

How to Select an **EFFECTIVE** electronic field ticketing solution



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The value of an electronic field ticketing solution lies in its ability to mitigate common challenges faced by fleet managers, while at the same time improving efficiency to increase revenue and reduce operational costs.

There are a number of components that make up a complete electronic field ticketing solution. In its simplest form, it will consist of software in the office, while having a mobile computing device that has integrated GPS in the vehicle. The mobile computing device will have a cellular and/or satellite connection that exchanges data between the vehicle and the office. In addition, various assets such as trailers, generators, yellow iron etc. can be outfitted with GPS/telematics devices to facilitate the electronic management of your fleet.

An electronic field ticketing solution can also integrate with back-end platforms such as payroll, operations and maintenance and these integrations can be critical to seamless operations.

Asset Tracking

Asset tracking allows you to move beyond automatic vehicle location (AVL) and track not just vehicles, but anything you wish. You're able to see the location of an operator, equipment or a high value physical asset, like a trailer.

Utilizing the Asset Tracking capabilities within an electronic field ticketing solution allows office staff to better manage asset utilization as it relates to the jobs underway. Dispatchers can send the closest or most appropriate worker to a job, assign the closest available related asset needed and overall field operators can complete more tickets per day. This allows your company to easily accommodate emergency and last-minute jobs to provide better customer service.

In many cases, these high value assets are physically located in very remote locations, and it provides peace of mind if an organization can regularly check on them. For example, an organization can see where their generators or yellow iron are in the field, giving owners and operators more peace of mind. This technology can also be used to enhance your company's journey management program. Vehicle and operator tracking is a simple way to reduce the risk of your employees and assets while they are on the road.



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Navigation

In-vehicle navigation ensures field operators won't get lost and have to waste fuel driving extra miles trying to find their way. It also eliminates the need for paper maps, which saves time and improves safety as well.

Well sites or LSD coordinates (Western Canada) can be uploaded to in-vehicle or mobile devices and all field operators have to do is simply follow the turn-by-turn directions to their location. This navigation platform can be automatically integrated with work orders for seamless navigation capabilities. The goal of integrating this software is to make the navigation tool more useful and functional for field operators. In-vehicle navigation flexibility has the added benefit of saving time for office staff as they don't need to give directions over the phone or spend time helping field operators who are lost.

ELD Compliance & Beyond

For organizations that run heavy-duty vehicles, Hours of Service (HOS) compliance and monitoring is becoming a more prevalent issue. HOS compliance can be a challenge, especially when companies are required to navigate complex regulations and drivers have to keep tedious manual logs of hours worked. Manual paperwork can be a distraction for drivers and paper log records can also be easily falsified.

Electronic hours of service monitoring is now the law with the ELD mandate in the USA and is pending legislation in Canada. Leveraging your electronic field ticketing technology platform investment to meet your ELD requirements is the most cost effective solution. In addition to the HOS compliance benefits, you will also be able to:

- Complete electronic DVIR (Driver Vehicle Inspection Reports) to ensure compliance with pre/post trip inspection requirements.
- Collect IFTA data for fuel tax reporting

Driver Behavior Monitoring

Reducing fuel consumption is one of the most important issues facing fleet managers, and at the same time it is hard to control effectively. When fuel costs account for a majority of a fleet's budget, wasteful driving habits hinder efficiency.

Finding ways to reduce consumption can make a big difference in a fleet's budget. With the serious toll fleet vehicle accidents have on a company, finding ways of minimizing the risk of accidents is just as important.

An electronic field ticketing solution uses vehicle telematics data to track information, such as a vehicle speed, hard braking and if drivers are wearing their seat belts or not. Additionally, with historical reporting, a vehicle's movements can be re-traced, which is useful for accident recreation and determining liability. Managers can set speed thresholds and be alerted in real-time when a driver exceeds the threshold. Electronic field ticketing technology allows you to monitor driver behavior, such as idling, speeding and vehicle usage. Monitoring driver speed encourages safer driving practices, which allows you to identify at-risk drivers and can reduce accident liability.



Field Ticketing and Work Order Management

The core benefits of electronic field ticketing solutions are observed by the mobile workforce, or field service, side of operations. An electronic field ticketing solution introduces efficiencies to the field worker, because work order management can be an inefficient process that costs money in staffing resources and time.

