance, and ensure that assets meet regulatory requirements.

In summary: mobile workers are set up for better success when they're connected to other departments.

Automation Boosts Efficiency in the Field

Extent of Benefit of Automation on Time-Saving



Base: Mobile workers at organizations with process/workflow automation.



02

Upselling becomes a vital function for mobile workers

With 85% of decision makers saying service is expected to contribute a larger share of revenue this year, the role of the mobile worker continues to grow in importance.

78% of mobile workers say they are responsible for revenue generation metrics.

Field service technicians get up close and personal with customers, creating many opportunities to influence buying decisions, suggest new subscriptions or equipment upgrades, and make proactive recommendations for follow-up service. Connected data lets them see customer histories in their mobile devices.

This may be why 66% of mobile workers say they “often” or “always” try to upsell, compared to just 54% of agents.

Organizations Rely on Field Service for Additional Revenue

Mobile Workers Who Say the Following



Frequency With Which Mobile Agents Try to Upsell





Taksina's Takeaway

4 data-driven ways to put sustainability into practice

What's more, connected data helps to improve field service sustainability – from route optimization to drones. And when it comes to sustainability, most service organizations are all-in. A majority (51%) of decision makers say environmental sustainability is a high priority for their organizations – and only 1% say it's not a priority at all.

Here are four ways that data-driven field service technology can help you reduce truck rolls and carbon emissions while keeping costs low.

1 Route optimization.

Planning the fastest and most cost-effective way for your mobile workers to get from one appointment to another is a great way to improve field service sustainability. As an added bonus, accurate scheduling can improve the customer experience (and boost customer satisfaction scores).

2 Intelligent asset management.

Thanks to advances in AI, you can manage resources more efficiently with proactive asset service management. AI can detect when an asset needs service and recommend preventative maintenance – minimizing emergency repairs and extending the useful life of your assets.

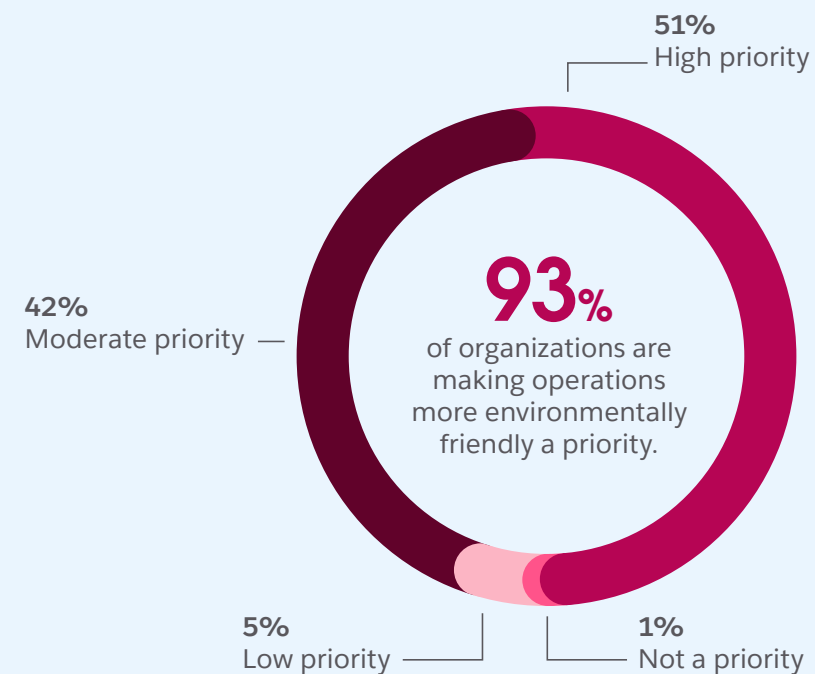
3 Visual remote assistance.

Not all service requests require on-site appointments. In these cases, mobile workers can use visual remote assistance to help customers solve problems from anywhere.

4 Drones.

To increase visibility into hard-to-reach assets like wind turbines, some companies are using drones to perform remote inspections by taking thousands of photos of each asset. AI can be trained to recognize problems in the drone images, then suggest repairs.

