



Service Differentiation: Your 3-Step Plan

Differentiation, Service DNA, and
Continuous Improvement in Field Service

Introduction

This white paper discusses service differentiation: doing more with less, providing service more effectively, and focusing on your unique business processes to outperform your competition.

We will review the challenges of delivering the highest level of customer satisfaction while dealing with critical resource and fiscal constraints, in particular, finding the right balance between conflicting objectives and building your unique processes into the solution.

In addition, we will highlight what ViryaNet G4 brings to the market as the industry's only auto-calibrating optimization technology with an embedded service priorities engine that enables the continuous optimization of scheduling resources within dynamic field service environments.

The Challenge

Your service organization has a unique way to differentiate itself from your competition. Your service processes are a significant part of what makes your business unique. These processes – your service DNA – define you as a service provider and are your strategic assets.

As a service organization, you need to define your goals, build your business processes, and measure your business objectives. Using this information, you can bring about change, enable continuous improvement, and differentiate your service from your competition.



Step 1: Define Your Goals

As a service organization, you face the challenge of delivering the highest level of customer satisfaction while dealing with critical resource and fiscal constraints.

In addition, schedule optimization is a multi-objective problem. In many cases, certain objectives will conflict with other objectives, so you must define your goals and define the balance between these goals.

For the majority of service organizations, improving customer satisfaction and increasing productivity and utilization are the most important field service goals.

However, in most cases, customer satisfaction and productivity are conflicting objectives. As a service organization trying to differentiate itself, you should not just define your goals and targets; you should also understand how one impacts the other. You need to find the balance that is right for you and translate this balance to the many day-to-day scheduling and dispatch decisions.

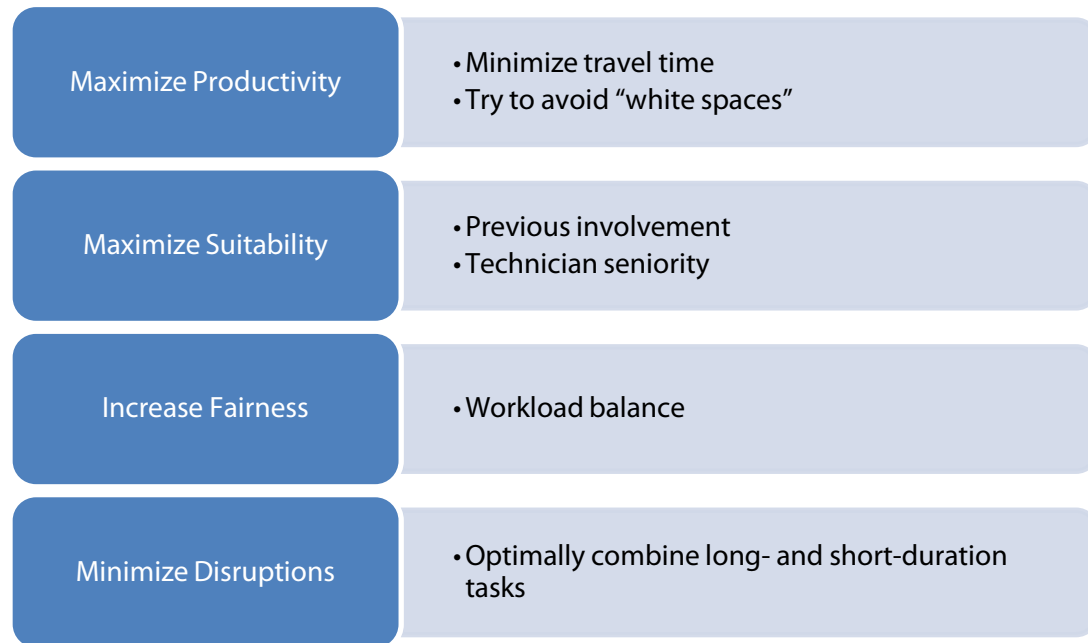
For many different industries across the globe, balancing conflicting objectives is one of the most challenging and most important problems that service organizations must solve. So how do you find the right balance between customer satisfaction and productivity? And how do you plan towards those business objectives?

