

Operations & Dispatch Research Findings & Persona



5 survey responses

Operations stakeholder group

Primary research

Directional. A small group, but a consistent one.

HOME SERVICE OPERATIONS ECOSYSTEM

Operations and Dispatch Research Findings and Persona Report

5 Survey Responses , Operations Stakeholder Group , Primary Research

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Research Overview

This document presents primary research findings from an operations and dispatch survey conducted as part of the Home Service Operations Ecosystem project. The research explores how operations managers, business owners, and service managers schedule appointments, communicate with technicians and customers, track job status, and manage daily operational challenges.

Research Goals

- Understand how appointments are scheduled and how often schedules change
- Identify how operations teams communicate with technicians and customers
- Understand how job status and inventory are currently tracked
- Identify the most common operational challenges and inefficiencies
- Determine what real-time information and tools would most improve operations

Participants

Detail	Value	Note
Total respondents	5	Survey collection complete
Primary role	Business Owner, 80%	1 Service Manager, 20%
Experience	60% have 15+ years	40% have 4 to 7 years
Team size	40% coordinate 11 to 25 technicians	40% operate independently

Important note:

With 5 responses, this data is directional rather than statistically conclusive. Findings are used to identify patterns and inform design decisions.

Survey Findings

Primary Role

The majority of respondents are business owners managing their own field service operations.

Role	Responses	% of Total
Business Owner	4	80.0%
Service Manager	1	20.0%

Years of Experience

Respondents are experienced operations professionals. No one has fewer than 4 years in operations.

Experience Level	Responses	% of Total
More than 15 years	3	60.0%
4 to 7 years	2	40.0%

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How Many Technicians Do You Coordinate?

Team sizes vary significantly, from solo operators to those managing larger field teams.

Team Size	Responses	% of Total
11 to 25 technicians	2	40.0%
6 to 10 technicians	1	20.0%
None, not applicable	2	40.0%

How Are Appointments Typically Scheduled?

No respondent uses dedicated scheduling software. Appointments are managed through a combination of phone calls, texts, emails, and personal calendars **(multiple choice)**.

Scheduling Method	Responses	% of Total
Phone call	4	80.0%
Text message	3	60.0%
Email	3	60.0%
Personal phone calendar	2	40.0%
Spreadsheet	1	20.0%
Paper calendar or schedule	1	20.0%

Note: Scheduling software and shared digital calendars were selected by 0 respondents.

Key finding:

100% of respondents schedule appointments manually using phone calls, texts, emails, or paper. Zero respondents use scheduling software or a shared digital calendar. This is a significant gap and a direct opportunity for improvement.

How Often Do Schedules Change During the Day?

Most operations teams deal with daily schedule disruptions as a routine part of their work.

Frequency	Responses	% of Total
Frequently	3	60.0%
Rarely	2	40.0%

Key finding:

60% of operations respondents experience frequent schedule changes during the day. Without a real-time system to communicate those changes to technicians and customers simultaneously, each change requires manual outreach across multiple channels.

Most Common Reasons for Schedule Changes

Customer cancellations are the leading driver of schedule disruption, followed by delays and emergency jobs (multiple choice).

Reason	Responses	% of Total
Customer cancellations	4	80.0%
Delays	3	60.0%
Emergency jobs	2	40.0%
Technician availability	2	40.0%
Missing materials	1	20.0%

Inbound Customer Calls per Day for Status Updates

Operations teams field a meaningful volume of calls from customers asking for arrival times and appointment status.

Calls per Day	Responses	% of Total
Fewer than 5	2	40.0%
5 to 10	1	20.0%
11 to 25	1	20.0%
I don't track this	1	20.0%

Key finding:

At least one respondent receives 11 to 25 status-update calls per day. These calls exist entirely because customers have no other way to find out where their technician is or when they will arrive. Real-time visibility would eliminate most of these calls.

How Do You Communicate with Field Technicians?

Text message and phone call are the universal tools for technician communication. No one uses a mobile app or radio **(multiple choice)**.

Communication Method	Responses	% of Total
Text message	5	100.0%
Phone call	4	80.0%
Email	1	20.0%

How Do You Communicate with Customers?

Customer communication relies entirely on manual outreach. No respondent uses automated notifications **(multiple choice)**.

