

IFS AI-enabled dynamic PSO boosts productivity by 25%, delivering a 4.36x ROI over 18 months for Konica Minolta

Since introducing IFS Planning, Scheduling and Optimization (PSO) across five national operating companies, in just 18 months Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd has seen significant business benefits. Outcomes to date include reducing average service visit travel times; raising SLA compliance; cutting fleet mileage, CO2 emissions and fuel costs; and increasing engineer productivity when attending field service calls.

Next generation field service: 'remote by default'

Konica Minolta's business is driven by digitization, providing powerful document management, industry printing and video solutions for the connected workplace. Supporting 430,000 customers across Europe generating over 1.1 billion prints a month, a team of 750 field service engineers is scheduled to attend premises where needed, working towards a first time fix within a customer's contracted agreed Service level Agreement (SLA).

Over the last two decades Konica Minolta has progressively moved towards a 'shift left' approach to product service, aiming to enable its front-line support team to resolve more end user issues directly without the need for escalation or field visits. Remote by design strategies, using IoT device monitoring only used for billing and consumables reporting for remote diagnostics and fixes. Each 'truck roll' field service visit to a customer site costs the company from 50-100 Euros, with additional costs for spare parts. Over the last two years, one of Konica Minolta's key business goals has been to increase the resolution rate for remote service tickets from 20-25% to over 50%, removing the need to dispatch a technician. Explains Ged Cranny, Senior Consultant at Konica Minolta BEU Service and Support, "Remote by default means finding the perfect balance – doing as much as possible remotely whilst ensuring any on-site work is exceptional," he says.

About Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd

Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd provides innovative business and industrial imaging solutions including digital printing, document management, and IT services, driving digital transformation and more sustainable business operations.

Parent company, Konica Minolta, is a global manufacturer and supplier of business and industrial imaging products. Founded in 1873 and headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, it operates in 49 countries, employing 40,000 staff with revenues of \$7.66 billion (March 2024)

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Dynamic, automated scheduling

Automated planning had been in place since 2006, with Konica Minolta's 10 national operating companies using Salesforce ClickSoftware integrated into SAP as a tool to schedule field service visits. But the process had become increasingly manual, typically with self-directed workgroups applying different local practices within each country.

In 2021, seeing operational inefficiencies and with ClickSoftware approaching end of life, the team took the decision to identify and adopt a next generation fully automated scheduling and mobile solution: a unified platform capable of ultimately uniting all Konica Minolta companies, across 27 different countries and cultures, within a consistent, templated, auto-scheduled mobile field service environment.

Embracing innovation

"We started our journey by going to Gartner and were fortunate enough to talk to the author of several white papers on the Future of Field Service," explains Cranny. "His insight helped to clarify our ideas and business requirements and also introduced us to some exciting new capabilities offered by leading vendors including IFS," he says.

Working collaboratively, the national operating companies agreed a harmonized set of processes for the first time, allowing a series of questions to be posed to candidate solution vendors. "From 16 responses, we requested quotes from four, selecting two vendors to demonstrate their proof of concept. IFS excelled, presenting and demonstrating in the local language for each country, and the decision to adopt IFS PSO was unanimous across all stakeholders," says Cranny.

A consistent solution template

Within just six months of signing the contract, the first implementation was completed, taking the Benelux national operating company live with IFS PSO in October 2022. Konica Minolta now has five national operating companies in five countries connected to SAP ECC 6, supporting some 430,000 customers. "We have a template that's fit for purpose with a unified set of rules we can roll out across Europe," says Cranny.

"The ability of the system to automatically schedule and re-schedule field service visits dynamically by the minute throughout the day is game-changing," he says. "We have two- and four-hour service level agreements to fulfil. A schedule that's optimal at 11am may need to be adapted within the next 10 minutes. IFS PSO continually updates reflecting current demand and available resources and can replan all live jobs within 12-15 seconds. In the event that a customer's fault can't be resolved remotely, we can automatically quickly allocate and deploy the most suitable engineers, with the necessary parts, in the most efficient way possible. We need to be right first time. Our customers are paying us to deliver uptime. We can't afford to visit a customer and not successfully execute a first-time fix," he says.

Benefits seen with IFS PSO

- 83.5% of service calls scheduled automatically
- Dynamic scheduling of all service visits within 12-15 seconds
- 17% increase in closed incidents per technician
- 21% rise in meeting SLA agreements
- 25% rise in daily service calls completed
- Average travel plus job time job time reduced by 11.1%

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We chose IFS because they listen. Factoring the financial savings from less travel time, faster job resolution and less miles driven/fuel used, we've seen an ROI of 4.36x since adopting IFS PSO.”

