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BUILDING A FIELD FULFILLMENT BUSINESS: KEYS TO SUCCESS

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Whether they're marketing to consumers or enterprises, providers of technology based-solutions face common challenges. How do they properly deploy, install, and service their products in a consistent manner across a wide geographical area? How do they accomplish this cost-effectively, but without compromising quality? And, most importantly, how do they provide exceptional customer experience, one that keeps clients coming back?

At MasTec Advanced Technologies, we're in a rather unique position to address those challenges. We've built a business around providing turnkey residential and commercial last-mile fulfillment services for customers ranging from consumer technology products to satellite TV providers to smart cities. In this article, we'll share our tips and best practices for organizing, building, deploying, and managing a nationwide field service program.

TIP #1: EMPOWER YOUR FIELD TECHS WITH STRONG LEADERSHIP

Your field techs are the face and voice of your company that will enter customers' homes or places of business – so it's critical that they reflect your company's values, culture, and professionalism. Techs need rock-solid executive sponsorship and leadership that values bottom-up feedback based on a keen balance of "ask and listen."

A strong and committed management team will equip your field crews with the dedicated resources, support, and autonomy they need to make core decisions. This support builds the foundation for an effective workforce management and customer management infrastructure that will give your program the staying power to survive the inevitable peaks and valleys.

TIP #2: KNOW YOUR MARKETS

In what states and cities will you be doing business? Think about state and municipal regulations and licensing requirements. What are the geographic considerations, traffic patterns, and community dynamics, and will your techs be pragmatic enough



to adapt? What if your program extends into remote areas with limited connectivity –how will you support those customers? At the minimum, you need technicians that are self-sufficient, work with minimal supervision and can think on the fly.

Since consumer installations require in-home access, it's critical to hire and train the right people. The recruitment processes should include adequate vetting with background checks and drug screenings. Hiring technicians as W-2 employees gives you an added measure of control and discretion.

A strong network of strategic partnerships can be an important factor in launching a nationwide fulfillment program. It's critical to maintain a consistent fulfillment labor network where your strategic partners' core values, and those of their techs, line up exactly with those of your company.

TIP #3: PICK THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGIES AND TOOLS

As you establish the scope of your new service, you need to take into account any system architecture issues including the flexibility to connect with any localized client systems. A powerful and flexible ERP system should be at the core of your technology strategy and will allow you to integrate and scale with systems from your clients. At a base level, the ERP should include capacity and inventory management, field workforce management, customer scheduling, and safety components.

Another important software tool at MasTec is Geotab, a fleet management and vehicle tracking system (also known as telematics) that uses GPS to provide precise and up-to-the-minute information on our techs, where they are in relation to customer calls, how they're driving, etc. We use localized dynamic routing to plan work efficiently and ensure the best completion rates, the most responsive customer reschedules, and the best safety performance.

TIP #4: ADOPT AN INTEGRATED FIELD TRAINING APPROACH

At MasTec, we take a holistic view of field training that starts with the customer and ensures a clean transition through order fulfillment, with every touch point in between. It's more than just ensuring that the technicians are proficient and certified on the tools they need to achieve fulfillment. Everyone involved needs to understand

the impact of the full business cycle –including supervisors and managers. It's important to establish a strong infrastructure of support tools and resources that will ensure success for each tech. At MasTec, this includes a learning management system (LMS), classroom training, peer-supported tools, tech hotlines, videos, mentor programs, buddy systems, and a cadenced communication plan. It's about making sure your techs know who to call and what they need to do to get the job done right. We actively manage continuing education and certification programs to reinforce lessons learned in the field.

TIP #5: MEASURE AND REWARD SUCCESS

We rely on Power BI to manage a balanced scorecard of performance and KPIs to inspect what we expect, set expectations, and reward success. Every single aspect of the business from safety down to financial margins is measurable. The more granular the metrics, the more opportunities to track successes and areas for improvement. These metrics are critical for ensuring your teams are working as safely as they can, that you're being as productive and profitable as you can, and you're serving customers as efficiently as possible. And of course, never miss an opportunity to reward and celebrate success!

A CASE STUDY: MASTEC AT AND DIRECTV

When DirecTV made the decision to expand into a new geographic area, they formed a strategic partnership with MasTec rather than try to handle fulfillment internally. DirecTV needed to stay on top of fulfillment for a large volume of sales in the new area. Since MasTec AT was already established there, our teams could provide the necessary local expertise and speed to market. DirecTV also realized that MasTec AT would share its core values and mirror its own standards of service and satisfaction to provide seamless and transparent customer fulfillment.

This example gets at the heart of many success factors that are built into the ideal strategic partnership for fulfillment. Through sharing of data and best practices, both partners create a common language for measuring performance and offering transparent services to customers. It's a win-win on both sides. 