What field service innovation looks like at Coca-Cola

Managing data flow and key performance indicators (KPIs) in field service mobility can be tricky business for many organisations. But Coca-Cola Amatil (CCA) has successfully visualised the end to end operation, and runs a ratio of 30 technicians to one administration desk.

We spoke earlier this year to **Michael Davey, National Field Service Manager at CCA**, to get his insights on how this has been achieved.

Objectives

One can only imagine the impressive technical arrangement which got CCA to that level of efficiency. The initial system which supported its mobility program couldn't be updated remotely and became obsolete for the company's requirements.

"We looked at different platforms around the world, as well as where the business was heading. SAP's Syclo platform was selected as the primary mobility system, and a route mobilisation for our in-field technicians created by a company called Ortec," he said.

Bottlers from around the world were benchmarked to give his team an idea of what would best suit their requirements, and it was a delicate balance between what they could support internally, and meet commercial needs at the same time.

The original deliverables extended across having a more coherent and end-to-end inventory management process – from in-fuel through the supply chain and back to distribution.

"Based on these deliverables, we wanted to be able to offer specific booking times and real-time updates of technician locations ahead of scheduled job appointments, but more importantly, route as efficiently as possible," Michael noted.

Alongside the aim to drive real-time updates and improve routing, several additional goals included:

- Service call appointments with customers
- Immediate answers to 'Where's My Tech?'
- Allowing the business to confirm a date and time of technician attendance when a call is placed
- Enhanced spare parts management
- Consistent, reliable 24/7 service

OSP platform

Traditionally in many companies, field service managers have spent too long in head office on their PCs, and as a result, have not been not able to do their normal tasks such as route rides, sales updates and tech training.

Michael tells me that his team has worked closely with their counterpart in the United States to implement a new enhancement and equip every service manager with an OSP app on their iPhones.

"It shows where every technician is, what they're doing at one particular time, what jobs they've got on, and if they're going to miss an SLA. This is not independent either; it leads directly back to the SAP server and to our main infrastructure," he said.

And in using the OSP platform, they have improved transparency and visibility, allowing managers to be in the field yet still have access to:

- What orders are allocated to each shift
- If a technician is listed on shift, they are completing orders
- If the technician falls more than a specified time behind their schedule (the team leader is subsequently notified)
- View current schedules by State and by Team Leader
- Active notifications of planning violations
- Sick leave management functionality

"We also wanted to automatically rank higher priority service calls, rather than involve manual interventions, and enable technicians to interact with each other through the mobility system," he added.

Essentially, the technicians would be able to manage their inventory more accurately through flexible communication. Technicians can actually see online how many widgets they have in their vehicle for a particular piece of equipment.

Inventory

At the same time, full status visibility of the different teams has allowed them to see in each individual warehouse how many widgets are available.

"If Technician A is on a job and he doesn't have a specific piece of equipment required, he's able to examine the inventory of Technician B and transfer stock to his own van. But Technician A does have to call and log a receipt; he can't simply do it without notification," Michael explained.

This capability is embedded within Toughbook hardware which the technicians are equipped with – simply a matter of logging in and reviewing available parts from stock in the field. And every piece of equipment has a bill of materials on it, so that automatically comes up and confirms if it's a fridge, air conditioning unit and so on.

There are restriction levels in place too. Analysis can be done by team categories or nationwide, but the general chain of command is: if you're a field service technician, you can have access to the inventory for your local workshop and for the Sydney distribution workshop.

"We're also conducting radius locking as well. If a technician is on-site doing maintenance work, and there are jobs within a certain radius of say, 1km, he'll automatically lock to that technician's work portfolio," Michael said.

This function is user-configurable, because not every technician's situation is the same. Some are in the CBD, some are in the region, and some are in remote areas. If there's any job in a particular town, the function identifies a technician's location and sends the information to his hand-held device automatically.