**Ged Cranny, Senior Consultant,
Konica Minolta BEU Service and
Support**

Significant operational improvements

The move from manual dispatch to AI-driven automation with manual exception handling has been one of the key changes in the business. In the UK, where IFS PSO has been live for Konica Minolta since July 2023, the results have been exceptional. Currently, 83.5% of Konica Minolta calls sent to PSO are now automatically scheduled successfully. The remaining 16.5% require human intervention in the form of exception handling. “This change in role for former planners means that they can prioritize the most urgent exception calls and deliver the best possible service to resolve issues for the customer,” says Cranny. “Their other critical contribution is also refining and improving the rules and logic PSO uses to improve performance. In this way, we can further increase automation and first-time fix rates whilst progressively reducing manual exceptions going forward. We’ve seen automatic planning figures by PSO reach 96% in certain instances.”

The system is transforming productivity and operational efficiency. Explains Cranny, “In the UK business, automated scheduling with IFS PSO across 770 engineers has seen productivity surge between 20-25%. We’ve seen a 17% increase in closed incidents per technician, and a 21% rise in meeting our SLA agreements for customers,” he says. “In addition, since implementing PSO, the average number of jobs completed each day by engineers has risen by 25%,” he adds.

Tangible business savings

Looking specifically at the UK operation, since going live with IFS the company has seen the average drive time between jobs reduce by 5.4%, and the average working time on jobs reduce by 14%. Taken together, the total average time saved travelling and completing each job has reduced by a 11.1%. Comments Cranny, “These savings represent not only significantly greater productivity, but also translate into both cost and sustainability benefits. For example, by automatically optimizing allocation and routing for service calls with IFS PSO, our fleet has reduced fuel consumption. This directly translates into lower fuel costs and a direct environmental impact through reduced CO2 emissions. As a global top 100 Most Sustainable Company in 2023, PSO is clearly supporting our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ambitions,” he says.

Transformation advice: managing change

The introduction of automated IFS PSO requires open engagement and discussion with staff and change management from stakeholders to oversee and monitor the operational transformation to secure support and adoption. Explains Cranny, “Dispatchers like to trust their own judgement, and like everyone, we all have an unconscious bias. In contrast, the AI engine behind PSO makes its decisions based purely on the rules and goals set – for example meeting SLAs and increasing the likelihood of a first time fix when allocating jobs.



"If engineers are used to self-selecting jobs and planning their day, suddenly getting dynamically allocated tickets one job at a time is a big change. It's vital management listen to and consult with their teams to explain the advantages. For instance, optimization can end shifts close to home and ensure rules accommodate any specific concerns," he says. "That way everyone understands the enablement readily available through configuration."

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, in addition to implementing IFS PSO with a sixth further national operating company by 2027, Cranny also sees an opportunity to use augmented reality for certain service calls, allowing a non-specialist technician to attend a customer site and be directed remotely by an expert on the service desk. "The 'smart hands' approach means we can resolve complex customer issues faster, without waiting for a specialist to physically attend in person," he says. "It makes no sense to pay highly skilled specialists to be driving for hours in a car when their expertise can be applied remotely. This same approach can give senior engineers approaching retirement the opportunity to continue sharing their valuable expertise by working flexibly on a part-time or freelance contract basis," he adds.

Advice to others considering IFS PSO

What advice would Cranny offer to other companies considering the same transformation journey? "Firstly, don't think that the software is the solution. It's a way to enable a business strategy, so be sure that everyone agrees exactly what that strategy is. Introducing AI into a business is a powerful enabler, but it's important to recognize and balance what you want the system to do. For example, do you want to reduce travel time? Or do you want to increase SLA adherence? Do you want to delight the customer? Any and all of these things are possible, but balancing goals means understanding where one is going to impact the outcome of another," he observes.

"Secondly, engineers and exception handlers need to understand how and why innovation like AI-driven automated dynamic scheduling can help them do their job better. They also need to understand that their skills and knowledge is exceptionally valuable and, increasingly, can be used in new ways – for instance improving the system rules and sharing skills at the first-line support desk level."

As a member of the IFS Customer Advisory Board, Cranny is also looking forward to collaborating to develop the product even further. "Our ambassador team across the national operating companies, alongside IFS R&D, will help to drive our own improvements and best practice using PSO," he says.

Konica Minolta's adoption of IFS PSO clearly demonstrates how advanced technology can address operational inefficiencies, enable remote service strategies, and align with sustainability goals. By transitioning from planners to exception handlers and leveraging AI-driven scheduling, IFS PSO is empowering the business to drive efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and deliver exceptional service.

Find out more

For further information, contact your local IFS office or visit ifs.com