Instead of relying on staff having to email or print out work orders and field tickets, work orders are electronically dispatched to the appropriate field operator automatically. Work flows, from dispatchers to field operators or drivers and back to the office, are executed smoothly and efficiently. Electronic manifests record job, trips, calls and pickups, and are a paperless way to ensure jobs are completed as quickly and accurately as possible. Office staff and dispatchers can easily change manifests or work orders throughout the day without having to contact the driver or field operator.

When work orders are completed by the field operators as they do their job, it eliminates the need for manual entry by office staff, and makes misplaced paper work a thing of the past. Billing cycles are also greatly received at the same time that payroll processes are noticeably improved. Having all field operators' work order information electronically recorded from login to logoff ensures accurate payroll and eliminates unnecessary overtime hours. Work orders are completed and updated in your back office system in real-time, leading to much faster billing and invoicing, which speeds payment cycles from months to hours after service.

Producer Integration with Back-End Office Systems

The key benefit of investing in an electronic field ticketing solution is that it allows users to take all the data being collected in the field and integrate it with existing back-end systems, including:

- Billing/Accounting Systems
- Work Order Management Systems
- Fleet Maintenance Systems
- Payroll Systems
- Inventory Systems

For instance, an electronic field ticketing solution collects a considerable amount of data from your vehicles, and this diagnostic information can be pulled directly from your fleet vehicles and integrated with your maintenance program to ensure that vehicles are being serviced when they need it to avoid downtime and costly repairs.

In another example, with an electronic field ticketing solution integrated with a back-end inventory system, managing in-vehicle inventory in real-time is possible, and warehouse staff can ensure each vehicle has the appropriate inventory needed to complete the job.

An electronic field ticketing solution takes all the data collected—from the life-cycle of a work order to the vehicle and presents it in a way that will allow you to run your business more effectively. By integrating this technology with existing systems, an electronic field ticketing solution improves business from many different perspectives.

Integrations direct to your end customer systems allows for real-time data exchange between your customers' systems with your back office system. You'll be able to exchange real-time data with your current customers without doing any duplicate entry. Customers are able to create work orders and see statuses through a login portal, eliminating overhead and phone calls. Now, it is easier for your customers to do business with you. Convenience and easy access are two critical factors that help to increase the "stickiness" of your clients, as well as the volume of work they trust you with.

Work Alone

Workers who work alone in the field pose a significant safety challenge for fleet-based companies. Without an accurate way to track workers, quickly sending help in an emergency situation can be extremely difficult. It can be hard to pinpoint the exact location of remote workers and cell coverage can be unreliable in the field, which adds to the difficulty to be in contact with someone at all times.

Companies are often required to comply with work-alone legislation for check-ins, even when field operators are outside of cell service. Managing lone worker safety doesn't have to be a challenge. Electronic field ticketing technology that helps you monitor lone workers goes a long way towards improving their safety.

An electronic field ticketing solution which utilizes AVL lets you know what your field workers are doing and where they are. Throughout the day, everything field workers do – from logon to logoff – is automatically time-stamped and captured, and contact with the office is maintained.

Identify Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

As with any technological investment, it is important to have a plan when you evaluate and implement an electronic field ticketing solution. Identify your short-term and long-term goals, and identify your priorities first for purchasing a system, then for implementation.

When looking at mobile platforms, it is helpful to maintain a sense of objectivity so you will not be attached to a specific device. It is important to recognize that often they will not fulfill all the needs of your business.

Once you have your system in place, the amount of data you can access can be overwhelming. Identifying a few, key measurable goals you want to achieve at the beginning of the deployment will help you avoid information overload.

Selecting the Right Solution

Now that you are aware of what makes up an electronic field ticketing solution and some of the expected benefits, the next step is looking at how to approach selecting the right solution for your business needs.

It is important to consider the fact that implementing a comprehensive electronic field ticketing solution can take a significant toll on an organization. This might not necessarily mean a negative experience, but you are asking yourself to change the way you run your business; success hinges on selecting the right technology partner that has experience managing all of the moving parts associated with this type of solution.



Common Mistakes

Choosing technology instead of a solution. Set aside a list of key functionalities that you need to achieve success and then evaluate the ability of different mobile platforms to meet these requirements.

