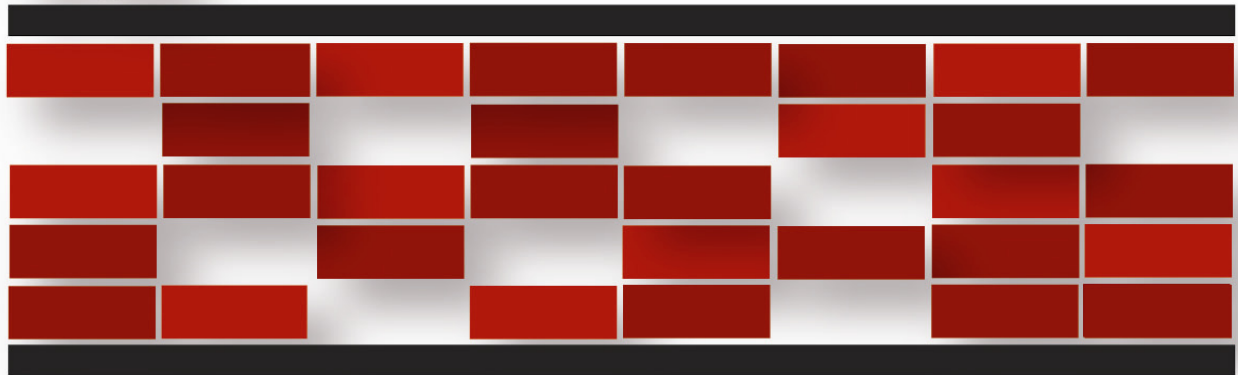


**Article: *Four Steps to Save Money with Service Management***

# VSI





## Four Steps to Save Money with Service Management

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Today's challenging economy is forcing companies to take a hard look at every dollar spent. While it makes sense to evaluate any purchase for its potential return on investment, many companies are losing money by freezing budgets for service management software. Too many companies are limping along with archaic systems that are more than slowing down their growth; they are costing them money. Following are four ways where investing in the right service management system can help companies save money.

- **Step One: Optimize dispatch to save money on field calls**

Every company that sends technicians or other personnel out into the field knows that it is the most expensive way to deliver customer service. Part of the challenge is the time eaten up by travel, but the most frustrating money-waster is when the tech arrives on site without the correct parts, or the correct skills, to do the job. When it comes to rapid return on investment, optimizing dispatch systems is at the top of the list.

A manufacturing firm with 400 field service engineers improved its ratio of assigned time from 70% to more than 95% after deploying Vertical Solutions, Inc.'s PowerHelp service management technology. This company transitioned from a group of regionally managed systems based on spreadsheets to a unified system that enabled it to track resources, talent, and call data. With PowerHelp, the company can assign field engineers based on skill set, availability, and geographic proximity. There's no more wasted capacity, and it is now quick and easy to determine the best person for the job across any region.

An optimized field service dispatch system delivers benefits for the customer, as well. Customers can submit schedules via PowerHelp's online portal in advance to the company, which can quickly discover the right resource at the least travel/expense cost. In addition, the company can now train field engineers in advance for any special requirements, enabling customers to have more complete call closure.

- **Step Two: Access trapped data to improve service response**

Everyone knows that customer and product data is valuable – numerous articles, presentations, and research reports have been devoted to the topic of gathering, mining, and using customer data to improve service, increase sales, and build loyalty. Yet, many companies' valuable customer data is locked away in inaccessible legacy systems. One manufacturing firm found itself in this position after a series of acquisitions – it knew it possessed a significant repository of customer and product data, but its outdated technology hampered its ability to use it effectively.

Its investment in PowerHelp service management technology paid off in hard and soft dollars, both by reducing the time to answer customer calls by 50%, and by the resulting gains in customer satisfaction.

Service management technology can capture data from a variety of disparate sources, unify it in to one cohesive database, and broaden access to the people who can take advantage of it. In this case, the firm no longer had to assign service calls to people trained on each individual, finicky platform; all agents had access to the data, streamlining call procedures and processes and dramatically shortening call lengths.

In addition to customer support, product development also was able to access the unified database via PowerHelp and use the information to develop modifications that reduced further service calls and improved customer satisfaction.

The company also cut call transfers by 20% – by enabling access to all data, every agent was able to be an "expert" on every product.



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- **Step Three: Reduce warranty repairs**

Support agents walk a fine line with customers who call about what they perceive to be defective products. Many companies decide that it's too costly to implement a troubleshooting protocol, or find that wrestling with disparate databases is too big of a challenge. Others don't want to chance the potential impact on satisfaction and loyalty. For these, and many other reasons, companies are quick to authorize a return to the manufacturer (RMA). The right service management system can save companies significant dollars without negatively impacting customer satisfaction.

For one global call center firm, deploying PowerHelp service management technology enabled it to establish a diagnostic protocol where agents walk customers through a series of steps to validate the problem. By accessing multiple databases seamlessly through a unified platform, agents have been able to cut call times from 12 minutes to 6 minutes, while shaving unnecessary returns and capturing vital data. When the repair is valid, a seamless connection to logistics and repair vendors' systems enables the company to streamline actual repair.

Customer satisfaction has actually increased – the extra steps often result in same-day self repair. And, when a repair is required, the hand-off and repair processes are now so easy, customers are impressed.

- **Step Four: Open access to external vendors to broaden service portfolio**

Few companies work in a vacuum, relying solely in internal procedures and processes. Opening up a service management system to access and interface with appropriate systems from vendors can streamline processes and save money.

An outsourced call center deployed PowerHelp service management technology to integrate with a variety of contact channels and information sources, including external vendors' databases. It then enabled all agents to access the information via a central dashboard. By integrating processes from a variety of external vendors, this company has enhanced the quality and timeliness of its support. Its closed-loop processing system has enabled it to offer extended services to its customers, build its business, and strengthen customer loyalty.

*Ron Wegmann, Sr. is CEO and President of Vertical Solutions, Inc. (VSI) a Cincinnati-based developer of the PowerHelp® Suite of Service Management software solutions.*

### **About Vertical Solutions, Inc.**

*Vertical Solutions, Inc., develops, implements, and supports its award-winning PowerHelp suite of service management software solutions. PowerHelp is a robust, modular application that offers in-depth functionality for Customer Support, Field Service, Sales/Marketing Automation, and Mobile environments. Companies in a variety of industries and throughout the world use PowerHelp to improve service response and resolution times, reduce the costs of delivering service, capture actionable customer data, seamlessly integrate with external partners, and broaden their portfolio of service offerings. PowerHelp is flexible, integrates easily with legacy systems, and offers one of the industry's fastest deployment times, all of which contribute to its low TCO, and high ROI. The company's customer list is 100-percent referenceable, and includes ACCO Brands (GBC), Reynolds and Reynolds, ABB, Inc., and A. O. Smith Water Products Co. VSI is headquartered in Cincinnati, OH, with offices and partners worldwide. For more information, visit [www.VSI-PowerHelp.com](http://www.VSI-PowerHelp.com) or call 1.800.466.0238.*

