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Microsoft Intelligent Communications for Manufacturing

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Dynamically shifting customer expectations, lower margins, and ever-increasing demands on supply chain efficiency are bringing new complexity to manufacturers around the globe. Increasingly, manufacturers are examining every stage of the customer journey to looking for any and all means to differentiate. In order to achieve this differentiation, innovative manufacturers are now connecting customer facing field-service technicians with vital supply chain data, dashboards, and interactive product documentation to ensure each customer interaction is as valuable and efficient as possible.

Using Microsoft Teams, manufacturers can scale to meet the evolving needs of field services and deepen customer loyalty. By creating a hub for manufacturing teamwork, field service teams empowered with Microsoft Teams can provide manufacturers with higher visibility across their organization while minimizing downtime, reducing costs, and increasing customer satisfaction. As a result, manufacturers can complement their products with a rich, value-added business service and provide a complete, connected customer experience.

How do you differentiate yourself in today's competitive manufacturing marketplace?





1

Communication Concern #1: Lack of a 360-Degree View for Customer Engagements

For manufacturers to ensure customers evolve from a one-time buyer to a loyal customer, they need to ensure that each point of a contact with that customer is fueled by a 360-degree view of customer intelligence. The emphasis in manufacturing is shifting from mass production to mass customization; without the right insights, manufacturers risk delivering products and services that are misaligned with customer needs or expectations.

Digital Transformation has hastened the ability to drive actionable customer insight into systems and customer portals, but often the most important event in the customer lifecycle is the contact a customer has with the field service agents tasked with going the last mile in meeting and surpassing customer expectations. Down to an individual customer, it is critical manufacturers have a full view of each customer in order to provide timely and efficient resolutions aligned perfectly to customer needs.

2

Communication Concern #2: Keeping Field Services Connected and Critically Updated

Managing field service presents unique challenges for manufacturer that require a complete customer view to address and resolve customer needs. Teamwork is required across personnel who have a variety of specialized skills. To address customer challenges from beginning to end, technicians need instant access to resources and materials, where far-flung field service teams are often confronted with poor mobile networks, disconnected from important systems, documentation and subject-matter expertise. Finally, modern communication methods are not inherently integrated into existing manufacturing customer relationship management systems, adding to the complexity of managing field service operations.

“77% of companies are still using an on-premises field service solution.”¹



A woman in a black business suit is looking at a tablet held by two field technicians. The technicians are wearing high-visibility yellow safety vests and hard hats (one green, one yellow). They are standing in a warehouse or industrial setting with blue metal structures and cardboard boxes in the background.

3

Communication Concern #3: Customers Leave When They Feel Disconnected or Ignored

Aberdeen Group recently conducted research on Field Service Management software and found that lack of customer information was the primary reason for return visits from field technicians. Moreover, a disconnected customer service experience delivered by a manufacturing field service agent or team can result in slow or incomplete case resolution, customer call backs and, ultimately, customer churn. Repeat visits from an under-educated and under-empowered field service agent will result in a continued poor customer experience, reputational damage and ultimately increasing cost to the business.

“By 2020, 40% of field service work will be performed by technicians who are not employees of the organizations that has direct contact with the customer.”²

Introducing Intelligent Communications for Field Service Teams

Manufacturers should strive to connect agents, dispatchers, and mobile employees to a single platform on which operations can be streamlined across the entire service chain, so the customer experience is connected across systems and people. By empowering field service teams with access to customer insights, product and service documentation, and real-time access to subject matter experts, manufacturers can create a virtuous customer experience and better anticipate customer needs.

“...Microsoft has taken a new focus on empowering field service teams across various industries.”

A Hub for Manufacturing Field Service Teamwork

With the recent introduction of Teams, Microsoft has taken a new focus on empowering field service teams across various industries. Microsoft has constructed a veneer specifically for the manufacturing industry, where manufacturers can deliver the unique needs of field service teams by integrating tools and data insights with the ability to connect--synchronous and a-synchronously--with colleagues, partners and customers.



“Microsoft continues to attract new ISVs and new application offerings to its application marketplace, which is important for application leaders who want to avoid building custom extensions in their SFA deployments.”³

Access to Insights and People are Key to Field Service Success

Manufacturing field services roles experience high attrition rates, which is problematic given that these very employees are most they represent your company to your customers. Connecting and engaging your field service team is therefore essential; if field services are engaged and can easily connect with your team, they'll pass that excitement for your organization on to your customer base, as well as likely reduce turnover those high turnover rates.

Field service teams need access to customer orders on-the-go, including real-time order updates, calendars, inventory, and customer information so that issue resolution is accurate and fast. If you're looking to increase first-time fix-rates, field service teams must have all this customer insight available on a mobile device connected via public, private and mobile networks.

Microsoft Teams uses powerful, integrated search capabilities and built-in access to SharePoint, OneNote and Planner, so team members can find the information they're looking for— instantly. Because every document shared in Microsoft Teams is saved to the cloud, team members work from the latest version—meaning there's no more trying to track down the latest version in a thread of emails. In the event that a field service technician can't find the documentation for which they are searching to support a customer, they can leverage integrated audio/video conferencing or voice calling capabilities to find the perfect subject matter expert to address a customer need.

