Honeywell Intelligrated

Responsive Field Service: The Best of Both Worlds

Regional Field Service Model Combines Power and Intelligence of Central Management With Responsiveness and Familiarity of Local Support

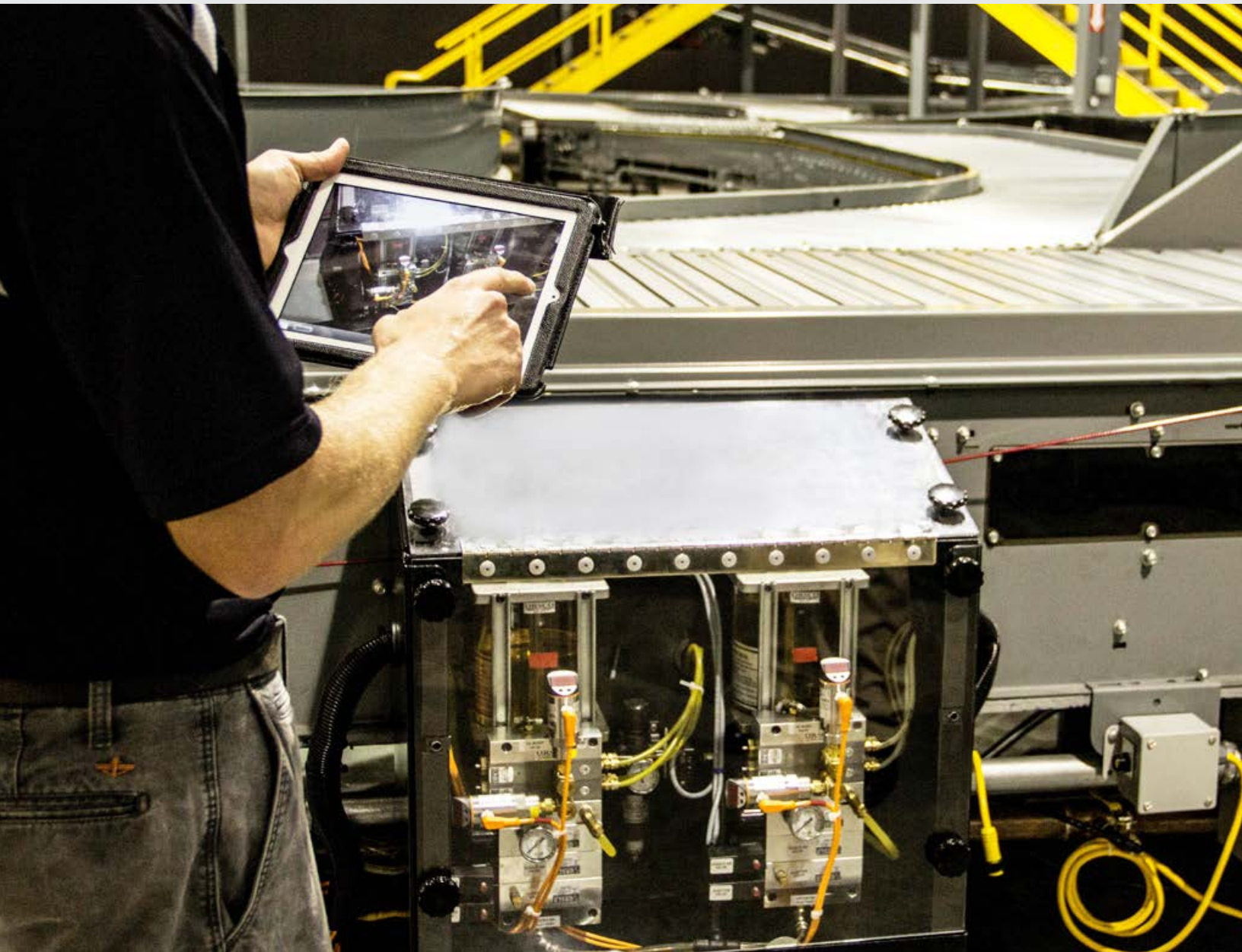


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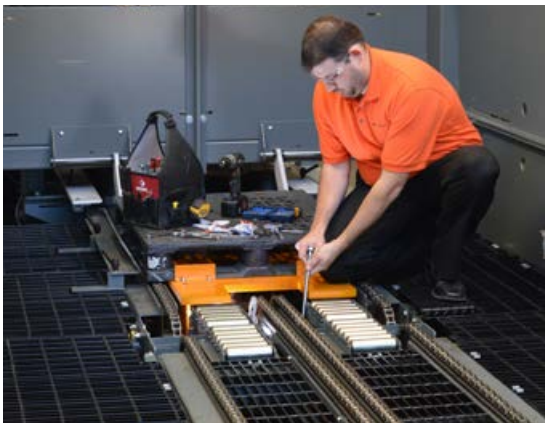
Responsive Field Service: The Best of Both Worlds

Regional Field Service Model Combines Power and Intelligence of Central Management With Responsiveness and Familiarity of Local Support

Service organizations typically provide field service through either centrally managed technicians dispatched from a principal location or regionally managed technicians based locally. Each approach offers benefits but also fundamental disadvantages that can prevent a swift resolution to critical service issues.

High-throughput distribution operations depend on automated material handling systems to route orders swiftly and accurately from storage to shipping. During peaks, many of these systems operate 20 hours per day, seven days a week to meet increased demand. However, in the event of an unplanned outage, the mission-critical nature of automated systems intensely magnifies the cost of downtime.

Beyond the cost of equipment repair and idle workers, the loss of throughput levies the highest expense. Extended downtime can result in thousands of delayed orders each hour, backing up processes within the distribution center (DC).



Quickly responding to an automated system breakdown or performance issue and minimizing downtime require technicians who possess a specialized skillset and high degree of system familiarity. However, many distributors and manufacturers lack sufficient resources to develop and retain suitable engineering and maintenance teams in-house. Therefore, these operations commonly outsource time-sensitive service and support to trained field service providers.

Problems With Existing Field Service Approaches

Centrally managed programs leverage an extensive maintenance database with service logs and equipment performance data to determine the best solution for a particular issue. However, drawing from a pool of centrally located technicians can translate into a next-available technician arriving late to the scene, unfamiliar with facility staff, equipment and software. With system complexity tailored to the unique operational needs of each location, this unfamiliarity can stretch repair time and increase the risk of substandard work. Combined with slower response due to travel requirements, centrally located programs cost time that high-throughput distribution operations simply cannot afford.

