

Whitepaper

#Managing multiple subcontractors

Field service management





Managing multiple subcontractors in field service management

There is a rise in the number of service organizations using third-party contractors to extend or supplement the capacity of their field service workforce. This usually happens when service organizations receive new projects and have increased service workload volumes. There are several reasons why you may want to leverage subcontractors for your field service projects.

Hiring independent subcontractors enable service organization

- To stay flexible and shift overhead costs to a more cost-effective workforce.
- Extend your reach to diverse geographical locations
- Benefit from a broader set of skills which comes in handy for unique field projects that require special skills.

However, hiring these contractors does come with some challenges. Subcontracting for field service delivery is no walk in the park. To enjoy the above benefits, you must

- Find the right subcontractors with the right skillsets...which can be difficult and time-consuming
- Conduct continuous assessment to ensure that subcontractors comply with quality, regulatory, and standards requirements.
- Maintain workplace happiness and morale
- Manage documents and files
- Maintain accountability for individual tasks
- Perform QA tasks on work done by subcontractors

All these challenges can be handled by properly onboarding outsourced field teams and using the right processes, tools and software. To help you tackle these challenges, here are some best practices for managing multiple subcontractors in field service management.



Conduct due diligence when hiring

Since field technicians are very important assets, service organizations need to invest time, effort, and resources to finding/attracting the right subcontractors. When searching for subcontractors, you must exercise the same level of caution and due diligence as you do when hiring full-time employees.

Conduct background checks and verify work performance from previous clients. Taking the time to do this saves you a lot of stress and resources down the line. You can identify limitations (such as incorrect skillsets, tardy performance, and poor work ethics) that will impede the execution of field service projects.

No need to micromanage

Skilled subcontractors are experts at what they do and have a strong sense of independence. Most prefer to retain a measure of freedom and autonomy when working on a project. As entrepreneurs, they won't like being told exactly how they should do their jobs.

Rather than micromanage and give explicit instructions for each task, it's best to manage them by communicating your expectations regarding outcomes. By recognizing the expertise of your subcontractors and giving them some leeway in executing tasks, you can avoid unpleasant scenarios and enjoy the results of their best efforts.



Clear communication

Clear communication enables seamless project execution and is the foundation of a successful working relationship between you and your subcontractors. Clearly defining the scope of work and the role of each subcontractor at the beginning of the project can help ensure that the work is accurately done. Everyone is aware of their responsibilities and liabilities and would take ownership of their part in project execution.

You should also schedule regular checkups at predefined points to assess and deliver feedback on work done to each subcontractor. Deliver constructive criticism when necessary and honest appreciation when your external field technicians have done a good job.

Team bonding

Subcontractors are more likely to put in their best efforts when they feel their contributions are meaningful. Rather than see them as expendable resources, make them feel like part of your team. Show subcontractors that their work is valuable and contributes to your overall business success.

Contractors are human beings and will prefer to work with employers they feel a connection with. This reduces the hassle of managing them and also minimizes the churn of experienced workers since those contractors will be happy to work with you on future projects.



Leverage field service software solutions

Managing field service businesses without software is difficult at the best of times. Doing so while subcontracting is unfeasible. Field service software solutions boost efficiency and accountability by acting as a single source of truth. Most solutions come with workflow capabilities that make it easy to assign/monitor jobs and tasks to third-party contractors. These solutions also help with record-keeping, payments, and tracking of documents. Field technicians can upload paperwork from their smartphones and fill in documentation for contracts, warranty, and other regulatory purposes.

Also, the job of managing multiple subcontractors in field service management becomes easier when you provide these technicians with a robust set of connected tools, devices, and the right information (task lists, asset history, job details, and customer data). Access to the right information empowers full-time and contract workers to achieve first visit resolution and deliver a premium service experience.

Wrapping Up

Although this isn't an exhaustive list, applying the above best practices will help you better manage subcontracted field technicians. Putting the right team of subcontractors together and using the right tools to manage them can help organizations ensure quality service delivery and better meet client expectations.



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