

How to Validate Field Work

A new mobile data collection solution allows this service provider to ensure that its field workers are doing the work they should, when they should, and it has also reduced labor costs by more than \$112,000 per year. Where are the savings, and what should you consider for your business?

There are many challenges in managing a field force, not the least of which is making sure that your mobile workers are doing what they should be when they are out of sight. It becomes even more difficult when validation must happen while the employees are located out of the office, or located at the customer site. Collection of data, reporting completed work, and measurements of performance become much more complicated.

Paper-based processes create unacceptable lag time

A paper form may be the initial response to a field reporting requirement. It is an easy method to collect the data for invoicing, and requires nearly no training of your field personnel. While this may prove to be an attractive solution, the accuracy, consistency of data and timeliness of the data will be lost. Additionally, each field worker will be required to take time to complete forms and communicate it in a legible format for manual entry for invoicing. Forms will require filing and some method for connecting the data collected to your invoicing. The costs mount.

Incorporate mobile technology and electronic forms for improved results

Instead of using a paper form, undertake a batch or integrated electronic form. Electronic forms used on a mobile computer provide improved data standardization through the use of pull down lists and check boxes. Additionally, generation of electronic data provides for improved speed in invoicing and accuracy.

Additional benefits utilizing a mobile computer with forms include: GPS location data, time stamps, asset management and inventory control. Even customer validation of the job can be incorporated into a work process without any new paperwork demand from the field worker.

Which is the best approach for your business?

If the start up expense is your only concern, a form is nearly always the best solution. If total cost of operations, speed of operations, and reduced time associated with invoice generation matters to you, an electronic solution is superior.

Consider the following:

- Data to be collected
- Timeliness requirements
- Accuracy requirement
- Validation of the data
- Systems within your organization that will require the data that has been generated
- Inventory that may be consumed /used in a service
- Documentation of the service required
- Employee location validation

- Service process influence or control
- Time required of the service employee to report the data