

10 THOUGHTS FOR SERVICE LEADERS PLANNING THE RECOVERY

When the world went into global lockdown as governments grappled with the Covid-19 pandemic, Field Service News hastily arranged an Emergency Symposium to bring together as many industry leaders as we could to try to bring some guidance to the global field service sector that we serve. That session became the most watched live stream in the history of our sector globally. In the subsequent weeks Field Service News' Editor-in-Chief, Kris Oldland conducted an ongoing series of interviews to help further identify emerging best practice in our sector as we adapted to the crisis. As the situation evolved so did the conversation and in the face of adversity we saw opportunities to improve as an industry as we looked forwards towards recovery.

This special report captures the key learnings from those sessions in one essential document for the field service sector..

#1: NOW IS THE TIME FOR STRONG, DECISIVE LEADERSHIP



The challenges of coping with the sudden onrush of a series of global lockdowns as governments across the globe reacted to the threat of the coronavirus pandemic meant that many organisations who were in the midst of planning how they could evolve their service offerings were suddenly faced with a much more pressing concern – how could they stay operational. One man who was involved in a number of such situations was Harald Wasserman, Co-Managing Director Si2 Partners.

“Only a few weeks ago I was working with a number of companies and we were talking about how to transform the company into a pro-active service organisation. Then as the onset of the coronavirus and the global lockdowns arrived, the situation changed rapidly and totally. We were no longer talking about high level strategies, but instead our focus was now centred on immediate challenges. Where do we get the workload for our service technicians tomorrow?” Wasserman explained.

“It soon became clear that the service centre was one of our key assets in this discussion, as they are in contact with the customers and so were fundamental in establishing where the work could be for our service

technicians. What we discovered very rapidly was that having this customer contact would be key to our survival and that the service centre would be instrumental in establishing that contact.

Another early discovery that was crucial that Wasserman believes played a pivotal role in companies being able to adapt to the new world that we all suddenly found ourselves in as the pandemic spread was the importance of an orderly approach to initiating customer contact.

“I noticed that it was important that we have a structure which is effective and allowed for fast contact with our customers,” he recounts “it was absolutely this customer communication that has allowed us to continue with a workload that has remained at 80% to 100% of our capacity - which was excellent at such a challenging time.

“We have been able to adapt our organisation to a more customer focused organisation now,” he says reflecting on the work that has been put in place since the onset of the lockdowns. “Instead of waiting for the customer to make contact with us we have pivoted to become much, much more

proactive in reaching out to them and this has meant that we are still able to generate the work required to keep our business operational.

“We have also started an initiative to contact customers who we may not have been in contact with for a number of years, and this proactive approach has been very much welcomed by these customers. So, we have implemented both new engagements with our lapsed customers and also a more proactive approach to our existing customer base and this has been the positive approach we have taken to guide us through this crisis.

“It has meant getting some of our people out of their comfort zones - we have changed the status quo in that whereas before we would have waited for the customer to initiate the conversation, now our team are contacting the customers themselves and kicking off the conversation. It is not easy, in some cases it is like searching for the proverbial needle in the haystack, however, it has been an endeavour that has been essential.”

Another aspect that has changed radically as a result of the crisis is how the role of management has changed and this is another area that Wasserman feels has been under increasing scrutiny.

“The management role within field service has become increasingly important during this time. Perhaps at the top of their responsibilities is the ongoing communications with their team. This is vital because our field service engineers and technicians, those in the front line are often operating more or less alone at the moment and they of course have many questions at this time.

“For example, what are the guidelines for them if the customer isn’t taking the necessary precautions that can ensure that our engineers are working within a safe environment given the current conditions? Our approach has been to issue clear advice to give our field workers firm support in their decision making. In this situation for example, if the customer is not willing to provide an environment in which our people can work safely then they must respect that the importance of our staff is our most fundamental priority. This had to be a management decision and had to be communicated strongly to give our staff the confidence to act when they are isolated in the field, and to know that they had our full backing.

‘Day by day we have to make a lot of these types of decisions to support our field workers, but also we have to ensure we are able to adapt our working processes to be able to be more flexible to fulfil the workload we have.

“The very way we in which we work has changed fundamentally both in the field but also the way we as management are working. For example, I would normally have four or five meetings a day, now I am having ten or more which are all remotely hosted. The meetings we have now are quicker and more intense, which is of course a part of the current situation, but also, they are more direct.

It is clear that much of the areas which Wasserman outlines as crucial elements shared amongst those companies he has seen adapt best to the challenges of Covid-19 have centred around strong and decisive leadership. This he believes is no coincidence. “There has absolutely been a correlation between those organisations that were able to make quick decisions and show strong leadership and those who were able to adapt easiest to the shifting sands of the operational environment of the pandemic,” he comments.

“The people on the working level they need guidance. They need clear rules. If you don’t give them this, they will struggle. There simply isn’t time for them to be thinking about ‘am I doing the right work?’ ‘Should I do X or Y in this situation?’ or even ‘what do I do?’. Such questions will have a direct impact on the productivity of your field workers. Therefore, strong leadership and providing strong support for your team is absolutely critical in maintaining efficiency in crisis situations.

“We saw this very early and the importance of ensuring that we were communicating important decisions very quickly to our people and continuing this level of clear, consistent communication with our workforce on an ongoing basis is essential, “ he added.

However, one of the that has arisen as we work under the confines of the current lockdowns, is finding the time for communications that are discussions rather than announcements. For many of us now is a time of action as we continue to constantly adapt and fight to hold onto to the business we have and meet the needs of the customers we serve.

“We are all dealing with a critical situation and it is hard to find time for anything else when we are in the midst of the challenge,” comments Nick Frank, Wasserman’s Co-Managing Director at Si2 Partners.

“However, when we are able to bring our key personnel together there are so many lessons to be learnt. This is because it is so extreme, everything has happened so quickly, and we haven’t really had time to think about it. We see that the companies that are probably dealing with the situation the best are those who have a built-in resilience. It is those companies who have a built-in adaptability and flexibility embedded within their DNA already.

“Those are the companies that we are seeing emerge as those who are ‘most comfortable’, certainly as comfortable as it is possible to be at such a time. They are making decisions; they are showing strong leadership and I think if there is one lesson to be learnt it is the value of strong leadership,” Frank concludes.



#2: REACT RETHINK RECOVER

One of the big discussions that has been circulating within the field service sector for a number of years now is whether the future of the focus for field service technology should be centred around separate technology based projects or whether we should be viewing technologies together as a stack – a collection of technologies brought together to solve the challenges we face.

When we are using technology to deliver service in these challenging times is it crucial to look towards establishing a technology ecosystem for our service operations rather than looking at specific technologies in isolation?

