TANGO

# BREAKING THE MAINTENANCE BOTTLENECK

## How to Streamline Maintenance at Scale

tangoanalytics.com

# About Tango

**Tango is a software company that helps businesses like yours manage and optimize their locations.**

With our Service Lifecycle Management and Integrated Workplace Management Software, corporations all around the world are optimizing resources, streamlining processes, and gathering better insights about their operations.

Our facility management software, **Tango Maintenance**, helps you manage your facilities and assets more efficiently. Automate work order routing, schedule preventive maintenance, pull responsibilities from equipment leases, and increase visibility into asset history, all in a single, made-for-maintenance environment. Whether you have dozens of locations or tens of thousands, we help you standardize maintenance processes and make more informed decisions.

# Introduction

In facility management, just about everything you do is critical. Some work is just *less* critical. You have a never-ending list of equipment to repair, machinery to replace, and assets to clean and service. Some of that work is ongoing and planned in advance—**preventive maintenance**. Other tasks only come up when something breaks, jumping ahead in the queue to get operations back on track.

The problem for most businesses is that there's not an adequate supply of maintenance resources and workers. Your crew has limited time. Your vendors have other customers. And you have a budget. To make matters worse, every step of the way, maintenance processes are constantly strained by bottlenecks, causing additional delays and preventing you from consistently achieving the best outcomes.

A crucial repair or replace decision could flounder in the initial stages because someone doesn't know how to create a work order or who to send it to. Decision makers could be cut off from vital information they need. And as your organization grows and you acquire more sites, it exacerbates these problems. The bottlenecks don't scale with you—they just grow worse and become more pronounced.

We're going to explore where and why maintenance bottlenecks arise, the problems they cause, and how you can finally break free of them, enabling your organization to finally manage your facilities at scale.

# The thing most maintenance bottlenecks have in common

When projects get off track, it's easy to point fingers. But often, the problem isn't the people involved. It's the process—or lack thereof. Your facility manager uses their front end request tool to create a work order…and then it falls into the abyss.

In facility management, people often can't get the information they need to make decisions or even route the work to the right personnel. There's no clear delineation of responsibilities, so the project stalls in a "no man's land." It's no one's fault because it's no one's responsibility. There's no ownership.

For example, an employee in Chicago probably isn't going to research, contact, and coordinate with HVAC vendors in Dallas to keep a work order moving. They don't know anything about Dallas vendors, which ones the facility has used in the past, or which ones the company has a relationship with. Even if they're the person these requests get directed to (presumably because they coordinate with vendors in Chicago), it's natural for them to assume it falls under someone else's responsibilities. So you wind up with various employees who *could* handle a task playing hot potato with your work order. And then you rinse and repeat for each step.

Meanwhile, you're essentially deferring HVAC maintenance by default. The work isn't making any progress and everyone is focusing on other work orders.

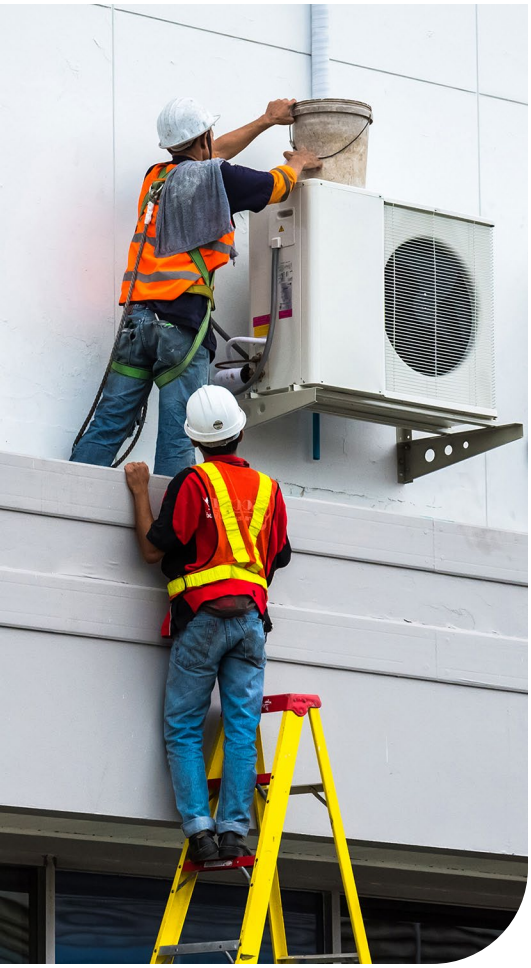
But what if the maintenance is more urgent? Maybe that HVAC system is actually broken, and you're stuck without air conditioning in a Dallas heat wave. Or perhaps a mission-critical asset is down, and every hour of downtime means lost revenue or missed deadlines. A fuel pump is malfunctioning. The self-checkout system isn't working. Maybe there's a problem with your infrastructure that's rapidly getting worse—like a burst pipe in an upper floor of your corporate offices. In instances like these, facility managers tend to develop their own informal (and undocumented) methods to work around the bottleneck and ensure the work gets done quickly.

