# ORACLE
**UTILITIES**

# Meeting Customer Expectations with Your Mobile Workforce

# ORACLE

## Introduction

*You promised the boss you'd attend that 11:00 meeting. But the plumber who said he'd be at your home by 9:00 is more than an hour and a half late.*

*You've used up an entire vacation day waiting for the movers who never arrived.*

It's hard to find anyone who doesn't have a discouraging story about waiting endlessly for a delivery or the cable guy. So it's easy to sympathize with your customers when they complain that your field crew hasn't arrived on time—or at all.

Software can help. Today's mobile workforce systems determine efficient travel routes, track job completion, and help you identify mismatches between staff skills and customer needs.

But unless your mobile workforce application links directly to your contact-center software, your customers will remain needlessly frustrated by business processes that don't take their needs for information into account.

Here are some of the ways to use your mobile workforce applications to meet customer needs and boost customer satisfaction:

## 1. Give the contact center direct access to a real-time schedule

Many older mobile workforce applications accept appointments generated by the contact center and work through them overnight to produce a schedule. That schedule looks great at 8:00 a.m. But by 8:10, two crews are already tied up in a big traffic back up, one technician has gone home sick, and your fleet manager has just called about a truck that won't start.

Typically, dispatchers in this situation scramble to rearrange the day's work. As they have time, they send information to the contact center, where service reps call the first customers of the day to inform them about the delay.

But what about customers with later appointments? That 8:00 a.m. schedule you sent to the contact center is useless. Even if a dispatcher sent the 8:10 changes, what about the ones made at 9:00 or 9:30? What does your customer representative tell the client who calls at noon to check on the 4:00 p.m. appointment? She may know instinctively that, with so many changes earlier in the morning, there's little chance the crew will be following the late-afternoon schedule. After all, she's been handling irate phone calls all day. But she can't guide the customer because she has no real information.

A mobile workforce real-time scheduler, accessible to both dispatcher and call center, gives your staff the opportunity to minimize the problems arising from a series of unexpected field events. Just moments after you feed in the day's first disaster, it generates an entirely new schedule that optimizes the amount of work your crews can accomplish. The real-time scheduler identifies immediately those customers who need to be rescheduled. And

because the contact center has direct access to the changes as they occur, your staff doesn't have to wait to initiate automated calling or to start calling the affected customers personally.

Integrating a real-time scheduler into your contact center doesn't eliminate the problem of unkept appointments. But it minimizes them while also giving customers maximum notice of the change.

## 2. Use the same system in reverse to exceed customer expectations

Field work isn't always delayed. There are inevitably days when appointments take less time than expected, traffic is light, and new appointment slots open up. Granted, any field crew will appreciate a break. But everyone will benefit from mobile workforce systems with schedulers that can look ahead, identify customers as yet unserved in the crew's area, and connect with contact center reps who can call to see if customers are home and would like to receive service early.

## 3. Use schedule changes as a profit opportunity

Integration between the contact center and a real-time scheduler offers an outstanding opportunity to any utility whose customers are willing to pay for faster service.

Here is how it works. Towards the end of the workday, your contact center identifies customers who were willing to pay a higher price for next-day appointments but who couldn't be accommodated. Feeding those customer names, their availability, and their location into your mobile workforce management software allows your scheduler to match them up with unexpectedly available slots. Without forcing the dispatcher to get involved, the software can notify the contact center of the potential match, allow the service rep to check on customer availability, and then slot the appointment into the schedule or move on to try the next best match.

## 4. Link in maintenance management software to move customer satisfaction up another notch

Utilities that combine customer appointments with maintenance fieldwork can use openings in crew schedules to accomplish maintenance tasks in the vicinity by bringing maintenance management automatically into the mix. That gives the real-time scheduler a choice of items with which to fill the opening.

Many maintenance tasks—inspections, changing out a streetlight—can be done without customer involvement. But some involve short disruptions in water or electricity flow. A contact center with real-time access to crew schedules can call the affected customers to let them know the causes (and, incidentally, the long-term benefits) of the disruption. Calling customers in advance has the additional benefit of dramatically reducing calls into the contact center from customers who might otherwise see the disruption as a problem.

## 5. Use mobile workforce applications to enhance outage communication

Utilities increasingly inform customers about outage by displaying outage maps on websites. Linking the mobile workforce application's Automatic Vehicle Locator function to the outage map can help customers understand that help is on the way and better grasp how soon problems may be solved.

## Conclusion

Customer's time has value. Integrating customer-facing systems with mobile workforce applications lets you create multi-departmental business processes that respect the value of customer time and cement positive customer relationships.

**CONNECT WITH US**

B blogs.oracle.com/oracle

f facebook.com/oracle

t twitter.com/oracle

o oracle.com

Integrated Cloud Applications & Platform Services

Meeting Customer Expectations with Your Mobile Workforce
February 2016
Author: Oracle Utilities

Oracle is committed to developing practices and products that help protect the environment