Hypergrowth Or Business As Normal: 2021 Field Service Industry Sentiment Study

Written by Michael R. Blumberg, President - Blumberg Advisory Group
Executive Summary

Analysis of the results of Blumberg Advisory Group's inaugural Field Service Industry Sentiment Study provides an interesting perspective on the current and future direction of the industry post-Covid 19.

Key findings include:

- Field Service Industry participants have a bullish outlook on the future of their service business and the industry as a whole.
- Many FSOs plan to hire additional field service engineers in the next 12 months but have skepticism about their ability to find qualified candidates.
- A significant percentage of FSOs indicate that their service business is in hypergrowth mode and transforming their companies.
- While many Field Service Leaders view AR-enabled software as an effective alternative to delivering onsite service during the pandemic, a significant number believe it has become an essential tool for providing field service ongoing.

These insights provide valuable data to Field Service Organizations in guiding their business plans and decisions over the next 12-18 months.

Background

In June of this year (2021), Blumberg Advisory Group launched its inaugural Field Service Industry Sentiment Study. Sponsored by Help Lightning, a leading provider of Remote Visual Assistance Software, the objective of this study was to assess the current sentiment in the Field Service industry on a variety of topics such as new and emerging technologies, hiring practices and workforce structure, etc.
emerging technologies, hiring practices, and workforce structure. We believe the study findings provide Field Service Industry decision makers with valuable insight and perspectives for planning future investments in their Field Service business.

The study methodology involved an online survey targeted to a cross representative sample of field service industry leaders from various demographic segments and cohort groups.

**Study Demographics**

We surveyed a total of 130 field service leaders from different types of businesses serving the Field Service Industry. Slightly more than 40% of these businesses are representative of Manufacturers. One-quarter represent channel partners of manufacturers (i.e., distributors, resellers, etc.) Third-Party Maintainers (TPMs)/Independent Service Organizations (ISOs) accounted for 16%. Contractors/Installers and Telecom Carriers accounted for the rest. (see figure 1)

The survey included a good cross-section of respondents regarding their role in their company and the number of field service workers (e.g. technicians, engineers, plumbers, mechanics, etc.) they employ (see figure 2). Respondent roles included board members, president/owners, vice presidents, C-Level executives, and managers/supervisors. The most significant number of respondents (28%) were from companies that managed 101 to 250 field service workers, followed by 51 to 100 (25%), 251 to 500 (17%), and 501 to 999 (10%). Their companies employ less than 50 field service workers (10%) to more than 1000 (11%).

**Which category best defines the generation you belong to?**

- Silent Generation: born 1928 to 1945: 4%
- Baby Boomers: born 1946 to 1964: 25%
- Generation X: born 1965 to 1980: 30%
- Millennials: born 1981 to 1996: 37%
- Generation Z: born 1997 or after: 4%

**Figure 2**

When designing our study methodology, we were interested in how opinions or sentiments about the Field Service Industry differ by generation. A plurality (37%) of respondents are Millennials. Generation X accounts for 30% of the survey population, while the Baby Boomer generation represents one-quarter of the respondents surveyed. Generation Z and the Silent Generation each account for 4% of respondents.

**Covid-19 and the Recovery**

Hopes of a speedy business recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic are a pressing issue on most people’s minds. Fortunately, over half (53%) of our respondents are bullish on the ability of their companies to fully recover from the Covid-19 pandemic in the next 12 months. Another 45% are cautiously optimistic. A small percentage (2%) are skeptical (see figure 3) Baby Boomers are significantly more confident about the ability of their companies to recover...
than Generation X and Millennials by a factor of 2.3 to 1 and 1.4 to 1, respectively. Interestingly, most Generation Xers are cautiously optimistic, while most Baby Boomers (75%) and Millennials (55%) are bullish.

These perspectives track the values and experiences of each of these different cohort groups closely. For example, Baby Boomers have a strong work ethic, are self-reliant and competitive. While Generation X is adaptable and independent, they are also skeptical and pragmatic about embracing the future. In contrast to Millennials, who are typically enthusiastic and eager.

We also observed differences by business type. Manufacturers (73%) were the most bullish on the prospect of their companies to recover in the next 12 months compared to a smaller percentage of Distributors/Resellers (48%), Contractors/Installers (29%), and TPMs/ISOs (28%) who are bullish. A more significant percentage of respondents within these last three (3) cohort groups are cautiously optimistic about the prospects for their companies.