Sustainability Matters to Service Organizations

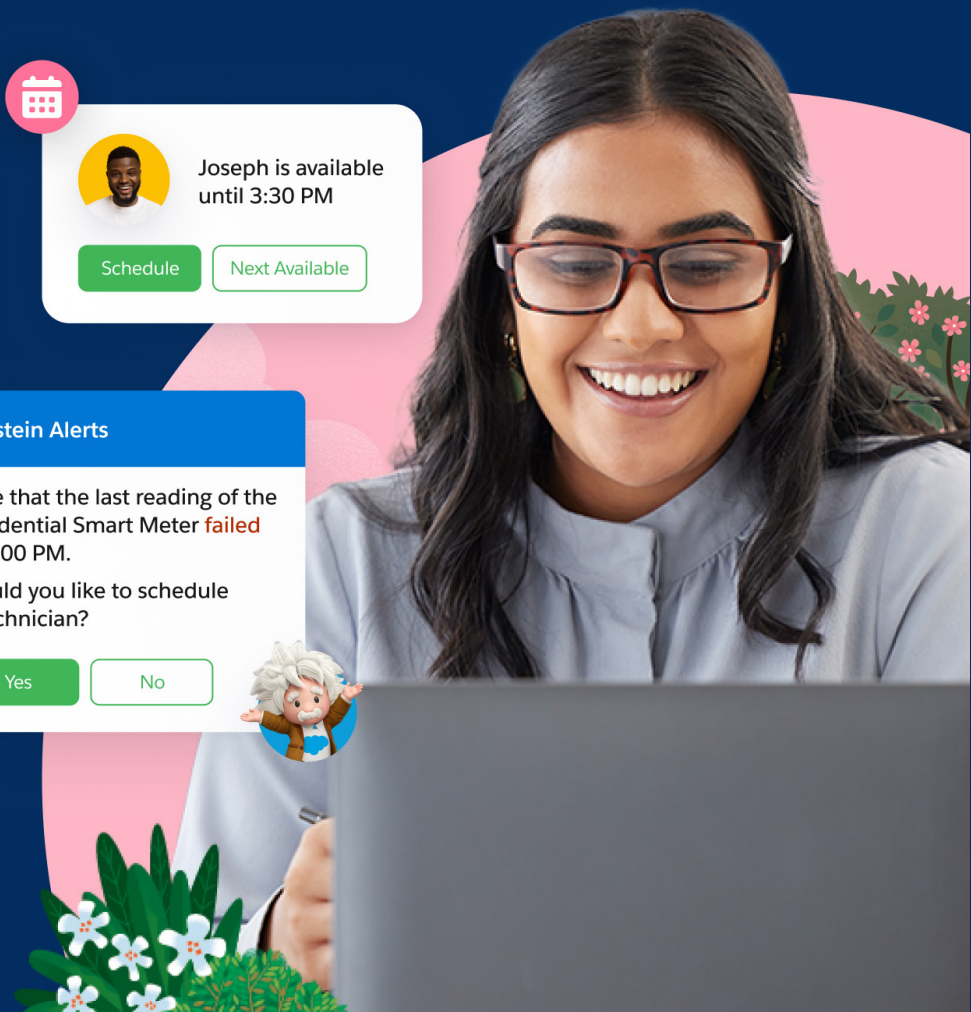
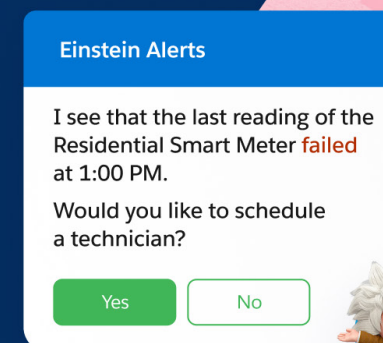
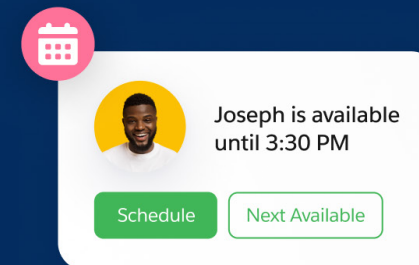


Base: Service decision makers



3

The benefits of AI are emerging — and they're compelling



Field service technology leaves analog solutions in the dust

Make no mistake: If your mobile teams are still doing the bulk of their work on spreadsheets and whiteboards, you're behind the curve. According to the vast majority of mobile workers, field service technology helps them feel safer and more effective at their jobs – giving them the tools they need to be superior brand ambassadors.