Planning Towards Business Objectives

Customer-Friendly Assignments Plan

Meet SLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uptime• Meantime between failures• Turnaround time
Provide Quality Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous involvement• Technician seniority
Minimize a Failure Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many end-users are affected?• How long are they waiting?• What is the direct effect on them?
Minimize the Risk to Miss the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete your commitments early in their respective time-windows• Plan for the unexpected

Resource-Effective Assignments Plan



Inherently, customer satisfaction is strongly related to the contractual agreement between the service provider and its customers, or more specifically, the service level agreement (SLA) part of this contract. Common SLA metrics that can be found in the service market are:

- uptime
- meantime between failures
- turnaround time (to fix a problem)

The big question is how to translate these SLA metrics – or the more generic goal of increasing customer satisfaction – into planning and execution policies, decisions and best practices.

For example, when creating a plan, there may be a lot of focus on meeting service commitments.

But you must also examine the risk of keeping your service commitments when something goes wrong. Would it be better to finish all your commitments as early as possible? But what if it means driving more or compromising workload balancing between your technicians? How much are you willing to pay in order to achieve a specific commitment?

One of ViryaNet’s largest customers took this concept even further. In order to provide better service, this customer wanted to ensure that when sending technicians, there are always strategic assets nearby in their network. This service organization found the balance by making a conscious decision to apply this restriction, but not go as far as dedicating a resource to handle just this task.

Another good example of balancing service objectives is driving time and previous involvement with the same customer. Do you ask your technician to drive 15 more miles because of previous involvement, knowing that this scenario should result in a better customer experience? Or when do you send 2 technicians to the same neighborhood to minimize the risk of missing appointments in this region?

Defining and prioritizing your objectives has significant impact on your business. These decisions are critical.

Step 2: Build Your Business Processes

Think about all the processes in mobile workforce management. Let's look at just one of those processes: communication with the customer if the technician is late for the appointment.

- How is the communication delivered?
- How far in advance is the communication delivered?
- Who approves the communication?
- Who delivers the communication?

These processes are different from one service organization to another, and are a significant part of what makes your business unique. These processes define you as a service provider, and are your strategic assets.

For companies that transition to centralized scheduling, they have one unified way of managing the scheduling of resources. What does this mean for the organization? Transparency and accountability. Now that the process is transparent, you can look for opportunities to improve.

If the technicians are scheduled in one system, you can break down silos. You can send work to a technician who may not have done this work in the past. And you have the opportunity to evaluate the impact of breaking down silos.

So what's the impact of breaking silos? Here's how two ViryaNet customers built in their service DNA with our solution to handle the business question of outsourcing.

Company A and Company B are very mature organizations in terms of what they measure, and how they make decisions, based on those measurements.

Both Company A and Company B are utilities that had to answer the question: Should meter reading be outsourced?

Company A decided to outsource this work. By doing that, they saved millions of dollars, and they have the performance management measurements to prove it.

Company B made the opposite decision, based on their service DNA.

Keep in mind:

- these service organizations are not alike
- the structure of their workforces is not the same
- the number of skilled workers is not the same
- the geography is not the same

For Company B, when their technicians are in a rural place and doing more complex work, it makes more sense to read the meter at the same time because another technician won't be driving to this rural place in the next week, especially if the ferry service isn't running.

Both decisions were the right decisions for these organizations. And the decisions were made, based on information gathered with ViryaNet G4.



Here's another example of exploring and measuring what works for your organization.

ViryaNet has customers who apply a process called "drip feeding" where they don't reveal the entire schedule to the field; they only reveal the next job.

These organizations believe "drip feeding" keeps their technicians much more focused, and not distracted by things they'll need to do later. The technicians are not overwhelmed because they have a lot of work to complete that day. In addition, technicians can't deviate from the planned schedule. These organizations believe "drip feeding" is a good way to make their mobile workforce more productive.

On the other hand, ViryaNet has customers who want to show the entire schedule to the field. These customers believe that showing the technicians even more than they can do will drive them to work harder and do things faster.

