

## Facilitator — February/March 2016



### Restaurants Go High-Tech

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#### The changing landscape of facility management technology

Just 30 years ago, facility management operated on a whole different scale. With no computers, Internet or cell phones, stores relied on landlines and paper folders to organize service requests and histories. Sourcing vendors meant using the Yellow Pages and calling vendors in the area one by one. Fast forward to 2015, where we hold more technology in the palm of our hand than all of NASA back in 1969, when it placed two astronauts on the moon. Today, smartphones are used for everything from texting and emailing to fitness tracking and now, yes, even facility management.

The ubiquity of GPS tracking in smartphones gives us useful tools to make our lives and jobs easier. Facility management technologies are no different. Some of the larger, more innovative companies are even taking it upon themselves to develop proprietary apps designed to simplify and improve service outcomes.

These innovative solutions benefit technicians and clients alike, in a variety of ways, such as providing a comprehensive view of open work orders in the technician's area or directions to the stores they have been scheduled to service. But these features are just the tip of the iceberg. When executed correctly, these apps can change the way clients and facility management companies view the IVR processes, response times and workplace safety (by limiting distracted driving, for example), all the while placing a new level of accountability on the collective processes we share.

#### The Industry of the Future

People, processes and systems must work together like a well-oiled machine to optimize the business' productivity, customer service and profits, and in today's world, technology is the gear that drives this machine. Facility managers have always been challenged to initiate improvements to control costs and improve brand experiences. As a result, the most successful facility professionals are adept problemsolvers. From the outset, facility professionals were always improving the efficiency of their business, whether by upgrading from paper folders to Microsoft Access or improving technician accountability by the implementation of IVR systems.

In today's world, technology is changing faster than ever, improving efficiency in multiple aspects of daily life, including facility management. Despite how hard facility managers try, some technicians are seemingly left behind in the world of technology. Many technicians are still forced to rely on paper work orders, printed directions and the time-intensive task of retyping data from the field. These processes can be streamlined and improved through the use of customized mobile applications, not only increasing productivity and decreasing expenses, but enhancing the overall operation as well.

#### Enhanced Operations

With mobile apps, facility professionals can better streamline operations. Technicians can use their mobile device to see their day's activity plan, complete with job details, addresses, client information and directions to the site, eliminating the need for back and forth phone calls and multiple printed documents. Technicians also can make updates to work orders while on site, virtually eliminating the need to update written documents post-completion.

Consider these potential uses of technology in the facility management world:

Facility managers routinely rely on IVR systems to monitor check-in and check-out of on-site technicians. While IVR systems provide proof of service, the system can be cumbersome and time-consuming for technicians who arrive on-site, ready to complete their work order. GPS-enabled apps can automatically check a technician into their work site, saving time and leaving very little room for error in time to completions.

It is estimated that labor issues cause 90 percent of all cost overruns on construction projects. Between paper documents, re-typing completion reports and relying on disjointed ways of reporting work completion, facility managers risk dealing with inaccurate hours, resulting in clients overspending on work orders. By eliminating the time, costs and confusion involved with manual processing of paper documents and digitally capturing work orders, technicians can spend more time servicing clients, and facility managers can get more accurate data, resulting in more accurate costs passed along to clients.

Using a facility management app for work order completion can reduce paper use by 85 percent, as well as significantly decrease postage costs.

By providing GPS services directly from work orders, technicians are able to prioritize work order based on location, reducing

travel distance and travel time by up to 15 percent, according to a 2015 case study by MobileFrame. This translates to faster response times and lower fuel costs. In addition, distracted driving becomes less of an issue as technicians can use real-time voice directions, allowing them to keep their eyes on the road.

Since all data is input at the time of service, there will be less missing documentation, meaning technicians will be paid for their work faster.

With a mobile app, facility professionals will have better access to actionable data, including real-time photos, notes and even store signatures to ensure satisfactory completion.

#### Long-Term Success

As documented, the industry now has more tools than ever to improve both the outcomes and the ease of doing business for all parties involved. In addition to the cost savings and accountability factors improved by mobile apps, direct access to up-to-the-second information gives businesses the capacity to make better decisions, faster than ever. In today's age of big data, this will take facility professionals' decision making to the next level. By going paperless, facility managers will be able to collect more real-time data than ever, granting them the ability to create benchmarks for all aspects of facility management, leading to "smarter" data, improved response times and long-term cost containment measures.

For those of you who are thinking, "This sounds great, but are my techs ready for this technology?" Yes, they are ready! According to a PRSM 2014 benchmarking report, "Supplier Fleet and Technician Operations and Practices," 90 percent of the technicians have access to smartphones and can receive work orders in real time.

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