Communication Method	Responses	% of Total
Text message	5	100.0%

Phone call	4	80.0%
Email	3	60.0%

Note: 0 respondents use automated notifications to communicate with customers.

Critical finding:

100% of operations teams communicate with customers manually through text, phone, or email. Zero uses automated notifications. Every customer update requires a human to stop what they are doing and send a message. This is the direct operational cost of the visibility gap customers experience.

What Information Do Customers Request Most Often?

Arrival time is by far the most common customer request, confirming what the customer survey found **(multiple choice)**.

Customer Request	Responses	% of Total
Arrival time	4	80.0%
Appointment status	3	60.0%
Delay updates	1	20.0%
Rescheduling	1	20.0%

Cross-stakeholder validation:

Operations teams confirm that 80% of customer requests are for arrival time. This matches the customer survey, where 58.3% of customers said exact arrival time was the information they most needed. The same gap appears from both sides of the conversation.

Process for Notifying Customers When a Technician Is Running Late

Every operations team calls the customer manually when a technician is delayed. No formal automated process exists **(multiple choice)**.

Notification Process	Responses	% of Total
We call the customer manually	5	100.0%
We send an automated text or email	2	40.0%
The technician contacts the customer directly	2	40.0%

Critical finding:

100% of respondents call customers manually when a technician is delayed. There is no formal automated process for delay notification. When a delay occurs, someone must stop working, find the customer contact, and make a call. Multiply this across multiple technicians and multiple delays per day and the operational cost becomes significant.

How Do You Track the Status of Field Appointments?

Appointment tracking relies heavily on manual communication rather than dedicated systems **(multiple choice)**.

Tracking Method	Responses	% of Total
Text messages	4	80.0%
Phone calls	3	60.0%
Dispatch software	1	20.0%
Paper records	1	20.0%

Key finding:

80% of operations teams track appointment status through text messages and 60% through phone calls. Only 1 respondent uses dispatch software. This means job status exists inside individual text threads, not in a centralized system anyone can reference.

How Do You Track Inventory, Materials, or Parts?

Most operations teams have no formal inventory system. Materials are purchased reactively as each job requires them **(multiple choice)**.

Inventory Tracking Method	Responses	% of Total
Materials purchased as needed per job	3	60.0%
We do not maintain inventory	2	40.0%
Technicians manually track inventory	1	20.0%
Spreadsheet	1	20.0%
Paper records	1	20.0%
Warehouse staff tracks inventory	1	20.0%

Key finding:

100% of respondents either purchase materials as needed or do not maintain inventory at all. This explains why 75% of technicians arrive at jobs without the necessary materials. There is no proactive inventory system to ensure technicians have what they need before they leave for the job.

What Information Is Most Difficult to Obtain in Real Time?

Three categories of information are equally difficult for operations teams to access in real time **(multiple choice)**.

Information Type	Responses	% of Total
Job status	2	40.0%
Delay notifications	2	40.0%
Inventory availability	2	40.0%
Customer updates	1	20.0%

Which Reports Do You Review Most Frequently?

Daily operations and schedule reports are the most commonly reviewed, reflecting a focus on day to day coordination **(multiple choice)**.

Report Type	Responses	% of Total
Daily operations reports	3	60.0%
Schedule reports	3	60.0%
Customer satisfaction reports	2	40.0%
Inventory reports	1	20.0%
Other	1	20.0%

Most Common Operational Challenges

Schedule changes are the top challenge, with technician delays, tracking difficulties, incomplete reports, missed appointments, and inventory shortages all tied at 40% **(multiple choice)**.

Challenge	Responses	% of Total
Schedule changes	3	60.0%
Technician delays	2	40.0%
Difficulty tracking job status	2	40.0%
Incomplete reports	2	40.0%
Missed appointments	2	40.0%
Inventory shortages	2	40.0%

Which Area Needs the Most Improvement?

The majority of respondents selected all areas, signaling that no single part of the operation is working well enough.

Area	Responses	% of Total
All of the above	3	60.0%
Technician communication	1	20.0%
Inventory management	1	20.0%

Key finding:

60% of respondents said all areas need improvement. This is not a single-point failure. It is a systemic one. Scheduling, communication, inventory, reporting, and job tracking all need to work better, and they all need to work together.

What Real-Time Information Would Be Most Valuable?