They lean on personal connections. They text a vendor they know. Tap the shoulder of the employee who has the most relevant experience. They may reference a spreadsheet only they understand, or pull warranty information from a complicated system of filing cabinets. As a result, there's a complete breakdown of process and often no visibility into the work. The only people who know the work is being done and who it's being done by are the ones making the phone calls, sending the emails, and turning the wrenches.

That's not a great way to manage any of your assets, but for some, it creates a much larger issue: you may have to prove the work has been done. Suppose there was an equipment failure that led to a toxic spill, and now the EPA is involved. Or perhaps a revolving door malfunctioned and caused an injury, and you have to prove you've been performing preventive maintenance. If your maintenance records aren't accessible because work is being assigned and completed through informal processes, much larger problems can arise at any moment.

**Using informal processes to work around a maintenance bottleneck really just creates a new bottleneck: the informal process.** Other employees can't replicate what was done or translate it to another facility. And everyone has to either ask around to find out what you did with an asset last time or create a new informal process on the spot.

Which is especially problematic when you have multiple campuses, stores, or clinics.



# Why maintenance bottlenecks become worse at scale

Ideally, every facility would be self-sufficient. Fully capable of scheduling and performing maintenance and managing assets on their own. Depending on how many locations you have, it probably makes sense for pockets of them to have some shared resources and overlapping organizational structure. The same vendors may be able to serve them, so it might be most practical for the same people to coordinate who to source labor, materials, and assets from.

But when you have maintenance bottlenecks, acquiring new sites, facilities, and businesses tends to increase the strain on them, rather than promote independent (and consistent) maintenance ecosystems. The bottlenecks go with you to the new location.

Suppose you own a fast-food chain. You have one veteran employee flipping burgers at your main restaurant. They're your burger expert, but you have other kitchen employees who can handle the work, too. You obviously can't expect your star burger flipper to operate an unlimited number of grills and manage an unlimited number of orders simultaneously, or race between multiple kitchens to keep up with demand at every location.

Unfortunately, large organizations often wind up treating their facility management and administrative personnel this way. Rather than establishing a clear delineation of responsibilities at each location (or within each region), their processes continue funneling work to people who don't have local insights, access to asset information, or capacity to translate their processes to additional locations.

There may only be one person who knows how to manage your maintenance projects from start to finish. Or who has handled a certain kind of task or asset. Maybe they're the only one who knows where to find the information needed to make decisions about assets. Or, as we discussed earlier, there may be undocumented informal processes that leave individual employees unsure where to begin and how to proceed.

The more personnel, facilities, and maintenance work you manage, the more disruptive these bottlenecks become. (And you really better hope none of those people leave.)