"We have talked often about the importance of making your data more meaningful, making service count, making your technology deliver returns and getting the knowledge out of your long-term technicians heads," commented Marne Martin, President Service, IFS at the Field Service News Emergency Symposium

All of these challenges couldn't be more critical now as we face up to the Covid-19 global crisis. So how was Martin suggesting her clients approach navigating these choppy waters and plotting a smoother course towards recovery. She had in fact established a clear blueprint that charted the three stages of the process. A neat summary of each of the stages field service organisations must go through as they not only adapt and survive the crisis, but that they evolve and thrive having gone through the process.

"I have come up with what I call the three R's which we are using for guiding our customers," Martin explained.

"The first of these is 'react.'"

"In this first phase you need to deal with the day to day challenges and use whatever tools you have to be able to continue operating. At this point it is important that you ensure you are focusing on any mission critical service tasks you have and are deferring the less critical, elective service tasks.

"You really need to be thinking about whether you are sending your technicians out to a maintenance job just because it was already scheduled and if so is that the best use of that resource? Also, consider if you are going to be required to change the maintenance schedule of some assets in your fleet because those assets are suddenly being used more than usual, or equally because they are being used less? This is the time to really make your service count and so it is vital that you are only focusing on what is mission critical service."

"IT REALLY IS IMPORTANT THAT WE NOW THINK ABOUT HOW WE RECOVER"

- MARNE MARTIN, IFS

The next phase is what Martin has defined 'rethink'.

"Whether it is how you look at utilising Augmented Reality and remote assistance tools or broader communications solutions, this is the time to assess the technology available to you.

"If you already have the technology in place but are not leveraging it effectively, how do you relook at your workflows and make that technology work for you? Is there technology that you can't put to work because you don't have a common platform? Is there technology that you have that you are not currently getting the most from? Are there gaps that you need to fill in your technology stack that will get you where you need to be and what do they look like and how quickly can you implement them?" Martin asks.

Then final R within the process is 'recovery.'

"It really is important that we now think about how we recover," comments Martin. "It has been and still is of course, important to be thinking about health and safety as paramount for both our employees and customers, but also during the rethinking phase we should have assessed how our business needs to be positioned to catch up on the service business we haven't been able to get to."

"One major consideration is that a lot of the assets you will need to service may have been turned off in the field. If this is the case then that will need extra time, resource and attention - exactly as they would if they had been turned off in a factory shutdown."

"Another really important consideration is that there is also going to be a lot more opportunity as we move into the post pandemic world to monetise service as an outcome. What is the difference in cost to a customer that you can service them even in times like we are facing now versus a standard contract where you are just providing routine maintenance every six months?"

"The overall drive for service will likely recover quite quickly I believe, because service is inherently nimble, and I anticipate that the eventual recovery for the service sector will be very strong. However, if this is the case then the challenge will be how do we deliver the service that is needed, when we perhaps don't have enough people and we are still implementing some of this technology we have discussed?"



#3: EMBRACE THE LATEST TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION

Perhaps one of the key factors that is keeping field service companies operating at such an exceptional level during such testing times is the spirit of us all working together and on the same page. This is true across the executive level, line management and at the ground level with our field service technicians and engineers.

It has never been more important to ensure our field engineers do not feel isolated and alone at this time. At field service news we have long been proponents of the importance of engineer-to-engineer communications tools and the need for such tools has been hugely magnified by Covid-19.

“It has been a really dramatic change of pace across the last few weeks as it relates to communication,” commented Stacey Epstein, CMO ServiceMax and CEO of Zinc during the Field Service News Emergency Symposium

“There were so many times over the last three years running Zinc where we would be talking to field service leaders who would see the potential of a modern communication tool like ours, but it just wouldn’t be top of the priority list for them. Other aspects of the technology stack such as parts optimisation or improving the scheduling algorithm would be the mission critical implementations, they would have at the top of their to do list.

“However, today that really has changed, and we are witnessing a rapid shift in how communications is now of utmost concern. It has now become that mission critical area of focus.

“We don’t have people coming into offices we have people working from home, or we have people working on swing shifts where we are trying not to mix crews, but they still need a means to communicate what has been done

and how.

"I think we have all known intrinsically the importance of communication and how important it is, it has now become something that we absolutely must have. Additionally, I have always felt that those of us who work behind a computer at a desk have always had a huge amount of ways to communicate. We already know how to use video conference tools; we sit in front of email all day we have our Slack or Microsoft teams to communicate with.

"But for our field service engineers they don't sit in front of a desk all day; they are inherently mobile, and a lot of these tools aren't really built with them in mind.

"It is not just messaging we are talking about here either. It is not just making sure that they (the field service engineers) are staying connected to their peer technicians or have the ability to put in a call with their manager. It is about real-time access to knowledge, that is what is important."

Indeed, there are a wide variety of communications tools that are being used right now as we try to keep communications moving across our times during the crisis. These include top down broadcast communication to the entire team, peer-to-peer communications between engineers or a smart function embedded within Zinc that allows the organisation to set up smaller groups that Zinc refer to as 'Hotlines' which allow technicians to put a question to a smaller group of peers without creating excessive noise by broadcasting across the entire company.

Hotline announcements are a nice halfway house between one to one communication and full broadcasts that ensure that the knowledge request goes to the right people, who have the knowledge and expertise to trouble shoot the issue at hand as and when the engineer needs that support the most.

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HELP LIGHTNING**

Of course, the other technology that has really been pushed to the fore during the pandemic has been remote assistance. With the adoption of the tools such as Help Lightning, OverIT's Space1 and SightCall exploding as field service companies sought to find new ways of putting their expertise on site despite travel restrictions and lockdowns.

Most of these modern remote assistance solutions are now largely Augmented Reality (AR) based where the service provider can offer virtual expertise by utilising the technology to allow a remote expert to show the customer onsite exactly how to go about the maintenance or repair by using their actual hands and tools which appear overlaid on the customer's screen while they are simultaneously looking at the asset in question also via their device.

It is an incredibly efficient means of communicating, studies have shown gesture to be three times more effective than voice and so is important in getting the first-time-fix and helping the customer get back up and running as quickly as possible.

"I think the most important thing that companies have considered when they have looked to adapt to the pandemic was what is practical," explained Gary York, CEO, Help Lightning who was also a panellist during the Emergency Symposium. "This wasn't a time

for experimenting it was a time where we were all scrambling to find the solutions that could keep our operations moving.

“It was a time of setting up War-Rooms and discussing what they could do immediately . It has been crucial for companies to get solutions that were friction free that they could start using today and be able to ramp up quickly.”

However, the ingenuity of many field service organisations not just in harnessing remote assistance technology but also in the manner in which they were able to both deploy and implement such tools was evident in all corners of the world.