It’s encouraging that most respondents are bullish or optimistic about the future of their businesses. Nearly one-third (32%) of the respondents believe that the Field Service Industry has already returned to normal (see figure 4). Most of the TPMs/ISOs (56%), Distributors/Resellers (48%), and Contractors/Installers (79%) share the view that the industry will return to normal in the next six months. Only 17% believe the industry will return to normal in the next 6-12 months, and 4% think it will be a year or more from now. A small percentage (2%) believe it will never return to normal, which aligns with the percentage of respondents skeptical about their businesses’ ability to recover.

We are not surprised by these findings. They are consistent with observations and in-depth conversations we’ve had with industry participants. It’s also reasonable to expect businesses to be optimistic given the increase in vaccination rates, decrease in Covid-19, easing of restrictions, and opening of the economy in many regions of the world. We anticipate that Field Service Organizations will implement more aggressive growth strategies and make significant investments in their businesses and new technologies due to this future outlook.

In your opinion, when do you think the field service industry will return to normal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s already returned to normal</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometime within the next 6 months</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within the next 6-12 months</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A year or more from now</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will never return to normal</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4

There are slightly different opinions about the industry’s future growth outlook by generation, by position, and by type of business. A plurality of respondents from the various generations believes the industry will return to normal within the next six months (see figure 5). On the other hand, one-third of Baby Boomers (38%) and Millennials (32%) believe the industry has already returned to normal.

Most of the TPMs/ISOs (56%), Distributors/Resellers (48%), and Contractors/Installers (79%) share the view that the industry will return to normal in the next six
When will Field Service Industry return to normal by Generation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>It is already returned to normal</th>
<th>Within the next 6-12 months</th>
<th>A year or more from now</th>
<th>It will never return to normal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td><a href="#">32%</a></td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td><a href="#">21%</a></td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td><a href="#">38%</a></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5

It has/will become essential for our field service organization

21%

It is an effective alternative to onsite service during COVID-19

41%

Our company is not prepared to use it

5%

It would be effective for us in limited use cases

21%

Survey respondents also provided their opinion on the most compelling use case for AR. Approximately three-quarters (74%) indicated that the strongest use case is that AR facilitates remote customer support/resolution. Over two-thirds (68%) suggest that providing remote support to field service engineers is the strongest use case for this technology. Fostering more efficient equipment installation and inspection (42%), training (42%), and returns and warranty management (12%) also received frequent mention.

Perhaps these comments from survey respondents help shed light on what FSOs perceive to be a few of the critical benefits of AR:

“An effective way to deal with the labor supply and demand challenges that will get to critical levels as more baby boomers leave the workforce and create and massive experience and knowledge gap.”

Augmented Reality (AR) Adoption

During the pandemic, many Field Service Organizations (FSOs) implemented Augmented Reality (AR) enabled Remote Visual Assistance Software solutions to deliver a “Contactless” or “Touchless Service” experience to their customers. From analysts and consultants to software vendors and field service executives, many industry participants have developed informed opinions regarding their view of AR. Although most (41%) of the respondents surveyed agree that AR is an effective alternative to onsite service during Covid-19, one-third (33%) indicate that AR has become essential for their organization (see figure 6). Another 21% support the notion that AR is effective in a limited or selected number of use cases.

These are encouraging data points for proponents of AR and Touchless Service. It affirms that this technology is not only a temporary fix to an acute problem but serves as a valuable tool for achieving transformational change within a Field Service Organization (FSO). For example, the technology enhances remote support effectiveness, eliminates truck rolls, and can generate new sources of revenue from the delivery of an improved service experience. An overwhelming majority of respondents (84%) either somewhat agree (43%) or strongly agree (41%) that AR will have a positive impact on the future of Field Service.
“It can help us solve problems and work in a more three-dimensional way.”

“There is no need for a face-to-face explanation so that customers can see it more intuitively.”

“It leads to fewer truck rolls, quicker customer uptime.”

Indeed, these findings validate our view that AR-enabled Remote Visual Assistance solutions have a broad set of use cases. More importantly, it supports our opinion that AR has a critical application within an FSO tool kit. We strongly believe that just like mobile computing and Field Service Management (FSM) software, using AR in various field service activities will become table stakes for FSOs.

