

CASE STUDY

Profel remains firmly in control - despite the growing number of tickets



More management options for IT and self-service end-users thanks to Freshworks solution

In the Profel Group, every element of the IT landscape revolves around production. For the manufacturer of doors, windows and aluminium profiles, it is essential that the machines in the factories operate reliably at all times. A smart service management solution provides the answer: a solution that enables the IT department to manage the growing number of IT support tickets while also distributing the workload more evenly and placing more control in the hands of its users.

Belgian family company Profel manufactures frames and doors in aluminium, wood and plastic for the non-commercial market. Each year, the company supplies around 170,000 frames and doors to approximately 30,000 families, earning it the position of the market leader in the Benelux countries. Profel also produces aluminium semi-finished products for its own use and for external parties. These semi-finished goods are supplied to various European companies and used in a diverse range of end products: from bicycle wheels and sun blinds to lighting applications. Production is spread across four sites, including three in Belgium and one in the Netherlands. The Belgian municipality of Pelt is home to the largest production location, as well as the majority of the company's 1000 employees, including its IT team.

Industry

Windows & doors

Location

Belgium

Usage

IT service delivery

Challenges

- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- No transparency
- No single source of truth
- Not a user-friendly tool
- High workload
- No self-service
- No central point of contact
- Questions slipped through the net
- Lots of cutting and pasting

Favourite Features

- Self-service
- New-Gen Project Management
- Central portal
- Automation functions
- Seamless integration with Freshcaller
- Customization options

Urgent questions

Profel develops all of its operating software in-house, including its ERP system and control programs for its fifty varieties of production machinery. The IT team is comprised of 13 people divided into three teams: software development, infrastructure, and business and functional analysis. The team is also tasked with providing support to 300 active end users. Incoming support requests may cover anything from a keyboard not working to complex software queries. Questions about the production systems are the most urgent for the team. "Our production systems cannot go down, otherwise costs will start to mount up rapidly", explains Peter Proost, who is the company's Software Development Team Lead and the interface responsible for linking the three teams.

Reducing the workload

Until 2017, Profel used its own system to record questions and queries, but there were a number of issues with this solution. "There was no central point of contact for support, so it was impossible to distribute the workload properly", says Proost. "In each team, we took turns on each role. If you took a phone call, you were responsible for solving the problem". The team was also unable to take actions such as integrating emails into the system or determining contact history. Another disadvantage was that end users did not have access to the system, which created even more work for the IT team. "We were getting a lot of phone calls to check up on the status of questions. People weren't able to look for their own answers in a knowledge base or cancel an enquiry if it was no longer relevant", says Proost.

To compound the situation, the IT department did not have full insight into the support workload. Proost continues: "There were a lot of questions falling through the gaps in the system. Not all phone calls were logged, and because we didn't know exactly what was coming in, it was very difficult to plan."

A functional helpdesk in a matter of minutes

Profel wanted more options to keep support on track and to keep users informed. In 2017, the company compared six solutions for IT Service Management (ITSM) based on 28 selection criteria. Freshservice emerged as the top performer. Proost lists a number of key advantages: "Freshservice has an intuitive and simple user interface that enabled us to set up a functional helpdesk in a matter of minutes during testing. Because it's a cloud solution, you don't have to worry about configuration, management or updates. And you can work on the system from home". Freshservice can also easily be linked up with other internal solutions, such as the ERP system. Proost continues: "Linking systems enables us to read out data for KPIs or planning, for example. In addition, we can also use Freshservice to manage assets such as PCs and printers. If a ticket comes in for a PC, we can immediately see exactly what software is installed on it."

Another significant advantage is that Freshservice is easily accessible to users. "The portal makes it easy for users to submit and manage tickets or check up on the status of an enquiry", explains Proost. "They can also search for solutions themselves in the knowledge base."

Central ticket processing

Freshservice was quick and easy for the company to roll out. "We wrote a manual and had the system tested for two months by a selected group of users. We only made a few minor adjustments during this process, such as adding an extra field to the ticket form and adjusting the automatic response. After a little bit of fine-tuning, we were able to go live very quickly", says Proost.

The system was rolled out in 2017, and since then, all IT support requests have been processed centrally via Freshservice. One helpdesk team member from the infrastructure team now acts as a central point of contact. He logs all incoming calls in the system, answering questions and resolving issues himself where possible and passing on complex issues to second-line support in the software team.

More effective planning

Since the implementation, Profel has processed no less than 10,000 tickets in Freshservice. The support process is now running significantly more efficiently than before. Proost explains: "Busy employees like our software developers no longer have to spend their time copying and pasting to create tickets. They've been freed up to return the roles they were originally recruited for". Profel no longer needs to worry about maintenance or management either. "We get fortnightly updates automatically. There's a whole team working on Freshservice behind the scenes, enabling us to focus on our own operating software."

As the ticket handling process is now more structured, IT is able to plan its support network more effectively and stay on top of requests, in spite of the fact that the number of tickets is increasing each year. Proost is also impressed by how easy it is to automate processes with Freshservice. 'The system allows you to categorise tickets automatically and assign them based on keywords. You only have to configure the settings once, and that's it – they don't need looking at again. Now, all of the relevant knowledge is held centrally in the system rather than in our heads.'



The New-Gen Project Management is a simple yet powerful tool that helps us manage our IT projects from start to finish. It's easy to track who's working on what, what they're responsible for, and what's coming up. The transparency and clarity the New-Gen Project Management tool provides us are key to running projects smoothly.

Nicola Beysen

Team lead IT Infrastructure at Profel

End-to-end visibility

Profel's IT infrastructure lead Nicola states that the new-gen project management inside Freshservice helps them manage IT projects from start to finish. It's easy to track who's working on what, what they're responsible for, and what's coming up. The transparency and clarity the new-gen project management provide them are crucial to running projects smoothly.

They also implemented new-gen project management to manage software releases", says Proost. "This enables us to link tickets to software releases and specific bugs."

Even more user-friendly

Profel is currently working to expand its Freshservice solution. The company is also working on Freshcaller integration. "One of the things we'll be able to do with this solution is to see all of a caller's tickets when their call comes in. It will also make it easy for us to add options menus and set up queues. We've already completed our initial tests. This solution will make our systems even more user-friendly for our employees and end-users", concludes Proost.



Freshworks is a portal where employees can easily submit and manage tickets, or view the status of a question. They can also look for solutions in a knowledge base themselves.



Peter Proost
Developer at Profel