These are completely different approaches on how to improve workforce efficiency. These approaches have nothing to do with the technology. It's about how people react to the process.

But a flexible solution allows you to apply different processes and make process changes easily. And with the right solution, you also have a framework to monitor the outcomes of the process changes; you can try a new process and see how it impacts your service organization. Then make a decision about what's best for you.

Similar to balancing business objectives, building your unique business processes is part of your service DNA; it is what can differentiate you from your competition.

The ViryaNet BPM Blueprint for Mobile Workforce Management is a collection of processes that provide visibility and flexibility.

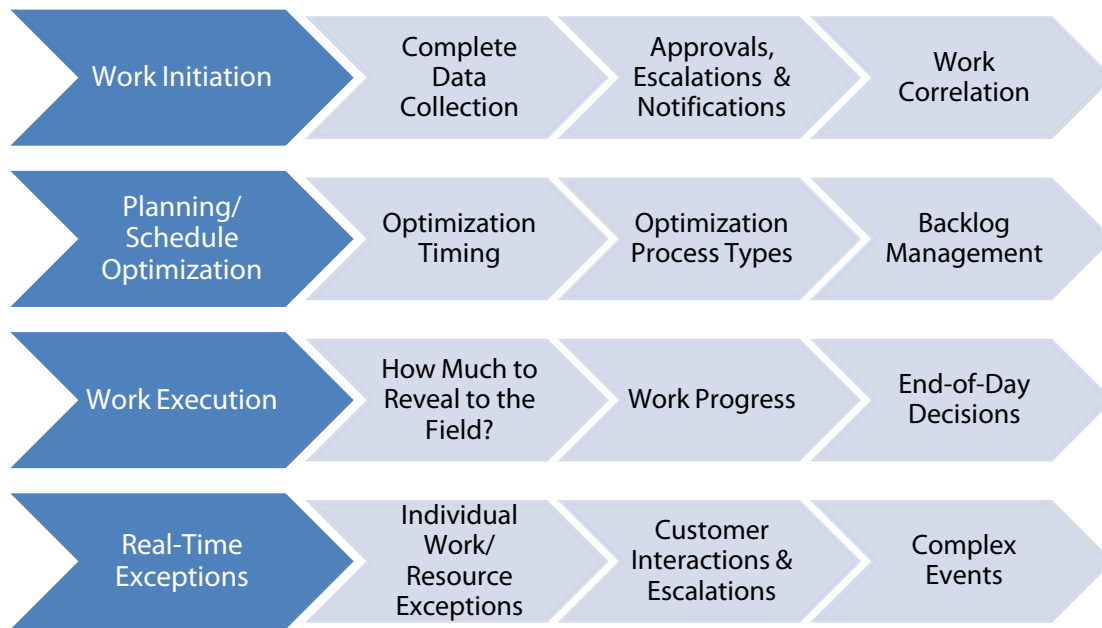
For the first time in mobile workforce management, you can leverage a modern, standard and affordable BPM tool to view processes that used to be buried in code. The process is visible to you as a service organization or as a business analyst. You don't need ViryaNet when your processes change.

If you need to define a new process, there are many reusable steps implemented within these prepackaged processes that you can access, such as, find work details, invoke optimization, send notifications, etc.

This BPM tool helps you build your service DNA into your decision support systems and into the day-to-day of mobile workforce management.



ViryaNet's BPM Blueprint for Mobile Workforce Management



Step 3: Measure, Measure, Measure

You already know you need to measure. But it's not just about measuring. It's a whole process. It's how you translate measurement into action.

Typical field service KPIs (key performance indicators) can be categorized into 3 groups: productivity, customer satisfaction, and total cost of ownership.

Each group usually includes many performance indicators, such as workforce value, resources cost, overtime ratio, etc.

So what's missing? Why don't KPIs by themselves provide all the answers?

There are 3 main gaps between KPIs and field service operational excellence:

- First, it is very difficult to compare financial metrics, such as labor cost with non-financial metrics, such as customer satisfaction.
- Second, just having a long list of measurements doesn't necessarily reflect the respective importance of each measurement.
- Third, and most important, having a measurement framework to benchmark your service organization doesn't mean that you'll know how to improve your results.

