

Quillen Machinery — “Desk”

Farm equipment dealer · service and parts, three branches · Grand Island, Nebraska

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1 · The decision

In one sentence, what decision does this dashboard exist to get made?

Which machines get somebody today, and which fault we stop treating one call at a time.

Who opens it, and when?

Me at six in the morning, standing at the parts counter with the phone on my shoulder, and then every time it rings. Not sitting down and not on a big screen. If it needs two hands I will go back to a notepad, and the notepad is why we did not spot the harness for two seasons.

Is there a rule the decision follows? Write it out, in the order it applies.

1. Down, then limping, then waiting on a part, then routine. 2. Inside each of those, by what is standing behind the machine — acres, or head. 3. Not by when the call came in, ever. 4. Livestock is an exception and gets written on the row rather than turned into a number: a mixer feeding four hundred and twenty head twice a day cannot be scored against wheat. 5. Waiting on a part is a date, not a visit.

Why is time of call so wrong here?

Because the longest-open job on my desk this morning is a load cell drifting on a feedlot mixer with nothing behind it, and the newest is a combine with two hundred and forty acres of wheat and rain on Thursday. Every system I have used puts them the other way round.

Tell me about the second list.

The header height sensor harness. We have closed it forty-one times in two seasons across fourteen customers, two and a half hours each. Every one of those was a good afternoon's work, invoiced, closed on time. On every report this business has ever produced it is our best-performing category of work. It is a hundred and seven hours of a fault nobody escalated, and closing them properly is exactly what stopped anybody asking.

So what should a fault have to reach before it counts as a cause?

Five closures across at least three customers, in twelve months. One customer with five is a machine, not a cause. And it keeps a status with a name on it — escalated, being worked off, ours, or closed. 'Under investigation' is not a status.

You said some of them are yours.

Three customers, nine calls about load cells drifting, and in seven of them the cells were fine — they were installed on pads we did not level. That goes on the same list as the manufacturer's faults, not on a separate page, because a separate page for our own mistakes gets read less often.

What has to be on it that a ticket system usually leaves off?

What we do not promise. Same-day on anything over fifteen years old, repair timelines on the discontinued sixty series, out-of-hours in harvest for anybody without a contract, and quotes over the phone on anything at all. Every one of those used to come out on day four. Said at the first call it costs us the job about a third of the time, and it stops somebody turning down a neighbour's combine because of a date we gave them.

Anything you specifically do not want on it?

No figures per technician. Nothing that assigns anybody automatically — half of dispatch is which of the three can actually fix a header sensor and that is not in any system I own. And no time-to-close as a headline. It is the number that hid the harness.

Where does the data come from, and how fresh does it need to be?

Service tickets and the parts system, live. In harvest it is wrong within twenty minutes if it is not.

2 · Screens requested

SCREEN	WHAT IT IS FOR	WHAT IT MUST SHOW
The desk	Open jobs, in the order somebody should be sent.	Urgency and what is standing behind the machine as separate figures, the fault in plain words, where the machine is, hours open, and whether it is an instance of a known cause.
Recurring	Faults we have closed more than five times without fixing.	Closures, customers affected, labour hours consumed in twelve months, a status with a name, and what is being done — including the ones that are our own fault.
What we do not promise	Where we say no at the first call rather than on day four.	The refusal, the reason, and the honest alternative said in the same breath.

3 · Figures, and the comparison each one carries

FIGURE	MUST APPEAR AGAINST
Queue position	Urgency and what is standing behind the machine, printed separately
Hours open	Reported, never sorted on
Closures of a cause	Customers affected, and labour hours consumed in twelve months
Call rate after a fix	The call rate before it

No figure appears on this dashboard without the comparison beside it. A number with nothing to compare it against is not information, and the component that renders these will not accept one.

4 • What this must not do

- 1. No figure for any individual technician.
- 2. No time-to-close as a headline figure.
- 3. No automatic assignment of a job to a person.
- 4. No ordering by when the call came in.
- 5. Nothing that needs two hands or a desk.

Treated as binding rather than as a preference. Every item above is checked again before the tool is handed over.

CONFIRMATION

The answers above are mine and may be used to build the tool described. Quillen Machinery is a fictional business profile supplied for demonstration and testing; every figure appearing in the delivered dashboard is sample data.

SIGNED — MAREK OSTROWSKI-HALE

DATE