**Customer Self Service Models**

As mentioned previously, AR helps facilitate customer self-service. The extent to which FSOs are turning toward self-service models is significant. Over one-quarter (26%) of respondents indicate that self-service is pervasive among their customer base, while one-half (51%) suggest that these models are growing. A small percentage (17%) indicate their use of self-service is limited, while 6% report their customers do not use it (see figure 7). These constituents may operate in service environments that are not conducive to support customer self-service models, either because they are too dangerous or too complex.

Nevertheless, industry participants recognize that customer self-service will dramatically impact the future of field service. Most respondents consider self-service as a strategy for optimizing field service performance and decision-making. For example, a plurality (42%) of respondents indicate that it will help FSOs prioritize field service dispatch. Another one-third (29%) predict that it will help overcome current and future labor shortages by either avoiding truck rolls or helping field service technicians be more productive and efficient in resolving problems once onsite. However, a significant percentage believe that it will eliminate the need for field service by either resulting in less demand (18%) for field service or reducing the need to dispatch a field service technician.

The key takeaway here is that customer self-service will never eliminate the need for Field Service. Instead, if used effectively, it can optimize the productivity and efficiency of field service teams. In effect, this result helps FSOs do more with less, which allows them to control operating costs while maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction. FSOs who have not yet considered implementing a customer self-service model should include this on their strategic planning road map and prioritize investment decisions around it.

**Technology Adoption Lifecycle**

AR is one of many technologies that FSOs can utilize to improve customer experience (CX) and optimize service excellence. Other tools and technologies that meet these objectives include IoT, AI & Machine Learning, 3D Printing, Smart Contracts. One-third (32%) of the respondents perceive that AI & Machine Learning will significantly benefit the Field Service Industry. IoT is a close second among 30% of respondents. These technologies support more than use cases specific to field service. For example, AI provides a predictive and proactive service experience and helps optimize equipment performance. AI’s reach extends beyond direct customer or field support/remote support. (see figure 8)

The technology that respondents consider to be the most mature in terms of adoption rate is also AI & Machine
In your opinion, which emerging technology is going to benefit/change the Field Service industry most?

- AI & Machine Learning: 32%
- IoT: 30%
- Augmented Reality: 18%
- Other: 10%
- 3D Printing: 7%
- Block Chain: 2%
- Smart Contract: 2%

Figure 8

Learning. One-quarter (26%) indicate that the Field Service Industry is in the Early Majority adoption stage for these technologies (see figure 9).

In contrast, a higher percentage of respondents perceive that the Field Service Industry is in the Early Adopter stage for AR (44%) and IoT (45%), suggesting that AR and IoT are the next most significant growth areas for the Field Service Industry.

Another way to evaluate the adoption curve is by exploring when each technology will become commonplace, in other words, reach the Early Majority stage of adoption within the industry. However, the survey results suggest that within 1 to 3 years all technologies identified in this study will become commonplace in a majority of FSOs.

AR and IoT are on the top of the list regarding technologies reaching this level of adoption within the next 1 to 3 years. Over 85% of respondents indicate that AR and IoT will be commonplace within three years, followed by 82% for AI and Machine learning. The percentages are under 78% for the remaining technologies. In other words, more deployments of AR and IoT will likely occur within the Field Service Industry over the next few years than other technologies under consideration. These findings suggest that FSOs are likely to prioritize their technology investment strategies toward AR and IoT for the next few years. As such, FSOs need to determine their level of AR readiness and evaluate the best use case for AR within their organizations.

In your opinion, which category best defines the stage of adoption each technology is in within the Field Service industry?

Figure 9

Factors Driving Technology Adoption

Field Service Leaders rely on different methods to drive technology adoption within the organizations. The methods that have the most significant impact on driving adoption are internal problem solving and experiments (34%) and observation of what competitors are doing (31%). One-quarter (25%) of respondents rely on research about new developments from vendors (see figure 10). Indeed, the software vendor community has invested heavily in thought leadership and education-based marketing campaigns to communicate new advancements to FSOs through their technology.

Surprisingly, advice from the analyst community, guidance from their CEO or Board, and recommendations from external consultants & advisors play less of a role in driving new technology.
This finding is consistent among all sizes and types of companies. In the past, these constituents have tended to carry a lot of influence. Our results suggest that FSOs are more motivated by self-reliance, competitive practices, and vendor advancements than other types of methods available to them, which indicates that FSOs have become more pragmatic and self-assured in their decision-making abilities.

FSOs also evaluate several criteria when considering adopting new technology. The maturity of the vendor’s solution and the vendor’s experience in the field service industry is regarded as the most important criteria by one-third of the respondents, respectively (see figure 11). Less critical factors are ROI (16%), ability to integrate with other systems (11%), and price of solution (7%). They are secondary to the others identified.