In contrast, regional operations offer lower travel costs and faster response times thanks to close proximity, and often deploy technicians who are more familiar with the facility compared to their centrally located counterparts. However, these local operations fall short due to inadequate central oversight, often lacking consistent quality control, scheduling efficiency, technical training and system knowledge on par with large national operations.

The right skillset to address a certain issue may not be available, causing longer repair times or worse yet, incorrect work that does not last or causes additional problems – even system failure.



The Regional Service Model — Robust Central Management and Responsive Local Support

With the advent of secure, cloud-based databases and scheduling systems, innovative field service providers can now offer a regional model that blends the intelligence of a centrally managed support operation with strategically located technicians. This enables fast dispatch of the best technician for the job based on skillset, proximity and system knowledge, backed by extensive central support.

Technicians and engineers stationed in major cities and manufacturing hot spots bypass expensive travel and lodging costs, enabling them to arrive at the facility sooner. Rather than simply assigning the next available technician who may have no prior experience in the facility, locally stationed technicians are already familiar with staff, equipment and software, enabling them to more efficiently address the problem and get systems back online in less time.



The CMMS Advantage

Oftentimes, these field service providers utilize a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) to ensure that the right technician responds to an issue with the most up-to-date information possible and plenty of remote support. It tracks what equipment operates in what locations and directs relevant updates and certification information to local technicians so they can effectively serve facilities in their territory. Technicians can access web-based CMMS tools from any location with an internet connection, enabling remote connectivity to troubleshoot issues in the field.

The CMMS also ensures standard reporting procedures for equipment performance data, service logs and spare parts inventory management. These insights provide views across the entire installation base to identify causes of service issues and determine the best maintenance solutions. Beyond emergency maintenance, the CMMS tool can issue preventive maintenance advisories for equipment at other facilities prone to similar issues. This holistic approach helps minimize system outages and keeps maintenance network capacity free to respond swiftly in the event of an emergency.