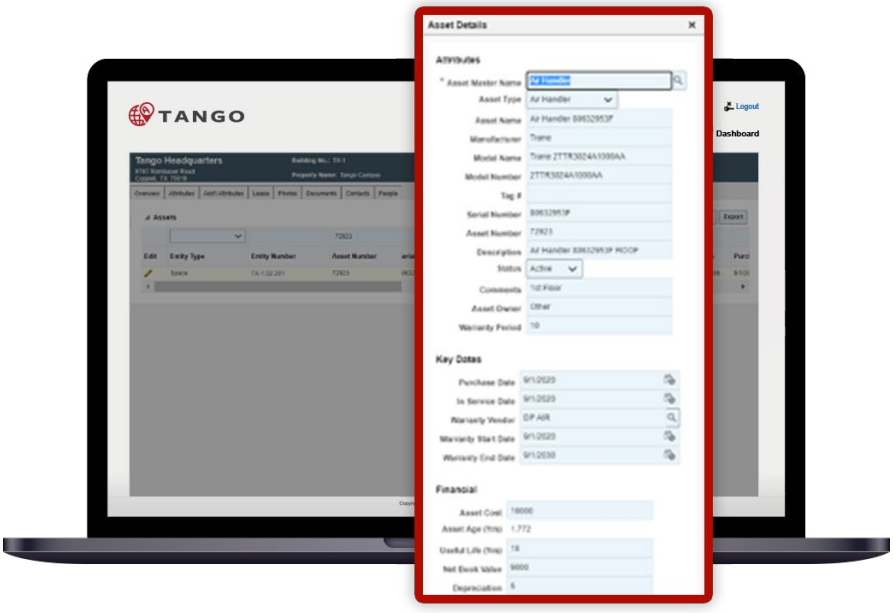
Arguably, the biggest reason maintenance bottlenecks become worse at scale is that you simply have more assets to keep track of. Organizations often don't even know what assets they have, let alone which ones are leased, under warranty, or due for replacement. Making the wrong repair or replace decision can cost your organization thousands of dollars in unnecessary expenses, but without crucial information like an asset's work order history, your team can't make informed choices. In order to avoid making poor decisions, though, workers are stuck using the bottleneck, requesting information from or deferring decisions to the same person.

So, how do you break these bottlenecks? What's the key to managing facilities at scale? Increase visibility. Leverage automation.

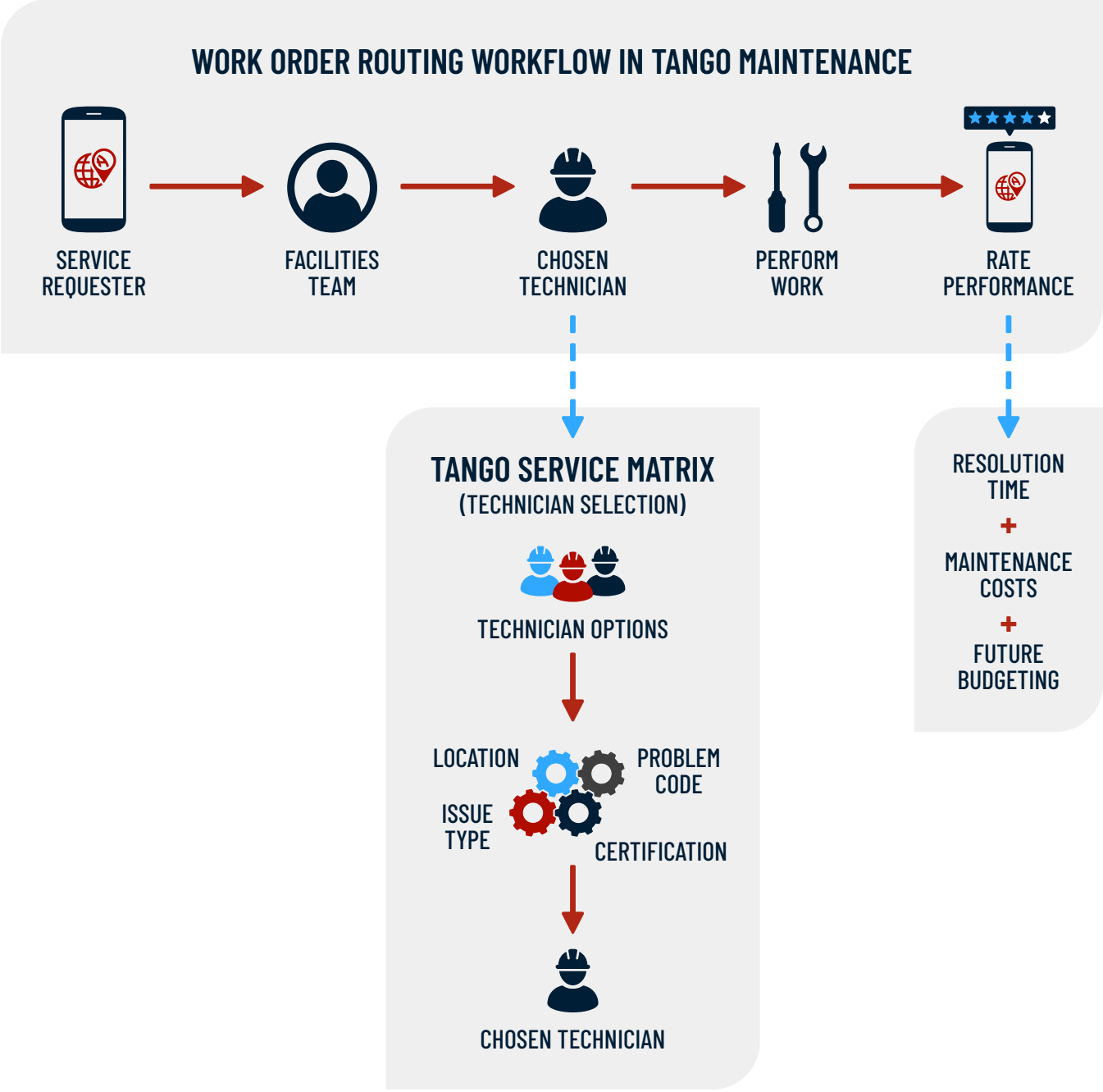
# Visibility and automation break the maintenance bottleneck