Key Influencers

There are, of course, many stakeholders within an FSO that can influence the adoption of new technology. Over one-third of respondents indicate that the Board of Directors (34%) and C-Suite (42%) are incredibly influential in adopting new technology (see figure 12). The Service Organization itself also plays a significant role in influencing the adoption of new technology, as per 44% of the respondents. While the CEO and Board may not necessarily have the most significant impact on driving new technology adoption, they do have a lot of influence.

Field Service Labor Outlook

Over the last several years, there has been a growing concern that the labor pool of available field service workers is dwindling. This concern is driven by the aging workforce evidenced by the increasing number of baby boomers currently in or approaching retirement and the shortage of skilled technicians from the ranks of younger cohort groups. Our research may help to alleviate these concerns as most respondents are either somewhat confident (37%) or extremely confident (41%) that the available labor pool of qualified field service engineers (FSEs) will increase in the future (see figure 13). Confidence levels vary by role, generation, and type of business. Almost two-thirds (65%) of Board Members/Owners/Presidents are extremely confident compared to 15% of C-Suite Executives, 5% of VP/Directors, and 42% of Managers/Supervisors. This data suggests that individuals closer to the recruitment and hiring process have more significant concerns about the future labor outlook. FSOs can overcome these confidence gaps by moving experienced technicians into a technical support role and have them provide AR enabled remote assistance to new hires with less experience.
respondents are not confident they will find additional FSEs in the next 12 months compared to 41% who are optimistic they will hire more (see figure 14). Very few FSOs have no hiring plans or expect a reduction in force over the next 12 months. While FSOs are confident about the future, they have concerns about finding the right talent to fill near-term demand. This situation is due to the fact the current demand exceeds supply.

One of the strategies available to FSOS in dealing with labor shortages is a blended workforce or variable staffing model to fill in gaps in the labor supply. These workforces include a mix of company-employed and independent or freelance FSEs. Field Service Leaders have mixed opinions about the effectiveness of these solutions. Utilizing a blended workforce allows for flexibility in meeting demand without the need to hire permanent employees. However, implementing such a model requires careful planning and communication with employees to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities.

In terms of generation, 62% of Millennials are also extremely confident. In contrast, only 21% of Generation X and 35% of Baby Boomers are extremely confident. We also observe differences by type of company, with 59% of Distributors/Resellers indicating they are extremely confident, followed by Manufacturers (44%) and TPMs/ISOs (44%). Contractors/Installers are the least confident, with only 14% reported they are extremely confident.

Our survey results indicate that FSOs believe that more people will be interested in joining the field service labor pool in the future. This perspective is contrary to the conventional wisdom that the Field Service Industry is experiencing a shortage of labor. These findings also suggest that FSOs will do a better job at attracting new talent in the future.

**New Hiring Expectations**

As most FSOs return to normal, a large percentage (90%) have plans to hire additional FSEs with the next 12 months. The ability to find this talent is mixed. Almost half of the respondents are not confident they will find additional FSEs in the next 12 months compared to 41% who are optimistic they will hire more (see figure 14). Very few FSOs have no hiring plans or expect a reduction in force over the next 12 months. While FSOs are confident about the future, they have concerns about finding the right talent to fill near-term demand. This situation is due to the fact the current demand exceeds supply.

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workforce is an effective approach for 41% of respondents. An almost equal amount (40%) think that it fills labor gaps but lowers quality. A small number (8%) have a negative perception of blended workforce or are opposed to using them, while 11% report that it is appropriate for selected use cases. Ultimately, we believe the blended workforce model is most effective in market segments where service skill sets and products have become commoditized, troubleshooting techniques and service fixes are relatively common across technology platforms, and there is both a large installed based and large volume of available freelancer or gig-economy workers.

Despite these views, many field service leaders think using freelance or gig-economy workers to enable a blended workforce is on the upswing within the industry. Indeed, one-third believe that its use will grow significantly, while one-half anticipate that it will grow somewhat; 11% think it will remain the same. Only 5% assume that its use will decrease somewhat (4%) or significantly (1%).