As we entered lockdown it became increasingly hard for field service technicians to access the customer worksite which meant that remote assistance became critical as field service delivery was rapidly pivoted to embracing remote assistance to guide the customer and to utilise the smart hands that were already on site to do the tasks normally done by the field service technicians.

It is also important in times of crisis to be able to utilise the tools that we already have access to, which is why it has been those solutions that could bring Augmented Reality to the Android or iOS devices that were readily available in our engineers’ pockets.

The majority of remote assistance solutions within the field service sector is based around a Software as a Service solution so can be ramped up quickly and can be set up within as little as 24 hours.

Some of the feats that have been achieved by organisations using remote assistance technologies really have been quite remarkable.

One such example saw the engineers and project managers at Icelandic food production giant Marel logged on to their computers in the Netherlands and connecting to a customer in the poultry industry across the world in South Korea to help with the correct placement of a brand new convenience line inside the processing plant,.

It was one of many excellent examples of field service engineers showing a determination to offer excellent customers support through these most challenging of times.

Perhaps most importantly though the communications technologies that have seen many organisations through the toughest of tests during the early periods of the global lockdowns, will also see them embrace best-practice working long after we have moved out of the crisis and even beyond recovery.



#4: ESTABLISH AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT TRUE LEADERSHIP LOOKS LIKE

A hand is shown holding a glowing lightbulb. The background is a solid yellow color. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger gripping the base of the lightbulb. The lightbulb is illuminated, casting a warm glow. The overall image conveys a sense of inspiration and leadership.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges in terms of planning our exit strategies and getting ourselves geared for recovery is that we are trying to plan for a period that we as yet are unable to define. Indeed, many of us may well still be in the rapid response phase even this deep into the lockdown as the continued parameters of the conversation continue to evolve.

Our movement along the path from rapid response to reviewing and assessing our situation and being able to plan our recovery is by no means the same for each of us. Indeed, progress through this path is somewhat dependent on how we tackled the initial challenges of the pandemic and if we have yet to get a firm grip on that then looking too far down the road maybe the wrong approach entirely.

It is important to complete each phase of the journey before moving on to the next as in doing so we establish firm foundations upon which we can build.

As Jan van Veen comments “I have seen companies isolating the phases. Firstly, there was the rapid response phase that required quick adaptation and getting our heads around the situation as quickly as possible.

“However, the key focus here has to be to gain as much control of a rapidly evolving situation as possible. This is critical as it is only when companies have established some modicum of control that they can begin to enter the second phase which is reviewing and assessing the situation before to plan for recovery.”

It is important to understand that there is a best-practice to be established in terms of what the first rapid response phase of dealing with the impact of Covid-19. When we think back to the initial lockdowns, there was a lot of panic even within relatively robust businesses and almost every action was reactive. However, many organisations were able to begin to establish a degree of control within the chaos, even if that control was to implement processes and war-rooms that allowed the organisation that were, and some potentially still are, essentially embedded in the rapid response phase of the situation as they are still meant reacting to new challenges as the situation continues to evolve.

Perhaps one of the biggest factors holding many field service companies within this initial phase is that while they may have been able to position themselves adequately to establish that control and may even be internally ready to move into the review and assessment phase ready to begin planning for recovery, externally their customers may not be so advanced down the path.

So what if we face this scenario, what if our customers remain mired in the challenges of dealing with the lockdown environment and are potentially stuck in ‘panic mode’? How do we assist our customers to adjust and move into the second phase of overcoming the challenges we all face? Perhaps the most critical question is what can we do, as service providers, to help them move out of the first emergency stage and look forward to recovery? Is this our customers recovery even something that we can be part of or do we have to wait for them to find their own path?

“I absolutely believe that the forward thinking, companies that are leading industry, can take the initiative to help bring the industries they serve forwards towards recovery,” explains van Veen. “In fact, this could also be viewed as an additional layer to the added value that you bring to the relationship and being seen to do so could really help solidify your brand as a leader within the sector. It can be incredibly powerful if you lead your industry through that shift and into that transition.

“However, it is a discussion that needs to be timed correctly and it is important to not force your customers towards moving their own businesses towards the recovery phase if they are not yet ready,” he warns.

Van Veen is of course correct. As the old adage goes you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink, and challenging your customers to move through the process towards recover before they are ready, could have the adverse effect of what you are trying to achieve. It is a complex situation, but as is often the way with complicated matters, the solution can be found in the simplest approach.

In this instance that simplest approach being to remain in close contact with your customer base is one that Van Veen stresses is an absolutely critical one to adopt in terms of understanding your customers’ and also the wider markets signals to ascertain when it is time to bring that discussion to the fore.

At that point though, being prepared to move into action to help your customers move back towards becoming fully operational will be vital and if done correctly it will position you incredibly well moving forward in terms of customer loyalty as the economy does reignite. However, it is in challenging times such as these that understanding the importance of playing the right role at the right time is essential.

Every company likes to think of themselves as a leader within their field. However, it is a much more select group who understand what true leadership actually involves and often it is not the stereotype that we might imagine. In times of crisis good leadership can involve simply being close to your customers – close enough to truly understand not just their needs but the pain points being those needs.

Yes, leadership involves being a voice in your industry, a positive beacon of hope in times of despair, but it also means being the voice of your customer or just being the platform that amplifies their voice. Leadership in business is not necessarily solely about taking control of a situation, it is about empowering your customers to take control themselves as well.

Often it is simply being there to be seen ready when needed. Being there, prepared and ready to act when your customers need you - that is the crucial support structure that your customers require from you and that is the leadership they will gravitate towards.

Great leadership is about knowing when it is time to play the lead role and when to be the supporting act. In testing times like these it is those companies who are able to adopt both positions that will bring the most value to their sector.



#5: PREPARE TO RETURN STRONGER THAN BEFORE

There have been so many changes across such a short time that as we have adapted to the impact of Covid-19 on the field service sector that it is perhaps quite natural for us all to feel a little lost and bewildered. However, in the midst of change there always lies opportunity, and this is the approach that the best-in-class organisations within the service sector are adopting. It is the route we should all adopt if we want to build strength in the face of adversity.

The amount of change we have faced as an industry, indeed as a society across the last few months has been unprecedented. Yet somehow, we have managed to adapt. We have rolled with the punches and somehow gotten back up and carried on. However, is taking a slow path to recovery the only choice we have? It would be a shame to have gone through all this pain and not emerge stronger, better and more evolved. Like the Phoenix we have descended into the ashes, with some of our service operations grinding to a

halt, others reduced to skeleton crews but now as we look towards recovery is this an opportunity to not only rise reborn, but to take to the skies and soar?

This is certainly something that Phil Anderson and Paul Smedley of The Forum are seeing amongst the more forward looking of their community members.

“What we have seen emerge across the weeks and months of the initial lockdowns is many, many businesses are being forced to make the changes that for many years they had been told that in the past that they simply couldn’t do,” began Anderson.