If you want to keep projects moving and maintenance on track, you need to ensure that everyone involved has access to the information they need and that work gets routed to the right people. The more centralized your asset information is, the less your processes depend on any one person. And the more you can automate transitions, the less chance there is that the process itself will bog down work orders.

In other words: you break the bottleneck with better tech. That's why businesses with multiple facilities or large operations turn to **computer aided facility management (CAFM)** software like **Tango Maintenance** to streamline and standardize maintenance processes. Tango keeps asset data like work order history, lease responsibilities, warranty information, expenses, and more in one place, so no one has to hunt for it or make decisions without it. Whenever you have a request associated with an asset, the asset's information is right there, too.



Tango also streamlines work order routing. You preconfigure areas of responsibility, and no one ever has to ask your facility manager again—Tango automatically gets the work order to the right person at the right time. As employees and vendors complete each step, Tango keeps the work order moving so your projects stay on track.



Nobody has to have the same conversations multiple times, either. With every work order, employees can see the discussions that have already taken place, so they can get up to speed and make sure they aren't asking questions that have been answered before.

## SAMPLE WORK ORDER MESSAGES IN TANGO MAINTENANCE

REQUESTER

FACILITIES TEAM

TECHNICIAN

### SERVICE REQUESTED

Your **Service Request** has been received and your facilities team is responding.

### SERVICE REQUESTED

**SR3498 Received:**
Issue Type_, Problem Code_, Impacted Area_, Description_

### VALIDATION

Your **Service Request** has been validated and a **Work Order** has been initiated.

### WORK ASSIGNMENT

**WO8496 Received:**
Issue Type_, Problem Code_, Impacted Area_, Description_, Vendor Accept_, NTE_, SLA_

### VENDOR SELECTION

Your **Work Order** has been dispatched to **ABC Vendor**.

### APPOINTMENT

Your **Maintenance Appointment** has been scheduled.

### RESOLUTION

Your **Work Order** has been resolved. **Please rate your experience.**

Your facility manager has to connect the demand side of maintenance (service requests) with the supply side (internal employees and external vendors). As you acquire new facilities, this becomes increasingly difficult to coordinate manually. Even with a clear organizational structure and defined areas of responsibility, someone has to ensure that a service request translates to a work order that gets in the right person's hands.

