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Field service, the Hollywood Way

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On June 1, 1975, Hollywood broke with tradition when it released *Jaws* to audiences across the country. Traditionally, summer had been the dumping ground for perceived flops – buzz-worthy movies were reserved for cold-weather release on the grounds that people had better things to do on sunny days than go to the movies.

Now, “blockbuster season” is as ingrained in popular culture (and advertising cycles) as holiday shopping or back-to-school. Whether you’re partial to natural disasters, dinosaurs or a little animated magic, the film industry works hard to pack your summer end-to-end with movies you want to catch on the big screen.

Movie making is big business, but what can Hollywood teach us about the way business gets done? Earlier this year, financial reporter Adam Davidson wrote in *The New York Times Magazine* about the “[Hollywood model](#)”

approach to business, in which a project is identified and a team assembled to work together for no longer than it takes to complete the project. Our economy is shifting more and more toward this model, with Davidson adding that more of us can expect to “see our working lives structured around short-term, project-based teams rather than long-term, open-ended jobs.”

Certainly, the Hollywood model is more nimble than what we think of as the traditional model: capital is raised and workers are hired to fill jobs with no specific duration or endpoint. The former is more adaptable to market forces, both in terms of cost and for the workers themselves, because it's more responsive. In the movie business, as Davidson points out, weekly box-office results provide new information about which skills are the most valuable. If last week's hit movie relied heavily on computer animation, animators will find themselves in a stronger negotiating position than if a live-action romantic comedy topped the box office.

This all sounds a lot like modern field service management, which is also experiencing a shift from an old, reactive model to the current model of proactive and preventative service. A field force might consist of full-time employees as well as contractors who can respond when demand spikes. As with the Hollywood model, workers arrive at the assigned location, perform tasks and then move on to the next job. Feedback, in the form of customer satisfaction, dictates whether or not the provider will be called upon to provide the service again. And companies that provide the very best service will find themselves in the best position to cement their reputation as industry leaders.

For service organizations, taking advantage of this shift calls for a field service management strategy and the right tools to carry it out. Managing a field force with paper, pencil and phone simply isn't powerful enough to meet the daily demands of the business and provide good service. This is where field service management technology steps in. Because the Hollywood model is subject to so much change, the technology has to adapt as quickly as the work evolves.

Oracle Field Service Cloud meets the demands of the Hollywood model because it is self-learning, acquiring knowledge as more work is performed. The solution can make more intelligent assignments as it learns about the work habits of individual performers. Over time, the technology learns which combinations of activities and personnel yields the most success – and the best service.

In the *Times* article, the author's assertion that "it is all but impossible to make a healthy profit in the United States by simply competing as the low-cost provider" of a product or service rings true. "Profits," Davidson writes, "need to come from that extra something that only your company can give, something for which customers are willing to pay a premium." Increasingly, this extra something is service, delivered reliably and efficiently.

As technology evolves, the way we request service will continue to collapse the time from ticket creation to incident resolution. If a remote cellular phone tower can signal that it needs service without human intervention, or an Amazon customer can press a button indicating they need more laundry detergent, it won't be long before a cable box can flag itself for replacement or a thermostat can trigger an energy audit. The companies that emerge as leaders will be those that not only understand how this technology will impact their business, but are prepared to respond to requests instantaneously with the help of a sophisticated field service strategy.

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