“We have had this huge catalyst for change and the mature businesses are taking this as an opportunity to go with the situation and to see what they can now actually do. What is common amongst the best-in-class businesses is that

they are using the current situation not so much tactically, but they are looking at it as an opportunity. These are the businesses that are saying 'let's redesign our strategy. Let's reset what we should be trying to do now.'

"This goes right down to the field service technician. They need to know the role they need to play not just in the here and now but in the broader strategy and their role in implementing that," Anderson added.

The situation we face as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic is a once in a generation occurrence, if that. The challenges are of relevant level of magnitude, but remember challenges and opportunities almost always come in equal measures.

"This is the best unknown unknown we have probably ever had," Anderson reflected.

"We will be talking about this for decades if not longer. But interestingly it was an unknown unknown that we could almost anticipate because we knew what had come before in different parts of the world, so we did have little bit of sight on what was to come."

This is an interesting observation and one of the things that has come from the slightly staggered approach to how the pandemic has fallen across the globe is we have also has an opportunity for an iterative approach to what has worked and what hasn't in terms of how we keep the field service sector operational. However, what has been consistent across regions is that we have seen the way in which businesses have responded to the crisis in three distinct phases. The terminology around these phases has varied across the conversations but phases have these have been given a variety of names but have general all consisted of React, Rethink, Recover – a phrase Marne Martin, IFS came up with during our initial Emergency Symposium

"WE NEED TO USE OUR WEBSITES WELL FOR COMMUNICATING AND ASK OURSELVES HOW WE CAN USE THESE TOOLS DIFFERENTLY"

- PHIL ANDERSON, THE FORUM

Now we are firmly in the second phase of the situation and this phase will undoubtedly last for some time, even after lockdown. But now is the time that we need to be planning our recovery, planning our exit strategies.

"I personally don't think we will be going back to anything that we have seen before," comments Anderson. "We are going to go forward to create a new business as usual. What I have seen from some of our more mature members, organisations with some great strategies and with a clearer purpose already in place, is that they are already starting to redesign that now. They are thinking 'how can we shape that future; how can we take control of it?' With so many unknowns out there, essentially what they are doing is trying to establish some certainty again."

A good example of this is came from one of the Forum's members who work within the utilities space.

"They have looked at changing their operating hours for certain services and deprioritising other services," explains Anderson.

"Of course, what this has meant is that they are offering a more limited service in some areas but what has happened, perhaps counter intuitively, is that their NPS scores have gone up. It is almost a wartime spirit at the moment, we are all in this together and our customers appreciate that.

"We do however, have to be aware that there is something of an information overload and so we need to be careful not to push too much out to people. We need to use our websites well for communicating and ask ourselves how we can use these tools differently. There is an opportunity here to educate our customers as well as educating our teams - who are going out there delivering for those customers."

"One aspect that I think is really important now as we look towards our exit strategies, is that we our utilising our frontline people to

understand what is working and what is not. This is critical because we also need to be able to understand that what is working now, in the pressurised environment we are all under, might not be suitable further down the line.

“With this in mind it is absolutely vital that we tag our data so we can make better informed decisions three, six or twelve months down the line. Then when we look back on this period in twelve months’ time we must remember exactly when we introduced new processes, because this time next year we will all have a wonderful hindsight bias of what we could have done better. By tagging our data now, just tracking and observing the changes, we will be in a far better position to understand these new processes and abandon those processes that were just what was needed as we were in the midst of these challenges, but also embrace the changes that emerged as new best-practices.”

One such example of this would be the rapid emergence of a much more flexible and decentralised approach to decision making within the field service sector - something that we saw many of the companies who were able to adapt to the lockdowns most efficiently embrace. This additional autonomy that enabled quicker decision making in the field has been crucial in adding the required agility to pivot and adapt that saw so many companies keep the wheels of industry turning.

“It all starts from a point of trust,” Anderson explains. “This was particularly true within the back office areas of the business as well as we saw companies moving their workers very rapidly from office working to home working.

“IF YOU DON’T CONSCIOUSLY LOOK TO GATHER LEARNING AND FEEDBACK YOU WILL MISS IT”

- PAUL SMEDLEY, THE FORUM

“The moment you start thinking your staff are not going to do at home what they would do in the office, is the moment you’ve lost. The technology around working from home is the easy bit. It is the compliance and risk that are the challenges. However, the point around autonomy is a massive one. Our engineers are risking their health going out and doing these jobs, so we’ve got to go put our trust in them that they are doing their job to the best of their abilities. Therefore, it is really important that we acknowledge the change that is made, and we do track the data.

“What is really important here though is that yes, we do track the data and we do tag it, but we simply observe it. We cannot use it as a stick to manage. That is the freedom that we are giving our teams right now. It may not last forever, however what we need to be saying is if something doesn’t work, raise it and let us know, so we can make sure someone else in the field avoids that mistake, so we can actually learn from it.

“We are only going to get these learnings if we can get this level of feedback, which is typically more qualitative as opposed to pure numbers. Having some form of feedback mechanism, a safe environment such as an internal forum that allows people to provide that insight so we as a group can learn from it.”

“The important thing in all of this for me is to have the right mindset as an organisation” added Paul Smedley, Anderson’s colleague at The Forum.

“If you don’t consciously look to gather learning and feedback you will miss it and then later you will capture the wrong learning because you will have a bias wherein you will only remember aspects - this is perhaps one of the most common psychological factors as to why such an approach tends to fail.

“We are working with members where there is usually a very experienced resource planner involved who will have been brought into a field service organisation in order to start bringing that discipline in place. So, by definition, they are probably more advanced around resource planning than many of their peers. They will already have seen many of the benefits of implementing a more structured approach to resource planning such as efficiency benefits, motivational benefits and customer benefits.

“What we have found though, even within these types of organisations, is that typically where the resource is going in terms of allocation is still quite reactive. So, while there are quite large numbers of people called field planners, what they are actually doing is

allocating tasks. Generally, what isn't so much in place is the more strategic planning such as Phil has mentioned.

"The essence of our planning model, which works in all sorts of operations and is very relevant to field, is that the more you have an easy to use, strategic plan that you can run 'what ifs' on, where you can change parameters and explore possibilities, the more likely it is that firstly you will need less resources as you can tend to fix issues upstream, but also secondly, that you can respond quicker to the things that you don't know.

"While we were in the initial phase of this crisis, probably even those with the most robust planning models in place found themselves in a situation where there was a lot of phoning around and scrambling as these were wholly unprecedented times. However, as we got through that first initial wave of adaptation, what started to happen amongst those organisations who were further down the maturity scale in terms of resource planning was they were able to start planning more effectively and being more organised.