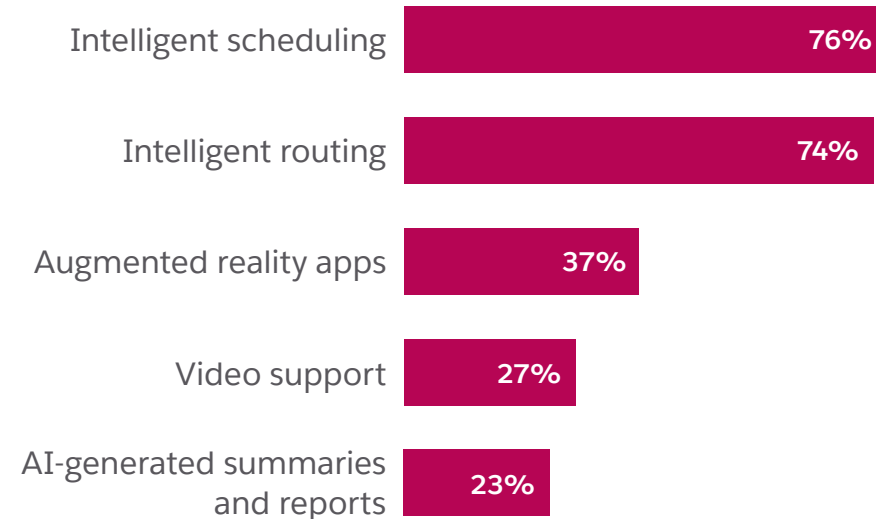
90% of decision makers say their company invests in specialized technology to improve mobile worker productivity.

The most common field service technologies are intelligent scheduling and routing. However, some organizations use video, AI-generated reports, and augmented reality, which can create detailed 3D renderings of large areas in seconds.