**Technology and Labor Shortages**

The conventional wisdom within the Field Service Industry is that new technology like AR and AI can play a role in dealing with the challenges of replacing an aging workforce. Almost three-quarters (72%) think they can use these technologies to upskill new hires or younger, less experienced workforce. More than half (60%) also believe that new technology can help attract a younger/newer workforce excited or enthusiastic about using these new tools (figure 15). Another 54% think it will allow their current workforce to be more productive and efficient, thus eliminating the need to hire new FSEs. A small number believe it will replace the need for hiring more FSEs, validating the view that technology is never a replacement for human interaction.

Given the widely held view that technology can help attract a younger workforce, FSOs must work closely with their Human Resource departments to ensure these aspects of the job opening are obvious to candidates during the recruitment, interview, and interview hire process.

**Primary Role of Service**

There are different views within a corporation regarding the role that the FSO should play. For some, it’s an operational role of ensuring products work properly. For others, it’s a tactical role of influencing product sales and adding value. Still, for others, it plays a strategic function of generating revenue and profits directly or providing market control through innovative solutions.

Our study shows that most Field Service Leaders believe that their service organization’s primary role should be operational or tactical. Over one-third (38%) believe that the service organizations’ primary role is to influence product sales and add value (figure 16). A similar percentage (37%)
think the primary role should be to ensure products are working correctly. Field Service Leaders who think the service organization’s primary function is strategic are clearly in the minority. This data point does not imply that the service organization’s role should be limited to ensuring that products work correctly. Instead there is an opportunity for the service organization to take on a more significant part in positively influencing their company’s strategy.

Our opinion is that service organizations will eventually take on a more strategic role as their companies implement servitization and outcome-based business models. This shift is necessary for long-term success, and FSOs will play a critical role in formulating these strategies. By no means should FSOs assume that they no longer need to focus on tactical and operational issues in this future scenario. The key takeaway is that they will need to step up their game regarding their mission, focus, and span of control.

By company role, over one-third (38%) of VP/Directors view the service organization’s primary role as strategic compared to 19% of C-Suite, and 23% of Board Members/Owners/Presidents. More than one-quarter of Baby Boomers (29%) and Generation X (30%) view it as strategic, while only 18% of Millennials view it this way. Manufactures (50%) are primarily focused on the operational aspects of service while Contractors/Installers (57%), Distributors/Resellers (52%), and TPMs/ISOs (44%) place a greater emphasis on the tactical aspects.

Level of Influence

Given that the particular role of service organizations within most companies, we were interested to understand the level of influence the service organization should have in driving product or corporate strategy. A considerable percentage (45%) of companies think that the service organization should provide input into the strategy (figure 17). One-third (29%) of companies indicate the FSO’s should execute on the established strategy. Less than 10% of companies indicate that service organizations should share equally in strategy with other stakeholders.

By company role, a higher percentage of C-Suite (54%) indicate the service organization should provide input into strategy compared to the other positions where the percentage was in the 42% to 44% range. Nearly three-quarters (71%) of Generation X and 50% of Baby Boomers also share this opinion compared to Millennials (24%), with almost two-thirds (60%) indicating the service organization’s role should be to execute on strategy once established.

Another interesting finding is that one-quarter of companies with more than 1,000 or more field workers think that the service organization should share equally in setting strategy. On the other hand, the most frequent response among companies of all sizes is that service should provide input into strategy.

As discussed earlier, FSOs need to take on a more active role in terms of influencing strategy. The current status quo is due to the role that the FSOs play in their company. Considering that many companies think that the service organization’s primary role should be to ensure products are working correctly, it’s not surprising that the service’s level of influence is limited to either providing input into strategy or executing on strategy once established. Field Service Leaders who strongly embrace Servitization strategies and desire a more significant role in crafting this strategy may want to upgrade their knowledge of market trends, best practices, and benchmarks to achieve this outcome.

In your opinion, what level of influence should the service organization have in setting product strategy within a company like yours?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service provides input into strategy</th>
<th>45%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service executes on strategy once established</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service has a vote but not a veto</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service shares equally in setting strategy</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service drives strategy</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17
**Future Outlook**

Based on our survey results, it appears that the outlook for service is very positive for many companies. Nearly two-fifths (39%) of respondents indicate their service business is in hypergrowth and transforming their companies (figure 18). An equal percentage indicates their service business is expanding moderately.

**What is the outlook for service within your company over the next 12 months?**

- 39% Our service business is in hypergrowth and transforming our company
- 12% Our service business is expanding slowly
- 10% Our service business remains steady
- 10% Our service business is expanding moderately

**Figure 18**

By business role, a higher percentage of Board Members/Owners/Presidents (46%) and Managers/Supervisors (46%) think their service business is experiencing hypergrowth compared to C-Suite (23%) and VP/Directors (19%). Nearly two-thirds (62%) of C-Suite and approximately two-fifths (38%) indicate their businesses are growing moderately.