"The first aspect of this is absolutely about prioritisation. You need to know what is important and place your efforts here. "If you know what is important and do that important work, you will get really good customer feedback because those customers really need help. The fact is that not everybody is going to need that help as desperately as others and unless we are prioritising those customers who need us soonest, we are wasting our resources on the wrong activities.

"AS WE MOVE INTO THE SECOND PHASE, YOU REALLY WANT SOME DATA AND CONTROL AROUND DECISION MAKING" - PAUL SMEDLEY, THE FORUM

"Building this type of prioritisation into our workflows and our processes, even into the way our customers interact with us is essential."

A good example of the approach that Anderson and Smedley advocate would be changing an automated answering system so that the recording explains that due to the pandemic you are operating at a lower service capacity and advising that customers with 'challenges around X', i.e. priority issues, should call an emergency hotline. Those customers that really need that priority level service will likely continue to pursue the call, while those who are in less urgent need may well not, introducing a simple yet effective means of prioritising where to direct your service technicians.

"When things are really, really unclear you can almost only make these decisions at the engineer level," Smedley adds. "This is absolutely what was required in the first phase of the crisis and credit for companies being able to facilitate that level of grass roots decision making and also to the engineers for making the best choices they could.

"However, as we move into the second phase, which could still last for some months as we begin to ease out of lockdowns, you really want some data and control around this decision making again - because as a business you will get a much better response from your customers whether they be business to business or business to consumer customers. .

"This will be crucial to regain control of your service levels which will allow you to build upon them and predict them more accurately. In doing so you will only enhance your reputation as a company that can be trusted to do what you say you will do."

The road to recovery may be a long one, it is hard to tell with some many unknown unknowns as Anderson describes the situation, however, it would be a fair assertion to suggest that those companies who can get a firm grasp of their resource planning could well find the path to recovery far less challenging than those who do not.

#6: PAY ATTENTION TO PARTS



One of the biggest pressures that field service organisations will face as the full extent of the global lockdowns is realised is an increasing pressure on their service supply chain. It has been an area that has been under immense pressure since the start of the Covid-19 crisis and is one that will only continue to be a pain point perhaps long beyond the reopening of borders and the relaxation of the stringent enforcement measures governments across the world have put in place as a measure of dealing with the pandemic.

“The starting point here was the immediate reaction,” explained Tony Smith, VP and Global Head of Services, Synchron on a recent panel discussion I hosted for Copperberg’s virtual Field Service Summit.

“There was an unprecedented change in the availability of inventory,” Smith continued “Starting with factories stopping or slowing down production in China, through to borders closing so we couldn’t then move inventory around different locations it was at that point that we definitely saw a spike in our customers beginning to phone us up seeking assistance. Because these were existing customers, they had that visibility into their stock that our software allows so they were able to divert inventory from other places, but it was at this point we could see that it was there was a major challenge looming on the horizon.”

Smith is certainly correct that the sudden lack of parts availability could have a crippling effect on many manufacturers. However, he and his colleagues at

Syncron were able to offer their customers some room for manoeuvre largely based on the visibility that the solution offers into their customers parts inventory.

“We have now since moved through that immediate phase though and are looking at smarter ways of working,” Smith explains. “One of the things that we have to do for example is to help many of the manufacturers who use our software identify where there maybe potential stock within their dealer networks.

“In many instances the case would be that some dealers would have extra stock available of one part and other dealers may have spare stock of another. By enabling our clients that visibility across their dealer network as well they were able to arrange parts swaps which meant that there was a more even distribution of parts across the regions as a whole.”

However, while this has offered some respite for Syncron’s customers in the face of the continuing challenge of that crucial aspect of field service delivery of getting the right parts to the right place at the right time, Smith was able to share some further best practices that he is seeing emerge from the companies he is working with.

“Moving forward, many of our customers are now looking at establishing more diverse supply chains,” he explains. “Many companies are now looking at having multiple suppliers of inventory - I think in general we have become so used to having single source suppliers but one thing the pandemic has revealed is the importance in being able to build some resilience into our supply chain.”

“COMPANIES WILL REALISE THAT THE AFTERMARKET PARTS ARE A HUGE CASH GENERATOR FOR THEM”

- TONY SMITH, SYNCRON

Of course, we really shouldn’t forget just how significant the value involved in the spare parts sector.

These parts cost a lot of money to move around and it also costs a lot of money to maintain them in huge warehouses, so the economic value of this whole side of the aftermarket sector is phenomenal. As Smith states “I think we are going to see customers suddenly realising that this whole aftermarket space is a huge form of cash generation.”

“As cash gets more squeezed for these businesses for their finished goods, for example car sales fell by 82% in China across February, so companies will realise that the aftermarket parts are a huge cash generator for them,” he continues. “If you can run that part of your business well you will generate a huge amount of cash. In fact, one of our largest clients Volvo, have furloughed all of their staff with the exception of those within the spare parts side of the business.

“For me the pricing aspects also starts coming into the equation as well,” Smith adds. “There are obviously massive changing demands in the marketplace which I think has really woken people up to two things. Firstly, there is the fact that we need to generate more cash from our aftersales business and understanding that opportunity is key. Secondly, companies are also perhaps realising that there are huge lost opportunities of margin generation in the way they price either parts or finished goods.”

However, there is another potential positive that Smith thinks the current crisis may bring to the fore. Namely the further rise of servitization.

“Moving forwards the other thing that I am really passionate about is the whole servitization piece,” Smiths comments “and I think that this may be the crisis that creates the pivot point that drives us fully into a servitized market. I see parallels of 2008 when we really saw the emergence of the Software as a Service (SaaS) model.

“At that time, although SaaS had been around for a while, but the market pressures really drove the model to the fore. I think we may be about to see the same thing with servitization. I am sure that there are some manufacturers out their right now who are product-centric who wished they had a servitized business providing them with a stable and regular income at this time.”



#7: BE READY TO EMBRACE THE GROWN UP GIG ECONOMY

As we look towards the recovery for our sector perhaps the biggest challenge many organisations in our sector will face is the sheer volume of service work that will be required to work through as we catch up with the backlog of non-essential service calls that will be mounting up each and every day that we remain in lockdown.

One aspect of building our field service workforces is that has increased in recent years is the rise of the blended workforce – i.e. a workforce that places third party workers alongside our own internal team of field service engineers.

Sometimes these third-party workers will be subcontractors working for a

third-party service organisation, however, increasingly these workers will be solo independent contractors that form part of the vibrant gig economy.

When the time comes to fully move back towards full recovery, it will be to this sector of workers that many field service organisations will turn. However, when we discuss the gig-economy, all too often our minds will be drawn to the likes of Uber, Deliveroo or Task Rabbit.