But with Tango, nobody has to know who is responsible for what tasks, assets, or processes—they simply make the request, and Tango does the rest.

You might be surprised by how many of the facility management issues you're facing right now could be solved by better digital tools. With better access to asset information and an automated approach to work order routing, the maintenance bottleneck could become a problem of the past.

# What happens when you break the bottleneck

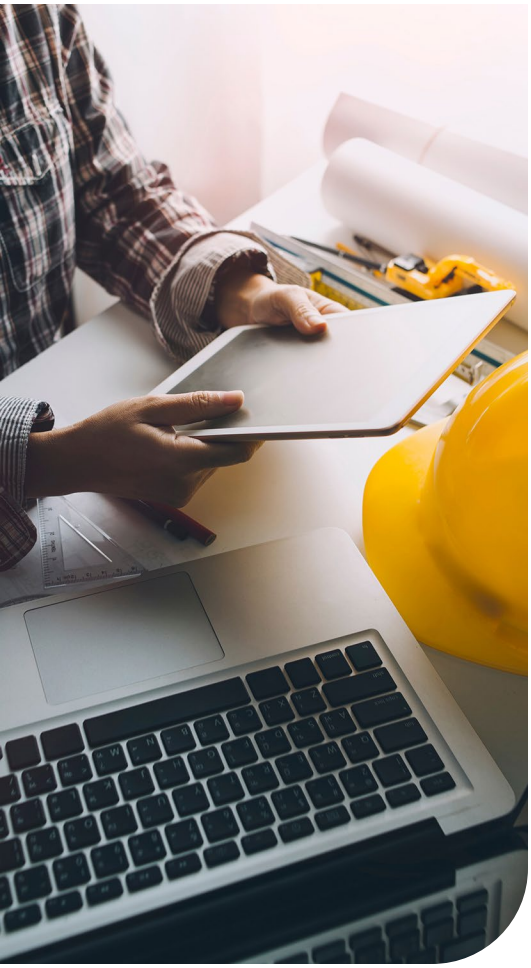
Bottlenecks restrict output. And while a designed bottleneck is intended to make the flow of something more manageable, in facility management, they're often unintentional, and they restrict the flow of work in a way that makes it less manageable. Like trying to slurp ice cream through a straw.

Breaking the bottleneck is critical to managing the flow of maintenance work because you can actually get it where it needs to go. In fact, anyone can. And by making asset data available to anyone who needs it, more employees become empowered to make decisions, too. They can see that you've been replacing the same part far too frequently over the last couple years. They can see that under your lease obligations, you're not required to pay for repairs to a particular asset. Or that the service you need is still under warranty. And they don't have to chase anyone down or dig through physical documents, navigate an unwieldy spreadsheet, or select the right shared folder to find it.

Work out the kinks in your **facilities maintenance** processes, and you'll get better outcomes (from more informed decisions) and faster results (from better **work order management**). And you may discover another advantage: the best vendors prioritize working with you.

Tango Maintenance makes it easy for internal employees and external partners to coordinate work. Your vendors can even work directly within Tango to access the information they need, perform and document work, and create invoices. As long as the NTE isn't exceeded, they can even automate payment.

In different regions your business will undoubtedly have different preferred vendors who give better prices or service. And when maintenance bottlenecks don't disrupt schedules or delay payments, you may find that these vendors are more accessible to your organization.



# Eliminate your bottlenecks with Tango

Downtime always comes at a cost. Whether it's a hard cost like a loss of revenue or a soft cost like a decline in employee satisfaction or productivity, you want to keep it to a minimum. Eliminating bottlenecks is the key to keeping costs low and minimizing the disruption to your operations.

If individual maintenance processes or personnel are slowing down work, it might be time to increase visibility and leverage automation. **Tango Maintenance** helps businesses like yours implement scalable, repeatable facility management processes by organizing your asset data in more useful ways, streamlining work order routing, and more.

Want to see what Tango Maintenance can do for your organization?

**Schedule a demo.**