Job status and inventory status are equally the most valuable real-time data points for operations teams **(multiple choice)**.

Information	Responses	% of Total
Job status	3	60.0%
Inventory status	3	60.0%
Delay alerts	2	40.0%
Job completion updates	2	40.0%
Customer communication history	1	20.0%

Overall Satisfaction with Current Tools and Systems

Rating	Responses	% of Total
5, Very satisfied	1	20.0%
4, Satisfied	2	40.0%
3, Neutral	2	40.0%
2, Dissatisfied	0	0%
1, Very dissatisfied	0	0%

Overall average: 3.80 / 5

Like technicians, operations respondents are neutral to satisfied but not enthusiastic about their current tools. The open-ended responses reveal what the ratings mask: frustration with communication, inventory, and cost of existing software.

Interest in a Unified Operations App

Respondents were asked whether they would use an app that consolidates appointments, technicians, customer updates, and job reports in one place.

Response	Responses	% of Total
Yes	3	60.0%
Not sure	1	20.0%
No	1	20.0%

Design consideration:

60% said yes. The respondent who said no mentioned cost as a key frustration with existing software. Any solution must be affordable and simple to justify adoption from cost-conscious small business operators.

Most Helpful App Features

Respondents selected all features they would find most useful in an operations app (multiple choice).

Feature	Responses	% of Total
Appointment scheduling	3	60.0%
Real-time appointment updates	3	60.0%
Customer communication tools	3	60.0%
Delay notifications	3	60.0%
Technician notes and reports	3	60.0%
Inventory tracking	3	60.0%
Technician status updates	2	40.0%
Route planning	2	40.0%
Job status updates	2	40.0%
Performance reports	2	40.0%
Automated customer notifications	2	40.0%
End-of-day reports	2	40.0%

Design direction:

Six features tied at 60%: appointment scheduling, real time appointment updates, customer communication tools, delay notifications, technician notes and reports, and inventory tracking. These six define the core feature set of the operations-facing solution.

If You Could Eliminate One Daily Frustration

Open-ended responses from 4 of 5 respondents.

"Poor communication"

"Inspectors being late"

"Communication and inventory"

"Materials being delayed"

Pattern:

All four frustrations connect to the same two root causes: communication gaps and inventory problems. Both are solvable with real-time information shared across Technicians, Customers, and Operations & Dispatch.

Research Themes

Four recurring themes emerged across all operations survey responses. These themes define the operational problem space from the management perspective.

Theme 1: Manual Everything

Not a single automated system is in place across the entire operations workflow. Scheduling, technician communication, customer notification, appointment tracking, and inventory management all happen manually through phone calls, texts, and emails.

- 0% use scheduling software
- 0% use automated customer notifications
- 0% use a mobile app to communicate with technicians
- 100% call customers manually when a technician is delayed
- 80% track appointment status through text message threads

Theme 2: The Visibility Problem

Operations managers cannot see what is happening in the field without actively reaching out. Job status, technician location, and delay information are only available by making a phone call or sending a text.

- 40% identified job status as difficult to obtain in real time
- 40% identified delay notifications are difficult to obtain in real time
- 40% identified difficulty tracking job status as a top challenge

- Job status and inventory status are the most valuable real-time data points, both at 60%

Theme 3: The Inventory Gap

The operations data reveals the upstream cause of the technician materials problem. There is no proactive inventory system. Materials are purchased as needed, which means technicians cannot know in advance whether they will have what they need.

- 60% purchase materials as needed per job
- 40% do not maintain inventory at all
- Inventory availability is difficult to obtain in real time, 40%
- Inventory shortages are a top operational challenge, 40%
- Inventory status is the most valuable real-time information, 60%
- Delayed materials were cited as a top daily frustration

Theme 4: The Scale of Manual Communication

Operations teams are the hub of all communication between customers, technicians, and the schedule. Every update, delay, and status change flows through a person, not a system. This creates a compounding burden as team size and job volume grow.

- 100% communicate with both technicians and customers via text message
- 80% communicate with both via phone call
- One respondent fields 11 to 25 customer status-update calls per day
- 60% of respondents said all areas of operations need improvement
- Poor communication was cited as the top frustration across open-ended responses

What the themes tell us:

Operations teams are running complex field service operations using the same tools available to anyone with a phone. Text messages, phone calls, and paper records cannot scale, cannot provide real-time visibility, and cannot automate anything. A connected ecosystem that gives operations a live view of technicians, customers, and inventory would transform the operations role from reactive coordinator to proactive manager.

