FIELD NATION

The MSP's Guide

to Field Service

Introduction

Managed Service Providers (MSPs) are under constant market pressure to expand service capabilities in order to retain key accounts. For example, a small, regional MSP specializing in desktop/laptop system maintenance may need to begin servicing a client's servers, or expand to include its national locations and other related systems.

The challenge is that expanding services using a traditional workforce can be time- and cost-prohibitive. Access to specialized, on-demand IT technicians solves this problem, enabling MSPs to quickly fill skill gaps and explore new markets without the risk of a large up-front, or ongoing, investment.

Welcome to the new world of work—a mix of independent contractors, freelancers, and gig workers that has more than doubled in size over the past decade. As recently as 2008, only fifteen percent of the average company's overall workforce was considered contingent. Today, over forty-one percent of the average enterprise's total workforce is non-employee, and ninety-seven percent of organizations consider independent talent to be critical to their success.

What's causing this significant shift within our workforce?

Business Need
Seventy-one percent of all enterprises cite agility as a top goal. Engaging a variable workforce allows MSPs to respond to real-time business challenges, quickly deploy talent where and when it's needed, scale up or down to meet seasonal demands, and focus on growth without committing resources to fixed staffing overhead.

Worker Preferences
Talented individuals with valuable skill sets are opting for greater professional control and autonomy, choosing to leverage their expertise to work how, when, and where they choose.

New Technology and Tools
As business needs and worker preferences shift from traditional employment to flexible, project-based work, integrated SaaS platforms and other technologies make it possible to scale a complex variable workforce, which enables MSPs of all sizes to efficiently source, manage, and deploy on-demand technicians.

This guide provides a holistic view of how MSPss and other field service organizations can leverage a contingent workforce to reduce costs and risk, increase work order efficiency, and expand operations with greater flexibility than ever.

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How Contingent Field Service Labor Can Benefit Your MSP

Recruiting, Training, and Employee Retention Costs

The costs of maintaining a highly-skilled, full-time workforce is rising, with benefits alone accounting for more than thirty-one percent of an average employee's total compensation package.

By shifting part of their workforce from traditional W-2 employees to specialized contract technicians, field service-focused MSPs can reduce costs without sacrificing service quality—in fact, forty-three percent of companies using a contingent workforce report saving at least twenty percent in labor costs.

Travel and Office Locations

Comprehensive Service Level Agreements (SLAs) often require an on-site presence based on customer needs. In the past, this would require either expensive travel and additional costly overtime for a centrally-located workforce, or would require MSPs to establish satellite locations and additional staff to accommodate customer demand.

Because contract technicians can be found in nearly every location around the world, it's now possible for MSPs to service clients in almost any area without the costs of additional infrastructure and travel.

Equipment Costs

Many contract technicians purchase and maintain their own equipment—vehicles, tools, laptops, and smartphones—further reducing the capital investment required for MSPs to provide a broad range of services.

Project Completion Costs

To protect profits and maintain sustainable growth, job and project costs must be strictly controlled. Accessing a labor pool of expert independent technicians helps MSPs ensure that each job is completed quickly, efficiently, and profitably.

Lowering Your Risk

Compliance

Many digital staffing outlets help indemnify MSPs by ensuring that all contract technicians sourced through their platform are compliant with specific industry regulations and certifications.

Insurance

To minimize liability risks, MSPs can narrow their search to only include providers and contract technicians who supply their own insurance coverage.

Expansion

Engaging with flexible contract technicians to fulfill work orders makes it easier to gauge demand before committing long-term resources and staff, offering a low risk way for MSPs to expand to new geographic locations or service offerings.
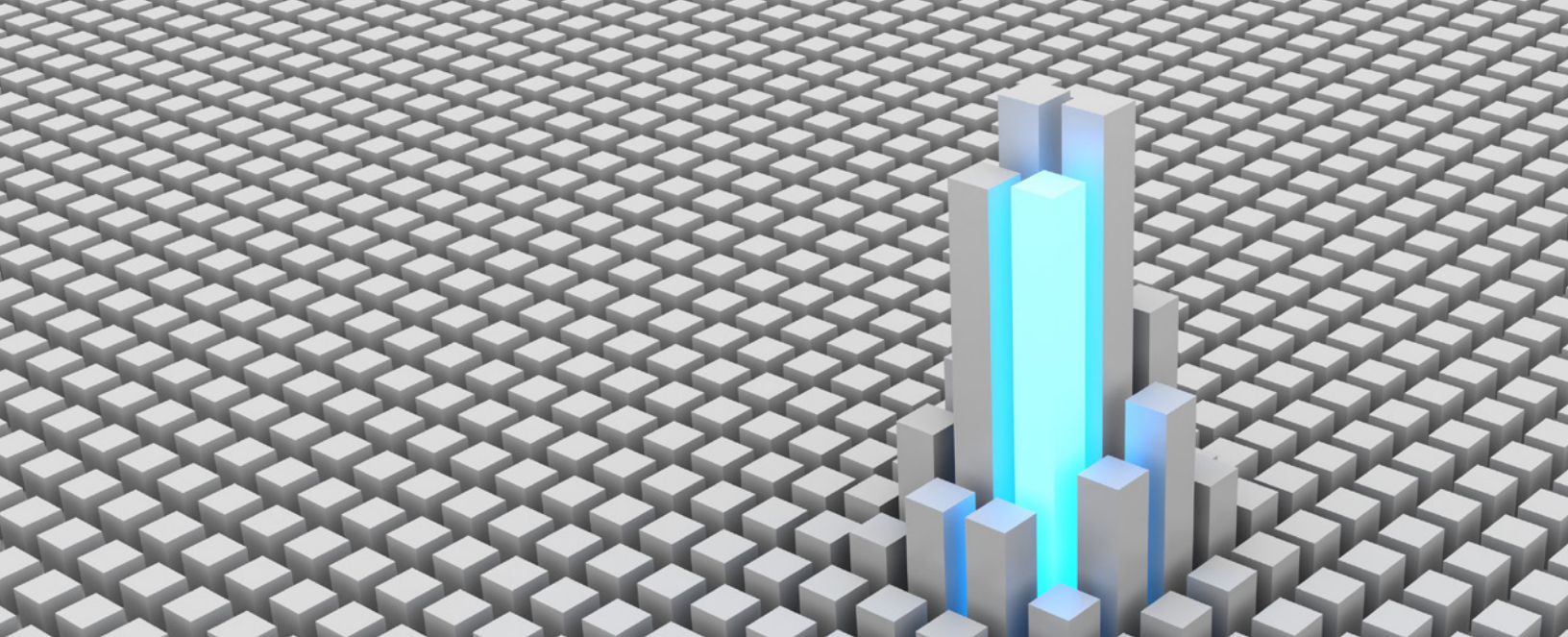
Increasing Field Service Work Order Efficiency

