

# SSPA September 2005 news

A Publication of the Service & Support Professionals Association

## Extending Knowledge Management to Field Service

By Mark Angel, CTO Knova

Unlike their customer service colleagues in contact centers who benefit from multiple tiers of support and powerful knowledge-empowered applications for service resolution management (SRM), field service professionals are often on their own.

On a customer site, field service technicians have no access to these new SRM applications or critical knowledge inside their corporate firewall. In fact, they may not have access to a Web browser at all, making it impossible to access the self-service site.

If they can't immediately resolve an issue, they have to call into the support center—sometimes waiting in the queue with customers—or rework the problem on site.

While most CRM packages provide some field service capabilities, they do not provide access to knowledge or diagnostic search and resolution functionality.

The result?

- High costs when issues drag on because the right knowledge isn't available
- Costly return visits to customer sites when issues can't be resolved the first time
- Customer dissatisfaction with slow resolutions and extended downtime

Service Resolution on a Laptop

Organizations are increasingly turning to service resolution management applications that extend into the field, providing direct customer-facing staff and mobile technicians with the knowledge they need to resolve customer issues the first time, quickly and accurately, without reworking known issues. When field service professionals have access to knowledge, they are more confident and capable and customers are more satisfied.

Empowering field service workers with knowledge results in lower costs by:

- Shortening the length of site visits
- Resolving issues during the first site visit
- Increasing customer confidence and satisfaction

Field service technicians often find themselves in remote locations or at secure customer sites without Internet access. Today's most advanced service resolution management applications support media-based updates to support DVD or CD distribution for truly disconnected clients. By providing synchronization tools, the applications make it easy to keep current with the corporate knowledge management system.

### In this issue

- [Extending Knowledge Management to Field Service](#)
- [Gray Matter: EMC's Innovative Approach to Knowledge Sharing](#)
- [Improve Operations and Save Money: Change Service Behavior from Reactive to Preventive](#)
- [Practical Ideas on Conquering the Knowledge Maintenance Monster](#)
- [Final countdown for the launch of the J.D. Power and Associates Certified Technology Service and Support program](#)

## Key Requirements

Not all applications are created equal. Of course you want the most comprehensive SRM application available, but that is an entire subject in itself. If field service is a critical component to your service organization, here are some key features to consider:

- A personalized portal interface with the same tools used by professionals in the support center
- Guided diagnostic search capabilities to step the agent through the resolution process
- Content source integration so technicians can see the most relevant knowledge from multiple departments and content repositories including documentation, release notes, engineering content, site-specific professional services documentation and user forums content-brought together from separate repositories
- Simple, automatic synchronization for content updates and system improvements whenever the laptop is connected to the intranet
- Integration options for your existing CRM and help desk applications
- An architecture that supports key IT standards including firewall-friendly, secure synchronization, industry-standard encryption and protocols to manage connections and secure information exchange

Knowledge-empowered field service is critical for industries that have sophisticated technology deployed to remote locations such as medical equipment, telecommunications, manufacturing systems network equipment, imaging and more. Industry analysts such as David Kay of DB Kay & Associates have long emphasized the importance of providing world-class field service. Kay says that "remote, on-site access to critical product and support knowledge has long been a challenge for field service technicians. By bringing the advantages of service resolution management technology to mobile support professionals, SRM improves productivity, customer satisfaction and first visit resolution."

As you try to stay competitive in today's marketplace, you recognize service and support as critical to obtaining and keeping customers. Yet, these initiatives are costly. Research from SSPA reveals that 82% of the cost of delivering support comes from the actual process of resolving customer issues, the service resolution management component. Leading analysts agree that empowering service and support professionals with knowledge in the contact center as well as the field eases the burden by cutting costs AND keeping customers happy.

We'd like to invite you to learn more through Knova's free white paper library: [www.knova.com/sspa](http://www.knova.com/sspa)

Comments? Suggestions? We would like to hear from you. Please email the editor at [sspanews@thesspa.com](mailto:sspanews@thesspa.com).

[Download PDF](#)



[next article >>>](#)

Distributed by SSPA - 11031 Via Frontera - Suite A - San Diego CA - 92127

©2005 SSPA