With the power of mobility and integrated voice/video services, field services teams may not always have the answer to every single problem, but then can endeavor to investigate issues on behalf of the customer leveraging connection to the right data, resources, and experts from anywhere, at any time. Ultimately this experience generates real business value by often eliminating the need to schedule a follow-up appointment with the customer due to lack of information in the field.



Teams Offers A Customizable, Personal Experience

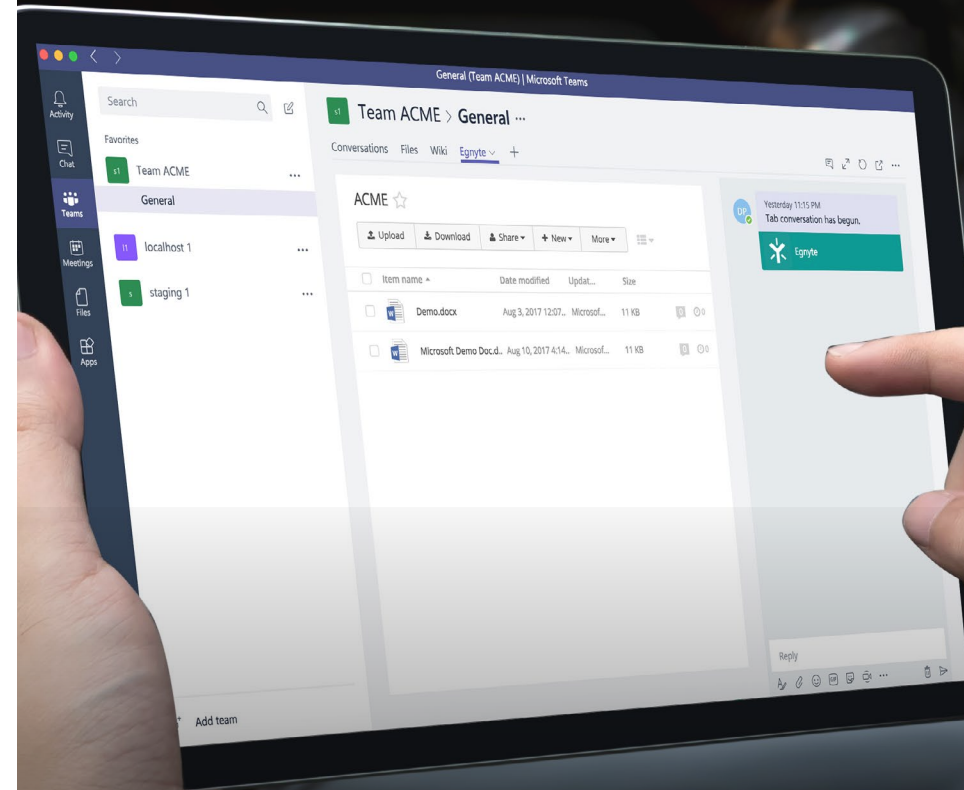
Field service teams require different capabilities depending on their role. While some might need access to private chats, calendars, and calls, others may only need access to team communications and channels. IT administrators can provide each employee role-specific access to the Teams features they need.

This capability can be used for employees in any role, with the option for IT to create a custom policy or use a newly available Firstline Worker configuration policy template. Employees can further customize their experience by pinning the modules they need most from their module tray to their Teams navigation bar.

Teams has Workforce Management Integration

Manufacturing field service teams rely on workforce management systems to handle important operational tasks related to their Firstline Workforce, such as shift scheduling, payroll, benefits, time, and attendance. Microsoft has launched a set of APIs that enable organizations to integrate their existing workforce management systems with Teams.

With the introduction of Graph API for Shifts, manufacturers can manage team schedules while leveraging existing enterprise scheduling systems, enabling seamless access to workforce management systems for managers and employees, right from Teams.



Customer Dialogue Management is Critical

Field service teams on the front lines are most closely associated with providing a customer's good experience, but it's not easy: agents handle many cases, for many customers, using a variety of different channels—and they're expected to do so efficiently.

The Anywhere365 Contact Center and Enterprise Dialogue Management platform is a native integration into Microsoft Teams, providing cost-effective rich dialogue management and contact center functionality for external customer contact centers or internal service desks. This platform is tailor-made for field service success, including:

- The ability for anyone within an organization to act as a contact center
- Intelligently forwarding incoming conversations to the appropriate agent based on skill, presence, location, time of day, and more
- The ability to extract previously hidden dialogue patterns through dialogue intelligence capabilities, for improving future customer experiences
- Real-time status visibility to monitor your contact center activity and performance

“By 2020, 10% of emergency field service work will be both triaged and scheduled by artificial intelligence.”⁴



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Microsoft Teams is the Right Choice for Manufacturers

It's clearly essential that manufacturers provide customers the support and answers they need, when they need them. Manufacturers can meet those needs by providing personalized service--service that goes above and beyond what your competitors can deliver. With multichannel support, Microsoft Teams allows smart manufacturers to meet customers wherever they are, fix problems before they happen, and delight customers through the entire experience.

“By 2020, more than 75% of field service organizations with more than 50 users will deploy mobile apps that go beyond simplified data collection and add capabilities that help technicians succeed.”⁵

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Shared Virtual Task Lists

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