Schedule and Leverage Current Employees

Getting the most value possible from a blended workforce—the mix of both employees and independent contractors—requires ongoing communication and detailed tracking.

Freelance Management System (FMS) platforms have become critical tools for optimizing this complex mix of talent, allowing MSPs to efficiently find, recruit, and manage their entire workforce from one place.

Nearly sixty percent of organizations across the globe leverage online talent platforms, helping them manage both employees and contingent workers, as well as access data and reports from one integrated system. An FMS also makes it easier for employees and contract technicians to collaborate on projects, hit performance targets, and work together to drive the business forward.

Expand Your Reach and Impact

Accessing an FMS-enabled variable workforce allows MSPs to accept more work by helping them fill labor gaps, complete projects more quickly, and balance out the peaks and valleys in field service demand—all without overloading their W-2 employees.

Get the Right Talent Fast

By using an FMS to source contingent labor, both hiring and project managers can quickly engage contract technicians based on skillset, experience, and location.

Win More Bids

Offering a diverse range of services via access to a marketplace of expert talent helps MSPs win more bids by demonstrating their ability to deliver exceptional service.

Create Accurate Proposals and Stay on Budget

Real-time labor pricing within an FMS makes it possible to quickly create accurate proposals for even the largest, most complex projects. Pricing data provides access to each territory's local market labor rate, filtered by specific location, qualifications, skillsets, and other key criteria. These insights help MSPs control costs, avoid overpaying for work, and ensure that each project is completed within the agreed upon budget.

Meet Every SLA

According to a recent Blumberg Advisory Group study, companies using a variable workforce achieve eighty-two percent SLA compliance, compared with seventy-six percent of companies that don't use a variable workforce model.

Best-in-class FMS users overwhelmingly outperform overall service industry averages for productivity and utilization: ninety-eight percent SLA compliance for FMS users compared to eighty-one percent service industry average, and ninety-six percent first time fix rate for FMS users compared to seventy-eight percent service industry average.

Provide Faster Service

Three-quarters of variable workforce users experience shorter travel time than non-users. The average travel time for emergency service calls is sixty minutes or less for seventy-three percent of FMS users compared to fifty percent of non-users.

FMS users also experience faster average travel time for emergency service calls: forty-five minutes or less for forty-two percent of FMS users, compared to nineteen percent of non-FMS users.

Growing Your MSP With a Contingent Workforce

Reduce Complexity

Pieced together software packages and sourcing strategies lead to information gaps that make it challenging MSPs to scale field operations. To get the most out of your variable workforce, it's critical to have a platform in place that allows you to integrate seamlessly with your existing systems, eliminates time-consuming manual data entry, and provides real-time reporting.

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Focus on the Big Picture

Take a high level view and focus on identifying inefficiencies and areas for growth. An integrated FMS platform consolidates critical data to a single dashboard view, allowing for greater visibility, accountability, and control.

Increase Speed

Establishing an efficient process for new contractor screening, vetting, interviewing, and onboarding enables MSPs to dispatch contract technicians and deliver on new SLAs as soon as they come in. The average onboard time is less than eleven days for eighty-eight percent of FMS users, compared to thirty-one percent of users of other types of variable workforce.

Enter New Markets

MSPs may be inclined to postpone expansion into new geographic territories until they can justify hiring one or more full-time field service technicians. The dilemma? It's risky hiring a field service provider before entering and building up demand in a new market.

The good news? Eighty percent of FMS users reported improvements in geographic coverage.

MSPs can leverage an FMS to:

- Scout and vet candidates across the globe to expand coverager
- Filter contractors based on experience, skill sets, and certifications
- Negotiate fees to get the best possible price for each service
- Receive checkpoints throughout projects for quality assurance
- Process contracts, tax forms, and final payment on a single platform
- Track progress and engage contractors to meet deadline

Conclusion

As the need for flexibility continues to drive both MSPsand workers, the use of a contingent workforce for field service operations will continue to grow. At the same time, FMS platforms like Field Nation ONE help provide the efficiency, transparency, and integration needed to unlock the greatest possible value from this new world of work.

About Field Nation

Field Nation connects companies with thousands of highly-skilled IT contractors to complete on-site projects throughout North America. With Field Nation companies can source, manage, and engage onsite talent in one place.

Source.
Manage.
Engage.