However, the truth is that when it comes to the field service sector, the gig-economy is about far more than millennials on bikes. There is an older more experienced sector of the gig economy that is particularly suited to the field service sector. An army of ex field service technicians that have perhaps

grown tired of the frequent travel that takes them away from their families or are perhaps just that little bit too old to be climbing up pylons or squeezing into cubby holes so are looking for a more balanced work-life equation.

This demographic of field workers could become an invaluable asset in the battle to help bring the field service fully back online. In a recent Field Service News White Paper published in partnership with Localz we outlined what were the benefits of the older gig-worker in the field service sector, an extract of which is included below.

So, let's take a look at why the gig economy can be of benefit both for more seasoned engineers and for field service organisations themselves:

FLEXIBILITY

The frequent travel of a field service engineer can be an exciting life for a younger worker. Indeed, this variety is something that field service organisers are starting to leverage as they seek to employ from the millennial labour pool. However, it is a work-life balance that is perhaps less attractive for the engineer who has settled and doesn't want to spend time away from their family so often.

Equally the older engineer, who is perhaps entering into semi-retirement may not want to (or be capable of) climbing up pylons or squeezing down cubby holes everyday but whose technical skills can be leveraged in less demanding roles.

Additionally, as our society adapts to newer thinking towards work, the entrepreneurial approach is becoming increasingly common amongst older workers as they have the necessary diligence to continue to seek out the work needed to provide them with financial support, but relish the freedom of being able to set their own agenda.

EXPERIENCE ON TAP

For the field service organisation, the ability to tap into a pool of experienced engineers, on demand, allows them to minimise the risk of unnecessary costs while still being able to meet any peaks in service requirements. Whilst this is of course true of any gig-worker, regardless of age, field service companies are seeking out more seasoned engineers for a number of reasons.

EXPERIENCED WITH THE ASSETS

The engineer that has been there, done it and got the t-shirt is likely to hit the first-time-fix rates.

Not only are they likely to have vast experience on multiple assets within the industry segment, but also their experience will shine when it comes to fault identification as well. This is crucial considering that no fault found is one of the over-riding biggest causes for costly second visits.

GOOD UNDER PRESSURE

When every second of downtime is costing your client money the front line of the service cycle can be a high-pressure environment.

In such pressure, mistakes can be made which can be costly for both you and your client. The experienced engineer is likely to be able to draw on a well of experience to help them get the job done as efficiently as possible. Indeed, this is the reason that so many field service organizations actively seek out ex-military personnel.

#8: LOOK AFTER YOUR FIELD SERVICE ENGINEERS



There have been many facets to the conversations we have held as an industry as we try to come to terms with the impact of Covid-19. Some has revolved around technology, some around our processes and others still around customer communications. But one area we cannot overlook is how we engage with our field service engineers at this time.

During the initial Field Service News Emergency Symposium, we brought together a wide range of service leaders to each share some insight into how we as an industry could move forward both in the short term with a rapid response to the lockdowns that were happening at the time (the UK actually announced the closure of bars and restaurants while we were on air) but also to try and get some early understanding of what the impact would be on our sector in the longer term as well.

As you would expect from a session with 13 people on a panel, there was a lot of information to take in, but much of the discussions were centred around processes and technologies. This of course, made sense. Those who were logged into what was an all-time record audience for the field service industry globally, were looking for quick answers – they needed to know how they could adapt

their businesses quickly to cope with the unprecedented challenges that at the time were still emerging.

However, one panellist on that call, raised an incredibly prescient point, a point that was perhaps somewhat overlooked by the industry at large in those first few weeks of coronavirus melee. That panellist was IDC's Aly Pinder and the point he raised was that alongside all of the shifts we make to serve our customers and keep our operations running we mustn't lose sight of the fact that we also have to treat our engineers as people and not resources to be casually moved around at this time of crisis.

In fact, this point was so crucial that we invited Pinder back for a one on one session within our series of support live streams that we have continued to operate to try and bring guidance to the wider field service industry.

"I think that the initial phase of the conversation was very much focused around what was the first response," Pinder explained on that second live session. "Short-term what are we looking at within the business, as we are all being disrupted to ensure that we have a plan. The first and foremost requirement was to make sure that our critical customers could remain productive as much as possible at this time," he added.

**"AS A COMMUNITY WE RARELY
TEND TO THINK ABOUT THE
PEOPLE BEHIND THE MACHINES
AND THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE
WRENCHES. HOW ARE WE
SUPPORTING THEM?"
- ALY PINDER JR, IDC**

"However, as the conversation has moved forward one of the areas that I feel we need to be aware of is the human piece of the puzzle. From the B2C perspective we have all been bombarded with emails from companies asking how we're doing and many of our organisations are likely doing similar as customer outreach right now is very important. However, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that our field service engineers and technicians are also a massive part of that human component of the broader equation."

"It can sometimes be a bit too easy see them (the field service engineers) as just the wrench turners. Broadly as a community we rarely tend to think about the people behind the machines and the people behind the wrenches. How are we supporting them in terms of understanding do they have families at home which they are also managing? Also, remember that by definition field service engineers cannot work from home and they are going out into a world that is very different to what it was a few months ago.

"Are we doing enough in terms of assessment where their minds are today? We are sending them out as heroes to fix things and keep the world moving. We've often argued that technicians are the heroes that get the assets back up and running in the good times, so now when they are really stepping up to the plate are we focusing on our ability to support them at this time, when we are all expecting them to show up when we need them most?

"It is important to take a step back and ensure that we don't just think of how we react to the challenges with the mindset that we are sending a resource out to fix the problem, we are sending a person. So, can we provide our engineers the tools and the assessment to understand how they are dealing with the scenario that we are all facing? Are we supporting them to deliver the services that we expect, that our customers expect?"

It is of course an incredibly important point and one that is magnified at a time when many of our office based staff have been isolated to work at

#9: LISTEN TO YOUR PEERS. LEARN FROM YOUR PEERS



As part of our ongoing support for the field service sector during the global Covid-19 crisis Field Service News is running a series of regional live panel sessions across the month of May to get the insight from a series of service leaders as to what are the considerations they are discussing within their organisations as we look towards what recovery looks like within the field service sector...

The challenges we face as we look towards recovery are multi-faceted and the road back to normal operations will be different for each of us. However, there are some key shared learnings that we can all take from how the field service world has changed within the last few months as well. Technologies such as remote

assistance have rapidly moved from being nice to have, to must have in the field service tool belt while customers have become open to a new understanding of what service looks like in a post Covid-19 world.

However, it is not just a case of establishing new approaches to service. We are also currently having to rethink all of our existing processes as well.

“We’ve started thinking about things like will we need health passports,” explained Ged Cranny, Konica Minolta adding “our customers are going to want to know where our engineers have been and what they are going to do. We’ve also got to understand how we are going to get screening for our field workers. These

concerns will last many months after the lockdowns end so for a long time our customers are going to want to know that our engineers who are breaking their bio security to perform the maintenance, they need are safe to do so?