All of these benefits add up to serious financial return. CMMS implementations commonly reduce overtime costs, as improved work planning and better maintenance result in fewer unexpected jobs. For a maintenance department with $50,000 annual overtime costs, reducing that by half over a period of three years enables complete return on their CMMS investment in reduced overtime costs alone. Operations can reap even more benefit by leveraging cross-facility comparisons and updates, enabling increased labor efficiency, leaner staffing allocations and reduced inventory by 10–15 percent. The software also fuels more informed decisions to minimize the total cost of ownership, asset depreciation and capital replacement by evaluating maintenance and replacement costs against wear and performance guidelines from the OEM.



One System's Resolution Protects an Entire Network of Installations

An invalid data alarm alerted staff to an issue with a light grid used to collect key data points for a facility's conveyor system. The light grid's power supply yielded irregular voltage readings that fluctuated higher and lower than design specification, risking critical equipment damage and robbing the system of key data points to control material flow as product moved through the facility. Support personnel arrived on-site and discovered that interference from a decaying motor powering a nearby conveyor roller corrupted the power supply. Technicians replaced the motor and relocated the power source to a separate control cabinet to prevent a repeat issue.

As a result of the incident, the system supplier and maintenance provider implemented a variety of proactive measures to ensure no other installation risked an outage due to a similar issue. The support provider issued work orders to relocate the power supply for all systems in its installation base with a similar arrangement, and ensure that all sites and local technicians have the necessary parts, tools and training to implement the solution.

For more information, contact Honeywell Intelligrated® by email at info@intelligrated.com, by phone at 866.936.7300, or visit www.intelligrated.com.

Comparing Costs

Thanks to robust central management, operations can leverage data across the entire installation network to minimize the risk of outages in the first place. However, in the event of an emergency service request, how does each service model compare in terms of cost, response time and repair quality?

As a working example, consider a DC near a major metropolitan area with an outage that requires a quick response with an efficient solution. For a centrally located program, travel to the site of an issue requires last-minute airfare ($500), ground transportation ($90) and lodging ($80) – a total ballpark cost approaching $700 before a single repair is made. Consider travel time to and from the airport, along with boarding and flight time, and the response time swells to more than 6 hours. A local resource, however, can get to the DC in a short time (1.5 hours) with low travel costs ($30).

Once technicians arrive on-site, the quality and speed of the repair mean the difference between an effective solution and further downtime. Reference the comparison chart below to see how each approach stacks up in the race to provide a fast, effective solution.

	CENTRALLY LOCATED, CENTRAL MANAGEMENT	REGIONALLY LOCATED, REGIONAL MANAGEMENT	REGIONALLY LOCATED, CENTRAL MANAGEMENT
Repair diagnosis	Remote connectivity through CMMS enables remote diagnosis while technician travels to site. However, technician making initial visit to site lacks familiarity with staff, equipment and system design, delaying on-site review.	Local technician very familiar with facility equipment and system design expedites on-site review, but lacks robust central support and database to help diagnose challenging issues.	Remote connectivity through CMMS, robust central support and familiarity of local technician expedite diagnosis. BEST IN CLASS
Repair implementation and quality	Extensive quality control, training and documentation ensure high-quality repair consistent with established best practices.	Insufficient database and limited technician skillset may not result in lasting repair that adheres to established best practices.	Extensive quality control, training and documentation ensure high-quality repair consistent with established best practices.

Additional offerings from Honeywell Intelligrated Lifecycle Support Services include computerized maintenance management (CMMS — cmms@intelligrated.com), resident maintenance, reactive service and troubleshooting, on-site training, ongoing asset management, preventive maintenance, upgrades and modifications, 24X7 technical support and spare parts.

Conclusion

Operations should consult with their system supplier for complete field service with robust central management and remote support combined with highly trained, responsive technicians strategically located in logistics hot spots. This approach guarantees the consistent, high-quality work of a central program but greatly reduces downtime and additional service costs due to travel and lack of system familiarity.

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