Using the Balanced Scorecard* framework is a compelling value proposition to overcome these 3 main gaps.

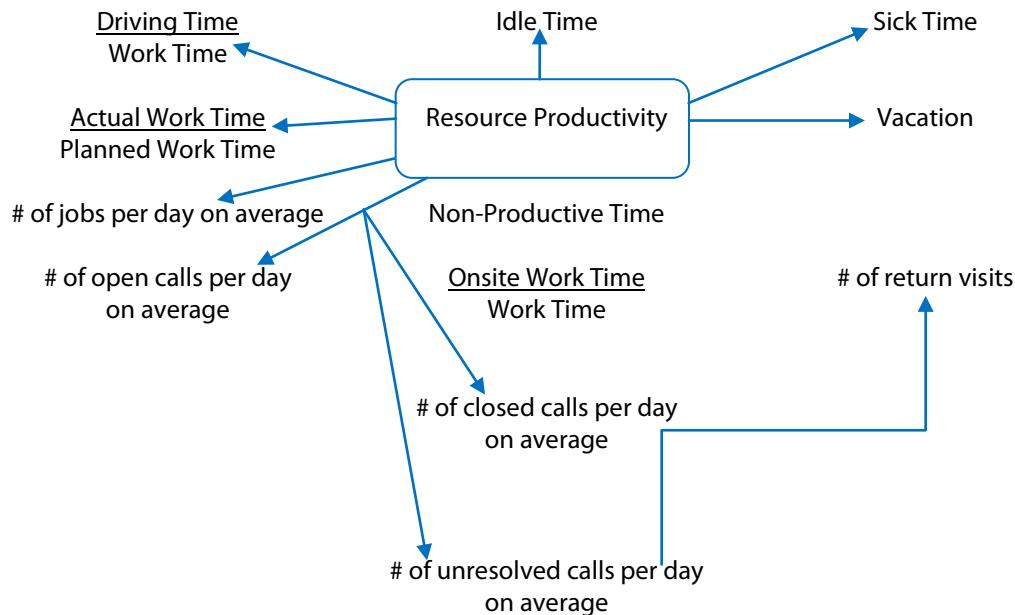
Remember that you'll need to identify – upfront – the relationships between measurements and decisions with a strategy map.

*The Balanced Scorecard developed by Kaplan and Norton in the early 90's quickly became a popular management best practice. The Balanced Scorecard is a strategic planning and management system designed to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications, and monitor the organization's performance against strategic goals. It provides a framework not only for performance measurements, but helps planners identify what should be done and measured.

Example: Assess the Efficiency of Field Technicians

Let's say you want to assess the efficiency of your field technicians.

- Which KPIs do you measure?
- Which dimensions and hierarchies do you review?
- What are your related business goals?



You could be measuring all the time, and still not be happy with your results because it's not obvious what you should fix.

You must analyze what you're measuring. Is it skills? Training? Motivation? Scheduling? Or maybe it's a broader issue, such as "too many people". Or maybe "how time is reported" is the source of the problem.

By analyzing this information, you can then determine what needs to be improved. It could be a process change. It could be a configuration change. It could be different decisions are taken by different people in the organization. It could be a matter of training some of your employees with new or more skills, or finding those employees who are not performing as well as others.

Also, your success will require significant change management with technology rollouts and ongoing improvements.

You need 3 elements to meet the change management challenge:

- strong and vocal executive support for the adoption of mobile workforce technologies with the proper delegation of authority to change the “status quo”
- true cross-functional teams with participation: a voice and a vote for all members that includes all aspects of the organization affected, and
- a methodology that proactively addresses the change management challenges.

All these processes are a significant part of what makes your business unique. These processes define you as a service provider and are your strategic assets.

Your service DNA determines how you can continuously improve and how you can differentiate yourself from your competition.

Summary and Conclusions

- Schedule optimization is a multi-objective problem. In many cases, certain objectives will conflict.
- Defining and prioritizing your objectives has a significant impact on your business.
- Building your unique business processes is part of your service DNA and can differentiate you from your competition.
- Your business processes define you as a service provider and are your strategic assets.
- The measurement process also includes analysis and the development of policies, decisions, and best practices to continuously improve.