“Also securing the right PPE for our field team is another challenge. There is new equipment that we now need to supply our engineers and technical people with when they go onto customer sites and that includes the people who are going to be visiting customer sites and doing training.

“Alongside this we need to understand how are they going to work and how do they demonstrate with the PPE? WE need to be able to assess how the use of the PPE could impact our schedules. For us one minutes additional of travel time per engineer, per job when added up across a year equates to one less engineer, we have available, so having that understanding of how these new requirements for working may impact the time to undertake each work order really does matter. So when we started to think about how our field service staff will incorporate the use of new PPE into their workflow, we also have to be thinking about this from a planning perspective.”

For IBM’s Rajat Kakar another challenge has been the shift in the types of service their customers require, while demand has increased for field service support.

“One of the things that I am seeing in our market is that we are seeing constant request for field service engineers - especially on the data centre side for coming in but this is not just an increase in the standard types of service, we are seeing a lot of requests for different approaches to try to offer our customers support,” Kakar explains.

The reason for these many requests for new means of delivering service are wedded to the global economic failure that we are facing and the impact this is having on cash-flow across the whole supply chain Kakar believes.

“NEW CONVERSATIONS ARE SUDDENLY COMING IN TO PLAY AS COMPANIES EXPLORE HOW TO SURVIVE - WHICH IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE CASH FLOW BEING LOWER” - RAJAT KAKAR, IBM

“I am finding that a lot of customers are beginning to struggle with the cash cycle. The amount of money is becoming tougher and I do not think that is going to ease in the short term. Effectively, the cash is not there so we are getting requests from customers asking us ‘how can you support us to run our structures in a much more global and consistent way?’

“This is where we are now looking to adapt our service portfolios to help these customers, to make sure that their service can continue to run uninterrupted, to make sure their data centres are not interrupted and that their field service operations can continue running as well. What we are also seeing is an uptake in the general service practices which are outside of the general data centre side of our operations and we are getting requests from other industries to apply our expertise to assist. We are also getting requests regarding assets management including asset buy backs and asset leasing. So all of these new conversations are suddenly coming in to play as companies explore how to survive – which is a direct result of the cash flow being lower in the market,” Kakar adds.

Indeed, this is a huge factor in the discussion. It is not just how quickly we can find recovery in our own organisations but also understanding the wider context of the full-service supply chain, taking into account both our customers and our suppliers and understanding their positions in terms of cash flow and operational capacity.

One of the other key aspects of how we can re-enforce our own businesses within such challenging conditions is embracing agility and at the heart of business agility lies is outside of the box thinking.

“One aspect of agility is saying ‘how can I solve this problem in a different way,’” explains Nick Frank, Si2 Partners.

“Working in partnerships with our customers is one way of achieving this. One of the upshots of the lack of cash within the markets is that there are more people interested in service contracts. Our customers are thinking ‘how do I work with my suppliers to be more effective and more resilient’ and the same thinking should be there for us as providers in terms of resilience. So with this in mind collaboration is one of the obvious paths ahead.

“Along this means of approach we can explore eco-system type of thinking and looking beyond the traditional linear supplier/customer relationships and start looking at the supply chain as more of a cloud of suppliers working towards a common goal. That is something I think forward thinking organisations should be looking at the moment.”

**“PRIOR TO THE PANDEMIC
REMOTE SUPPORT WASN'T A
PARTICULARLY LARGE PART OF
OUR SERVICE OFFERING BUT IT
HAS BECOME A CRITICAL PART
OF WHAT WE ARE OFFERING
NOW”**

- CHRISTO ROUX, OUTOTEC

In many senses everything has shaped us to move much more towards a fully service-centred economy, which is something that many of us in the industry have been shifting our efforts towards for some time anyway.

“I certainly think that this is the way we want to move forward,” explained Outotec’s Christo Roux. “We use the term long-term service agreements where we engage the customer over a much longer period of time on all different levels of the service including a 24/7 call line, periodic service and maintenance intervention and emergency maintenance activities. But that has also evolved over the last couple of months and weeks now. Prior to the pandemic remote support wasn’t a particularly large part of our service offering but it has become a critical part of what we are offering now and our customers are very keen and interested to go down this path.

“Because we are globally situated and operating in many different countries the lockdown has been different depending on which company we are dealing with. So, we have had to manage this situation at different levels of engagement. But certainly, with where we are now, with not being able to cross state lines or country borders to get our experts onsite, we have had to adapt and so have been engaging with our customers directly via remote technologies much more,” he added.

“Our offering has changed and evolved in that way and has become a lot more remote based,” Roux continues before adding “this is something that I think we will see a lot more moving forward in the industry. It has always been there, but it is something that I think will become much more prevalent. I also think that how well you perform these types of remote service is going to be a key differentiator in the future.”

This shift towards a sudden acceptance on the customer side of remote assistance-based service is something that Konica Minolta have also felt as Cranny explained.

“The appetite for remote tools that we have been trying to promote for years in terms of supporting and monitoring customers in the print industry has gone up by about tenfold during the pandemic,” he explained “these types of off-site support services have suddenly become much more accepted by customers now and we will need to continue to drive this through sales.”

However, as Kakar warns such an uptake in appetite for remote services will drive further challenges that must be considered as we

establish what is set to become the new normal.

“One of the things that will happen as we are all trying to do more service work utilising remote tools is that we will hit soon the capacity about how far you can take remote services,” he explained.

“There are two things that we are seeing coming out of that equation. Within the field itself the utilisation of Augmented Reality will become more prevalent because companies will simply not be able to train engineers fast enough. If the customers are introducing new portfolio elements and you are using a scalable workforce, which may or may not fully belong to you, plus you have a product that is relatively complex, this could be a huge challenge. At IBM we are already starting to see requests ask us what are technical elements that we can bring into the opportunity in order to make things work.

“WHAT WE SEE WHEN THINGS ARE BEING DIGITALISED IS DISRUPTION, DEVALUATION, DEMONETISATION AND EVENTUALLY A FORM OF DEMOCRATISATION”

- JAN VAN VEEN

MOREMOMENTUM

“The service desks will be another area where people are going to be expecting a better level of service - perhaps a level one and level two combined approach. In addition to this we are also starting to see an uptake on elements such as self-service portals. Customers are becoming increasingly keen to find a resolution themselves before the call is routed into a service desk. From a cost perspective that could become the new norm in terms of where the self-service sits in the equation. First self-service, then a more comprehensive service desk approach and then finally the field service call. Field service engineering then needs to become more easily scalable but coupled with Augmented Reality this becomes an interesting opportunity.”

