



INSIGHT BRIEF · FIELD SERVICE

Five Places a Service Call Loses Money

Dispatch, travel, parts, labour, and invoicing: where service margin quietly leaks, why most of it never shows on a report, and what connected field service changes.

Service margin rarely disappears in one dramatic loss. It leaks, a few dollars and a few minutes at a time, across five points on every call. None of the leaks is big enough to trigger a review, which is exactly why they persist.

The five leaks

- Dispatch: wrong tech, wrong truck, wrong parts. The job starts underwater and finishes there.
- Travel: windshield time nobody bills, on routes nobody optimized.
- Parts: used on site, never on the invoice. The truck restocks and the cost vanishes into overhead.
- Labour: hours remembered at the end of the week instead of recorded at the site. Memory rounds down.
- Invoicing: sent three weeks after the work, paid three weeks after that. The cash cycle doubles for no reason.

Why reports never show it

Reports show what systems capture. Unbilled travel, forgotten parts, and rounded-down hours were never captured, so they are not on any report. The P&L just shows a service division that earns a little less than it should, month after month, with no line item to blame.

That is what makes these leaks durable. You cannot manage what was never recorded.

What connected field service changes

One record from the call to the cash: the work order created at intake is the same record the dispatcher assigns, the tech updates from a phone, and billing invoices from. Nothing is re-keyed, so nothing is dropped between systems.

- Parts recorded against the work order as they are used
- Time captured at the site, at completion
- Invoice generated from the completed work order the same day
- Dispatch decisions informed by skills, stock, and location

A five-minute self-audit

- Pull your last twenty completed work orders. How many invoiced within 48 hours?
- Compare parts used on three recent jobs against what was invoiced.
- Ask one tech how they record time. If the answer involves Friday, you found a leak.



Questions about any of this?

Summit Business Systems has been implementing ERP for Ontario businesses since 1991. We are an Acumatica Gold-Certified Partner based in Barrie, working with construction, field service, distribution, and professional services companies across the province. If you want a second opinion on anything in this insight brief, we give straight answers.

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