APPENDIX A

ViryaNet G4 – Service Differentiation Support

ViryaNet G4 ensures optimal daily schedules to best reflect service business priorities.

ViryaNet G4 is the industry's only auto-calibrating optimization technology and embedded service priorities engine that enables the continuous optimization of scheduling resources within dynamic field service environments.

To achieve objective-based modeling in ViryaNet G4, we:

- Provide customers with a clear, out-of-the-box set of supported objectives, built from the most common mobile workforce management business objectives.
- Use these out-of-the-box objectives within ViryaNet G4 to intuitively define the balance between objectives by prioritizing the objectives and defining threshold levels for compromising a higher-priority objective in favor of a lower-priority one.
- Auto-tune the internal parameters of the optimizer, with every run, to best accommodate the prioritized service objectives and the data for that run. So you do not have to worry about having an optimizer “bad hair” day.
- Offer an easy way to objectively measure the quality of a plan, and
- Provide greater visibility by measuring and presenting the objective's results for each plan.

ViryaNet BPM Blueprint for Mobile Workforce Management

The benefits of the Business Process Management methodology include:

- Productivity efficiency can be achieved through automation of business processes and visibility into the progress of each business process. The automation minimizes manual intervention between systems and people, and people in different groups within the same or different organizations. The visibility into progress allows for the capability to monitor the business process and enables the organization to become more proactive in handling the business process.
- Business process effectiveness is improved by analyzing the current business process and handling the exceptions successfully. The analysis of the implemented business process, along with its execution metrics, can provide the necessary information to determine the effectiveness of the business processes. If there are any exceptions identified within the business process, these exceptions can be handled appropriately, depending on the exception condition.
- Adaptability to constant change is always a major benefit of using a BPM system. The ability to quickly update an existing business process or implement a new process helps business users. In addition, the rules for a business process can be updated and implemented in real-time without the need to redeploy the business process.
- Sustainable improvements during the iterative lifecycle of business processes are possible, so BPM is a continuum and not a “use-it-and-forget-it” approach.



Reports & Dashboards

Normal business processes produce information at every step in the process. But how do you really know what's happening in your operation day-by-day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute? How can you get to the right data?

With ViryaNet G4, executives can review:

- How much of the working day is consumed with non-productive work or travel?
- What's the variance between best and worst performers?
- Are there enough or too few resources available in a service team/area to fulfill upcoming jobs?
- What percentage of jobs completed successfully on the first call?
- How do these metrics compare with an earlier period of time?

With ViryaNet G4, operations managers can determine:

- How am I doing right now against my plan?
- Will I be able to keep all my commitments?
- Will I incur any overtime today?
- How effectively are my schedulers and dispatchers managing new or urgent work?
- Am I underutilizing my field workforce?



What's your plan for service differentiation?

[Find out how ViryaNet can help.](#)

About ViryaNet

ViryaNet delivers mobile workforce management solutions that intelligently guide, automate, and optimize both simple and complex field service work, resulting in measurable business benefits. ViryaNet's products, pre-packaged solutions and people are recognized within the industry as innovative which in turn enables its' customers to be viewed as leaders within their respective industries. ViryaNet's G4 products specialize in the functions of scheduling and dispatching resources and enabling mobile field communication and are delivered in industry specific configurations. Embedding industry best practices and utilizing innovative technologies like ViryaNet's BPM Blueprint for Mobile Workforce Management™, Microsoft InfoPath® and device agnostic mobile solutions enable ViryaNet's products to be rapidly deployed and extended to support virtually any business process across a wide range of industries. ViryaNet is proud to call many of the world's leading utilities, the United States' largest pure rural telecommunications firm, the supermarkets most respected retailer, and North America's largest auto insurer as customers. ViryaNet has strong partnerships with leading platform and system integration companies that enable it to have a global presence. Headquartered in Westborough, MA, ViryaNet has additional offices in the United States and Israel. For more information [visit our website](#) or [follow us on twitter](#).