There indeed is a lot of opportunity that is being carved out as a result of the rapid rethinking we have all had to do in response to Covid-19. We have seen the already fast approaching onset of digital transformation hit a turbo-boost. This in and of itself is a huge positive to take out of what has been the most testing time of a generation. However, the rapid onset of such digitalization brings along its own disruptive influence that we must also consider as Jan van Veen points out.

“One thing of the things that I have been hearing a lot about is the prediction of the acceleration of the digital disruption that was already starting and is now going to go exponentially upwards. However, that also means that the game is going to change dramatically also,” Van Veen explains. “Typically, what we see when things are being digitalised is disruption, devaluation, demonetisation and eventually a form of democratisation. The question we need to address is that what is going to be the unique asset that you bring as a manufacturer when we reach that point? Where you are going to add value? At a certain point in the not too distant future it is not going to be about remote assistance because there will be third party service providers, system integrators and even your customers themselves who all have the ability to provide the maintenance.

“Therefore, we have to think of other ways of adding value with these digital data driven capabilities and it is probably that these will need to be more about the operations rather than the asset itself,” he commented before adding “If one of the upshots of the pandemic is that we are seeing the further acceleration of digital transformation, then I think that it is critical that we start thinking about what this will mean longer-term now as well.”

What is certain is that the world in which we operate in vastly different to that of just a few months ago. However, as we begin to plan our recovery, it is clear that there is an opportunity to not just return to business as normal, but to redefine that normal to something more efficient, productive and cohesive than it ever was before.



#10: APPRECIATE THE MOMENTS OF LEVITY WHEN THEY COME ALONG

I'm sure everyone of us at the moment is under a greater level of strain than we have ever felt before. For me personally, I can confess to having never been under so much pressure. As an independent publisher, we have a tendency to punch well above our weight as it is, with an output that matches and dare I say it, betters that of any of the mainstream publishers I have worked for during my entire career in publishing. This is something I take immense pride in.

Similarly, as the field service sectors leading global voice, I felt it was simply our duty to react in a proactive and positive manner

to the current Covid19 pandemic and so establishing the support channel that we have created to host a series of live sessions to help offer guidance to field service companies during this time was something that I knew in my heart we had to move mountains to do.

It is at times of crisis that we need both leaders and we need to come together as a community. It is our job as the primary layer of news media in the global field service sector to facilitate that. And we may be winging it a little, as are we all at the moment, but so far, I think we've done a reasonable job of achieving quite

a lot in very little time - thanks in the main to the wonderful support from our friends in the industry.

But I'll freely admit, it has been tough, I'm tired and I know there is a long way to go yet. We'll get there, but there is a long, long way to go.

So a week or so on from the first Emergency Symposium we hosted on Covid-19 and its impact on field service organisations and I have just a moment to take stock on everything that happened in a whirlwind of anxiety, anticipation, and action. While there have been countless excellent learnings from our Covid19 sessions, which you can catch up on here, perhaps one of the most important aspects of the current situation was raised by an unexpected cameo on my recent stream with Nick Frank and Harald Wasserman of SI2 Partners.

It was a moment of sheer unexpected levity, and it shone a light on a very important, yet potentially easily overlooked, aspect of the remote working environment we are all currently engaged in.

Just as Nick was speaking about the importance of strong leadership we saw a blurred flash across the camera as his young daughter entered into the shot. However, it was the follow up cameo that brought a wonderful moment of levity into what have quite understandably been a series of tense sessions across the week. With the wonderful exuberance of youth on her side, Nick's daughter proceeded to torment her Dad, with a pair of bunny ears behind his head and a wry smile to our live audience before treating us to one more wave as her brief, but enjoyable cameo came to an end.

"IT IS THESE MOMENTS OF LEVITY AND SOCIALISATION THAT CAN ALLOW US TO UNDERSTAND OUR TEAMS AS PEOPLE AND WHO THEY ARE" - NICK FRANK, SI2 PARTNERS

It was an endearing moment, one that reminded us all of the humanity that lies behind the screen - something that was acknowledged by a number of the audience in the chat room of the live session.

Nick coped with things admirably, and there were shades of Professor Robert Kelly's famous BBC video interview, which went viral, for sure. However, what this intervention brought forward was an important discussion on the importance of levity in these challenging times.

"The thing about remote working and 'virtual sessions' is that they are very intense," Frank commented during the stream.

"The meetings are much shorter, they are to the point and rather than having one or two sessions which are much longer these are shorter, more frequent and more intense. The other thing is that you can see the environment. Actually, you are letting people in to your lives and I think this is quite difficult for some people.

"But now, because of the situation we are in, people are getting used to the seeing the working environment and it actually becomes OK, we're all in the same boat and it is of no surprise. What it brings is an informality to the discussion which completely changes the means of communication.

"I think it is these moments of levity and socialisation that can allow us to understand our teams as people and who they are and that is an important part of leadership, and good leadership is vital at the moment."

Well said Nick and thanks Katy for bringing a smile to many of our faces at an intense time. It was a lesson many of us needed - i.e. to remember that while we may be working a million miles an hour to get through this crisis, while the rolling news continues to update us on everything that is in front of us, ultimately we must remember that a moment of levity, a reminder of the human behind the screen, can be a wonderful tonic to keep us going.

THE FOLLOWING LEADERS OF INDUSTRY ALL GAVE UP THEIR TIME TO HELP SUPPORT OUR INDUSTRY WHEN WE NEEDED IT MOST.

MANY THANKS TO THEM ALL.

- Nick Frank, Managing Director & Harald Wasserman, Managing Director, Si2 Partners
- Jan van Veen, Managing Director, MoreMomentum
- Marne Marting, President Service, IFS
- Bill Pollock President, Strategies for Growth
- Rajat Kakar, Executive EMEA Service, IBM
- Aly Pindr Jr, Program Director, Service Innovation & Connected Products, IDC
- Phil Anderson & Paul Smedley, The Forum
- Ged Cranny, Head of Direct Service, Konica Minolta
- Gary York, CEO, Help Lightning
- Stacey Epstein, CMO, ServiceMax
- Michael Kuebel, Senior Director of Product Management, Salesforce
- Rich Agostinelli, ByBox
- Christo Roux, Director Field and Workshop Services, Outotec
- Tony Smith, VP and Global Head of Services, Synchron
- Hilbrand Rustema, Managing Director & Martin Gilday, Director for Growth in Service, Noventum
- Tim Andrew, CEO, Localz

Special thanks to:



An aerial, top-down view of a large crowd of diverse people standing on a grey floor with a complex grid pattern of blue and orange lines. The people are scattered across the frame, some in small groups, some alone, and some in motion. The overall scene conveys a sense of a busy, public gathering.

**TOGETHER WE
CAN BUILD
THE RECOVERY
AND EMERGE
STRONGER**

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