Operations and Dispatch Persona

The following persona was developed from the operations survey data. She represents the dominant experience pattern across respondents: an experienced business owner or manager running field operations without dedicated tools.

DISPATCH DIANA

Operations Manager , Business Owner , 4 to 15+ Years Experience

"I need to see what is happening in the field without having to call someone to find out."

At a Glance

Role	Experience	Team size	Satisfaction
Business Owner or Service Manager	4 to 15+ years	6 to 25 technicians	3.80 / 5 average

Who She Is

Diana is an experienced operations manager or business owner running a field service team. She coordinates schedules, dispatches technicians, handles customer communication, and manages inventory, all through a combination of text messages, phone calls, and personal judgment built over years of experience. She does not have a real-time view of her field. She finds out what is happening by asking. Every delay, every schedule change, and every customer call that comes in means she must stop what she is doing and manually handle it. She is not looking for a complex enterprise system. She needs one clear view of what is happening right now.

Goals

- See job status and technician location without having to call and ask
- Notify customers of delays automatically without manually calling each one

- Know when materials or parts are needed before technicians leave for the job
- Reduce the volume of inbound customer calls asking for arrival times
- Have one place where scheduling, communication, and reporting come together

Pain Points

Manual Delay Notifications

100% of respondents call customers manually when a technician is delayed. There is no automated process. Every delay means a phone call. In a day with multiple technicians and multiple delays, this becomes a significant operational burden.

No Real-Time Field Visibility

Job status, technician location, and delay information are only available by making a phone call or sending a text. Operations teams are coordinating blindly, reacting to problems rather than anticipating them.

Reactive Inventory Management

60% purchase materials as needed per job. 40% maintain no inventory at all. This is the upstream cause of the technician materials problem. There is no system to ensure technicians have what they need before they leave.

Fragmented Scheduling

No respondent uses scheduling software. Appointments are managed through phone calls, text messages, personal phone calendars, and paper. When schedules change, every update must be communicated manually across all channels.

Inbound Status Calls

Customers who cannot find out when their technician will arrive call operations directly. One respondent receives 11 to 25 of these calls per day. Each call is a symptom of the same problem: no customer-facing visibility.

What She Needs

Functional Needs	Emotional Needs
• Real-time job status and technician updates • Automated customer delay notifications • Inventory visibility before dispatch • Centralized scheduling and communication • Technician notes and job completion reports	• Confidence that the operation is running smoothly • Reduced stress from reactive problem-solving • Trust that customers are being taken care of • Clarity over what is happening in the field

What Makes Her Satisfied

- She can see job status and technician progress without making a phone call
- Customers are notified of delays automatically before they call in
- Technicians arrive at jobs with the right materials because inventory is tracked
- Schedule changes are communicated to technicians and customers in one action

What Makes Her Frustrated

- Having to call every customer manually when a technician is running late
- Not knowing where a technician is or how a job is progressing
- Technicians arriving without materials because there is no proactive inventory system
- Fielding inbound status calls from customers who have no other way to get information
- Software that is too expensive for a small or mid-size operation

Top Priorities by Survey Evidence

#	Priority	Survey Evidence
1	Real-time job and inventory status	60% said both are most valuable in real time
2	Automated customer notifications	100% currently call customers manually for delays
3	Centralized scheduling	0% use scheduling software today
4	Delay alerts	40% said delay alerts are difficult to obtain in real time
5	Technician notes and job reports	60% selected this as a top app feature

Opportunity Statement

Operations managers like Diana need to stop reacting and start seeing. The opportunity is to give them a live view of technicians, customers, and inventory in one place, with automated notifications that eliminate the manual communication burden of running a field service operation.

Persona Snapshot

Name: Dispatch Diana **Archetype:** Operations Manager and Business Owner

"I need to see what is happening in the field without having to call someone to find out."

Top Priorities

- Real-time job and inventory status
- Automated customer notifications
- Centralized scheduling
- Real-time delay alerts
- Technician notes and job reports

Dispatch Diana is supported by 5 survey responses from experienced business owners and service managers. She represents the operational reality of running a field service team without dedicated tools.