Look for a Partner with Flexible Options

In the process of ensuring the electronic field ticketing solution meets your needs, make sure you identify and communicate your industry-specific needs to vendors.

Beware of “off-the-shelf” solutions that may require you to change your business processes too much. The goal of an electronic field ticketing solution is to improve and streamline business processes, not to restrict the operations.

Also, make sure the vendor you choose dates their offering as technology changes to ensure you’re not purchasing a system that will soon be obsolete and outdated. Selecting a solution that can be tailored to your needs is more significant than industry trends, and the right solution depends on your specific needs.

Common Mistakes

Don't Overspend - Ways to avoid this pitfall include making sure you aren't paying for functionality you don't need, creating lists of necessary features and evaluating solutions based on your must-have features. Finally, keep in mind that unnecessary features are just that – unnecessary.

Ensure the Solution Supports Future Growth

When selecting a solution, it is easy to forget about the future and neglect to envision what your business and technology needs will be down the line. Keep in mind that electronic field ticketing technology will change your business and it's important to plan for those changes. A key to easing implementation challenges is by choosing a vendor that offers a complete solution.

Common Mistakes

Selecting a mobile device based only on current needs. Purchase devices that will grow with your business and choose a vendor that will help you with that growth.



Implement a Change Management Plan

Deploying an electronic field ticketing solution is a complex process, and the transition to a new system can be especially difficult. Implementing a change management plan helps organizations make this transition a success. If you implement a mobile electronic field ticketing solution be prepared to meet resistance to the new system. To ensure wide spread acceptance of the new system, it is important to underscore how the technology will improve the organization's bottom line and the employee's work day and processes. Also, involving end-users throughout the decision-making process makes them feel more engaged and connected to the process.

Recognize that resistance to change is a normal part of human behavior and how it is managed can contribute to how successful your employees are in using their new fleet system. Keep in mind that lack of awareness is one of the top causes of resistance. Be proactive in identifying key areas that you expect to meet the most resistance. Create not only a communication plan, but also a plan for managing those areas that focus on moving the employees through the change process in their own way. Address any potential roadblocks that may stand in the way of making the change successful.

If you take away anything from this section, keep in mind the following tips:

Dedicated Implementation Team

They possess diverse skill sets – IT, GIS, Project Management, Consultant, etc.

Recurring Scheduled Meetings/Status Checks

Plan for internal checks as well as external checks with the AssetWorks implementation team.

Focus on Train the Trainer

Managers and supervisors are the focus of initial training so that they can then train their personnel.

Adjust Management Strategies for Personnel

Be aware of push back and offer assistance to those having issues. Management provides support to encourage the employees to adapt to the new system by demonstrating the advantages they can expect to encounter.

As with most things, if you're not able to measure it then how do you know if it's working? A structure should be put in place that allows you to measure the business impact of the upcoming changes and ensure that continued reinforcement opportunities exist to build proficiencies in technical skills and behavior. Follow-up plans should be put in place for both successful and unsuccessful results.

Providing comprehensive training for all your staff is not only an essential step in the implementation process but it is also a means of creating trust around the new system. The most effective training methods involve creating a highly-skilled user group within your organization, then having them pass that information onto others.

Make sure you assign an individual to become an expert, or champion, of the system. This helps generate interest and excitement among the rest of the employees and ensures you get the most from your system. Even the most advanced system is useless unless someone from the organization fully understands the benefits of the system and the needs of the organization.

Senior Management Support

Leaders who implement on a holistic basis can create employee buy-in and acceptance throughout their organization, which leads to a positive implementation experience.

Positive Attitudes even when Faced with Difficulties

Team members always try to find solutions and learn to not dwell on problems.

Ability to Prioritize and Schedule

A team that has properly managed their time and deadlines as it relates to the implementation schedule is more likely to succeed.

Regardless of your fleet size, an electronic field ticketing solution offers enhanced analytical and reporting capabilities which allow a fleet manager to use concrete data to optimize business practices. An electronic field ticketing solution can be tailored to your business needs and integrated with your existing infrastructure to help you deal with the unique issues you face, and provide insight into your operations.

Want to learn more?

Visit www.assetworks.com/fss/field-ticketing



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