This finding tracks consistently with earlier findings within the report regarding respondents’ views of the recovery and the ability of the industry to return to normal post-pandemic. More importantly, it speaks to the resiliency of the industry as a whole and the role and value that service plays in driving growth, enhancing CX, and building customer loyalty. For companies experiencing rapid growth, now is the time to continue to invest, build, and grow. Companies experiencing slower or steady growth should consider benchmarking their peers and re-evaluating their go-to-market and service business strategies to find opportunities for improvement.

**Study Conclusions**

There is a great deal of optimism among industry participants that the Field Service Industry is now recovering from the terrible shock waves of Covid-19. A large percentage of Field Service Leaders believe their service businesses have returned to normal or will within the next six months. There is some difference of opinion regarding the pace of recovery by generation, type of business, and people’s position or role within their company. These differences reflect the values and aspirations of different cohort groups and the visibility and control each cohort group has in driving change within their organizations.

Many companies turned to augmented reality enabled Remote Visual Assistance software to provide a contactless or touchless service experience during the pandemic. While many Field Service Leaders view it as an effective tool to overcome obstacles to delivering onsite service during the pandemic, a significant number believe it has become an essential tool for providing field service regardless. It is likely to become a critical tool in facilitating a company’s customer support and remote resolution objectives.

The trend toward customer self-service began many years ago. However, Covid-19 and the proliferation of technologies like AR, AI, and IoT have significantly accelerated the speed at which customer self-service will become pervasive within the industry. Among the different technologies available to FSOs, AI & Machine Learning are the most advanced in terms of adoption rates primarily due to their applicability in multiple areas beyond field service. For example, to anticipate or avoid equipment failures or to optimize parts inventory stocking levels, or field service engineer schedules and staffing levels. However, AR and IoT will likely experience more growth as companies seek to reap the benefits these technologies provide.

As the industry returns to normal, FSOs will need to continue to deal with the same issues they faced before the pandemic. One of these issues is finding available labor to replace an aging workforce. Utilizing a blended workforce model and relying on technology like AR, IoT, and AI is a
way to upskill and attract newer workers. Fortunately, there is a great deal of optimism within the industry that this new labor exists. However, many leaders are concerned about finding qualified candidates.

With sights on the future, it is essential to recognize that most companies believe that the primary role of the service organization should be to ensure that products operate properly or influence product sales and add value. These findings suggest that the FSO plays an operational or tactical role in most companies. Companies that expect to generate a more significant portion of their revenues and profits from service must allow their FSOs to play a more strategic role in developing income directly from service and gaining market control from innovative solutions.

It is encouraging that the FSO has input into the product strategy at many companies instead of just executing on the strategy once established. Over time, we believe that FSOs will play an equal role in setting the strategy. It may even be necessary for FSOs to drive strategy as their companies migrate towards Outcome-Based business models. Nevertheless, the Field Service Industry has a reason to be exuberant about the future as service businesses are in hypergrowth and driving transformation in many companies.

**About the Author**

Michael Blumberg is President of Blumberg Advisory Group, Inc., a research and consulting firm in the Field Service Industry. Michael’s firm provides clients with strategic guidance and tactical assistance for improving the overall profitability and quality of field service operations through procedural and systemic improvements and optimized service marketing strategies. Mr. Blumberg is a prolific author and frequent speaker at industry events and conferences. He is available via email at michaelblumberg@blumbergadvisor.com. Michael’s blog is accessible at https://www.blumbergadvisor.com/blog. Follow him on Twitter via @blumberg1.

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Help Lightning is a B2B software as a service (SaaS) company specializing in remote assistance. It provides next generation video collaboration services that enable a company’s experts to work virtually side-by-side with anyone needing help, anywhere in the world. The company’s cloud-based solution applies augmented reality features, including the merging of two video streams and the use of 3D annotation to improve real-time communications and solve difficult problems. Help Lightning is used for the installation, inspection, training, servicing, and repair of complex equipment and products. With Help Lightning, customers see immediate performance improvements including an increase in first-time fix rates, fewer truck rolls, expanded workforce capacity, and an increase in end customer satisfaction while enhancing service revenue and margin.

Learn more at: [helplightning.com](http://helplightning.com)