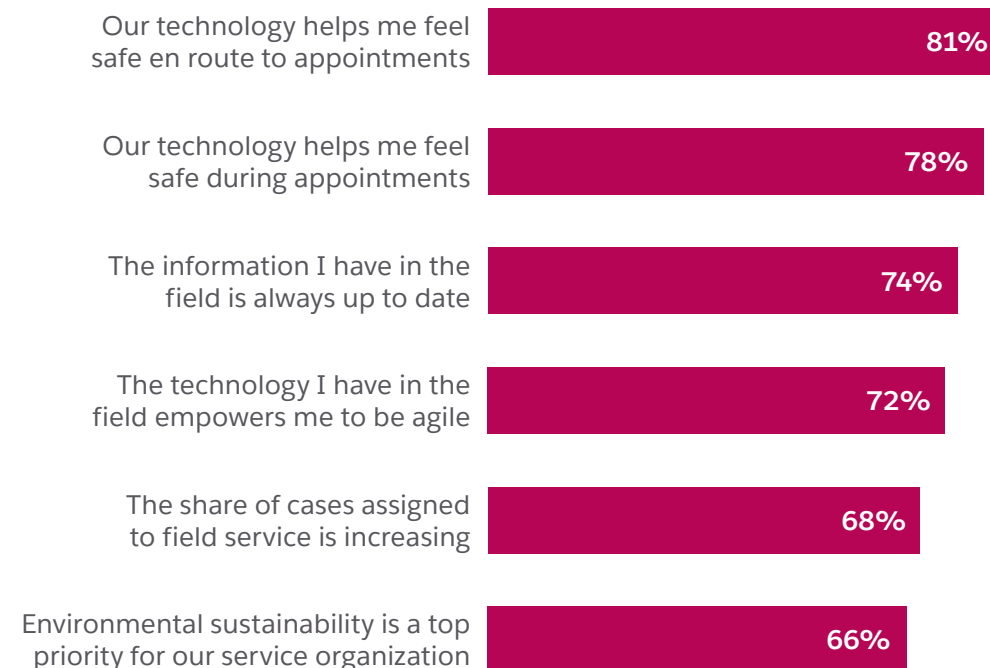


Technology Helps Mobile Workers Feel Safer, More Effective

Mobile Workers With the Following Capabilities



Mobile Workers Who Agree With the Following



03

AI saves time, cuts costs, and improves customer service in the field

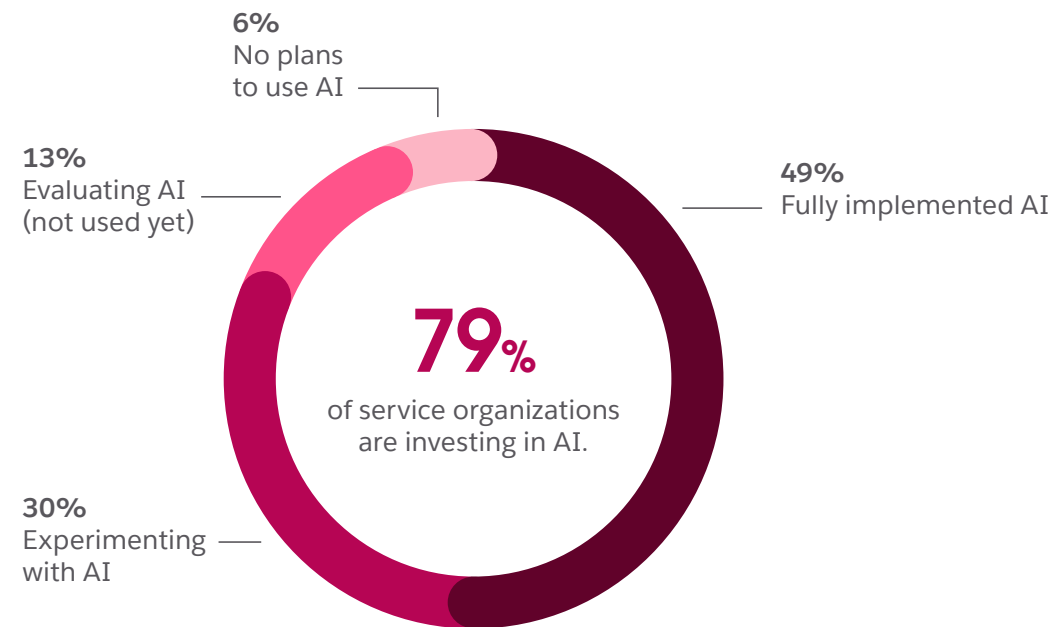
AI is gaining significant traction. Seventy-nine percent of service organizations are investing in AI, and 83% of decision makers plan to increase their investment in this technology next year. This is especially true at high-performing service organizations, 88% of which are actively pursuing AI, compared to just 56% of underperformers.

The benefits are clear: 83% of mobile workers in organizations with AI say this technology cuts costs, while 78% say it saves them time on the job. A majority (64%) say generative AI, in particular, will help their companies improve customer service.

Tip 💡 Use AI to brief mobile workers.

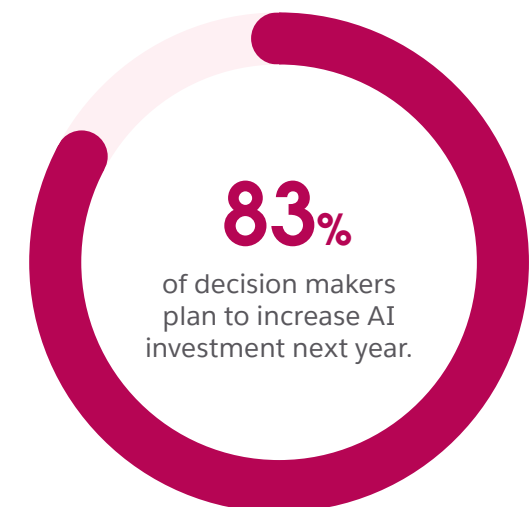
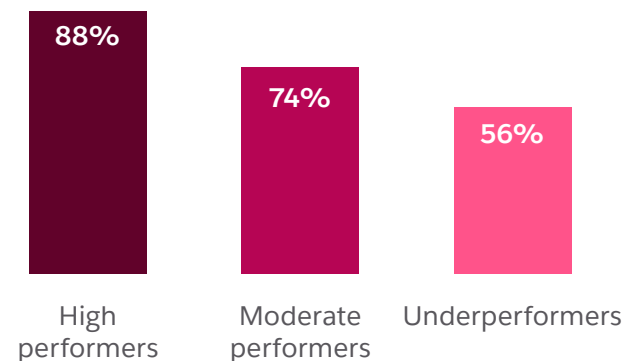
With AI-generated summaries of asset history and past service interactions, you can prepare your mobile workers before they even arrive at a job site – and identify upsell opportunities in the process.

A Majority of Teams Plan to Increase Their AI Investment



Base: Service professionals

Service Organizations Investing in AI



CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT:

AAA - The Auto Club Group



With a member network of over 13 million members and 6 million road service events that happen each year, AAA - The Auto Club Group turned to Salesforce to continue providing fast, personalized service.

By automating roadside assistance with Salesforce, AAA - The Auto Club Group reported 10% faster response times. This automated approach also helped the company reduce gas costs by connecting the closest and best qualified service tech to the right member. Appointment Assistant lets customers stay connected to technicians throughout service and manage the appointment – providing them with a safer and more personalized experience.

AAA - The Auto Club Group also plans to use AI to make it even easier for agents to provide the right support to members. With Einstein, insurance policies and info are sifted through to generate appropriate responses to customers, saving agents time.

“We’re accelerating our digital transformation with Salesforce and Einstein as one of the partners that will help us implement AI across our entire business including DevOps, support, sales and underwriting.”

SHOHREH ABEDI

EVP, CHIEF OPERATIONS TECHNOLOGY
OFFICER, & MEMBER EXPERIENCE AT
AAA - THE AUTO CLUB GROUP





Taksina's Takeaway

How to build safety, trust, and value into every service appointment

Safety is top of mind for field service technicians and customers alike. Many companies are exploring technologies like drones and robotics to handle routine tasks in dangerous locations – for example, using field robots to investigate potentially hazardous materials in nuclear facilities.

But you don't have to work in extreme environments to benefit from the latest innovations. Here are a few practical ways to help technicians feel safer on every service call with technologies like mobile appointment assistance.

1 Get technicians' consent.

Secure your employees' written permission to have their location tracked to avoid potential misunderstandings.

2 Let your mobile workers control tracking.

Technicians should be able to choose whether or not to trigger tracking when they set out for a job, and with whom they share their location.

3 Support mobile workers' concerns about sharing their last names.

Help protect technicians' privacy before, during, and after the service engagement by including their first names only.

4 Build safety into the app experience.

Include a checklist of safety features within the app for the mobile worker to review at every job to keep everyone safe.

5 Share customer feedback.

Show the value of real-time visibility on the day of service with metrics like customer satisfaction (CSAT) and Net Promoter Score (NPS).

6 Build trust through transparency.

Be open with your mobile workers about your reasons for wanting to track their location and explain the benefits to both them and the customer.



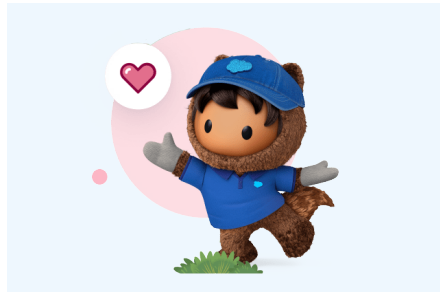


LOOKING AHEAD: What's next for Field Service?

So what's up-and-coming for field service? It should come as no surprise that technology is set to play an important role in shaping the future of the industry, especially when it comes to improving efficiency.

Four rapidly evolving technologies in particular have the power to transform field service: augmented reality (AR), the internet of things (IoT), mobile solutions, and of course, generative AI.

This is just the beginning. As time goes on, these technologies will become more intuitive and offer deeper insights for businesses, all leading to an even better customer experience. To get there and gain a competitive advantage, early adoption and effective change management are key to success.



Ready to get started?

Join high-performing organizations and power efficient field service operations with Salesforce Field Service now.

[Learn More](#)



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