New benchmarks set for customer service

KSB manages 2,500 incidents into CMDB each month in assyst in multiple languages

KSB

Key Statistics

- 2,500 incidents per month
- 8,200 users supported
- 11 Service Desk and 17 ITSM employees
- 1,000 IT orders placed per month

Key Challenge

- Shorten incident resolution times
- Reduce database maintenance effort and operational costs
- Provide multi-language support
- Improve Supplier Management and customer satisfaction

Key Strategy

- Restructure and implement Incident Management
- Clean and classify >20,000 assets and user CIs
- Align IT processes to ITIL guidelines
- Deploy one system to control all data

Key Benefits/Results

- ITIL aligned solution available with multi-language support
- All parties involved with Incident Management working from same system
- All end-users can access information directly from IT service portal
- Automatic notification of critical faults to escalation team

KSB AG is headquartered in Frankenthal, Germany and is a global manufacturer of pumps, fittings and related systems. With a turnover of around 1.8 billion EURO and over 14,000 employees, it is one of the leading vendors in its sector.

KSB operates 16 production sites worldwide (19 including service sites) and a further 70 sales offices. The IT team provides a variety of IT services for the entire company and its 90 employees are located in three German and two French sites. The main IT administration function is situated at the headquarters in Frankenthal.

Challenge – **Move to one unified best of breed solution**

Before implementing assyst, KSB used an in-house ticket system with a number of different databases. The IT team wanted to replace this disparate arrangement with one comprehensive solution and a single data model. The objectives were clearly defined and included shortening the resolution times for over 8,200 end-users, reducing database maintenance effort and lowering the considerable associated costs.

Furthermore, the relationship with the external service provider, responsible for the operation of the system in an outsourcing model, had to be improved.

After a thorough evaluation of the market, KSB chose assyst by Axios Systems. *"The key factor in choosing assyst was the comprehensive functionality of the software and the combination of all ITIL processes in one solution. The fair price/performance ratio was another important aspect. We still hold this view today"*, says Jörg Liebethal, Configuration Manager at KSB. Another criterion in favor of assyst was the multi-language support - as an international company, the pump manufacturer uses assyst in German, English and French.

Strategy - **Improve flow of information**

The implementation started after a concept analysis and data preparation exercise in summer 2002. The aim of the first phase was to re-structure and implement Incident Management. As the basis for a well-functioning Incident Management process is Asset and Configuration Management, the focus was initially on the assyst CMDB, which was to contain all of KSB's infrastructure and user data records.

The review of more than 20,000 assets and user data, as well as their classification into the organizational and location structure, was a considerable challenge. At the time around 85 percent of the asset data was cleaned and by 2008, 95 percent of the data had been brought up-to-date. Selected key users tested the system in the pilot phase and the implementation team prepared the users of the tool with tailored training sessions. Despite the ambitious targets, the implementation project was completed on schedule within eight months.

The pilot system was started at the beginning of January 2003. After a short test period, the assyst Incident Management process went live. The system implementation was conducted in cooperation with the service provider and all processes were integrated and mapped into one system. For the first time, all internal and external staff involved with Incident Management could now work with one shared system.

The next logical step was to focus on the processes within the ITIL framework. After ITIL training and certification of staff members, the IT team introduced Configuration, Problem and Change Management processes. With the help of assyst, which is based around the ITIL processes, the implementation was quickly completed. Further training sessions brought valuable insights into user behavior and preferences, which the project team incorporated in a separate project. The result was an in-house developed web front-end, with which all end-users could directly access the information in the assyst database.

This IT self-service portal provides the users with the following functionality:

- IT order system
- Fault reporting interface
- Change processing
- Knowledge database
- Personal user data interface (personal data can be changed, new users added and contacts can be searched for)
- News portal with up-to-date incident messages

With this add-on, the end-users can, for example, request IT orders via the IT self-service portal and the request is automatically assigned to the relevant service department for fulfillment. It is then possible to generate reports on the financial status of the items or to automatically record maintenance and service calculations. Currently around 2,500 requests are handled by the service team per month and more than 1,000 orders are placed.

Benefits – More than just delivering a simple service

Links and Interfaces

The seamless flow of orders or information to external service providers is a necessary part of the workflow for KSB. Following a change in service provider, it was not possible to use just one system. Interfaces for Incident and Order Management, and for data exchange between the KSB contact user data systems, Asset Management systems and the service provider, had to be established. The service provider mapped its processes into its own system. As soon as the incident or order process brings up a task with the service provider, this is passed to the corresponding system, which creates an event reference.

Always Informed with SmartMail

When placing an order or upon logging a fault, the affected user receives an e-mail regarding the event into their inbox. They are also notified when the order is completed or the fault ticket has to be closed. This functionality is also used by external suppliers such as Siemens IT Solutions and Services (SIS) in order to inform customers about the current state of progress. KSB continuously works to improve its processes and workflows. The automatic notification to the escalation management team in the case of critical faults has proven to be a great additional benefit. If a member of the service team categorizes an incident as critical, assyst SmartMail collates information regarding this event and informs the relevant group of people.

Reporting: Trust is Good - Control is Important!

The pump manufacturer is particularly focused on service quality and customer satisfaction. KSB periodically conducts surveys among its customers and analyzes the results. Objective setting is fundamental to this and the team is constantly striving to achieve these. In addition, the operational IT data is reported on and verified periodically by a dedicated team. All information and statistics have been kept since the beginning of the implementation and can be reported on if required.

Conclusion and Way Ahead

The introduction of the assyst software led to a noticeable workload reduction at the Service Desk and transparency of the business processes. In addition to improved customer satisfaction and up-to-date data, the software simplifies the day-to-day work processes significantly.

As a last step, Financial Management has been expanded. All IT charging is now based on data from assyst.

"With assyst by Axios Systems, KSB is using a software solution which, due to its breadth of functionality and open data model, can grow in line with our company and requirements. Thanks to assyst we only have one database that needs to be kept up-to-date. In addition, the software makes our day jobs easier and I can look at current data at any time for reports. We already have put many projects in place and want to continue to improve and expand the service to our customers."

Frau Brachmann,
IT Governance Manager
KSB

KSB are also replacing the existing IT self-service portal with the current version of assyst. This currently still runs on Lotus Notes while being transferred onto a html-based platform combined with assystNET. The basis for the list of must-have criteria was the realization that the structures within assyst did not correspond to how the end-user thinks. So while the old front-end mirrored the assyst structures, now the IT processes are mapped into the front-end with the end-user view in mind. The interface 'translates' this into the structure and processes of assyst.

Axios Systems in Manufacturing

Axios has been providing ITSM solutions to the manufacturing industry for more than 20 years. assyst is a fully integrated, out-of-the-box solution, available in on-premise and SaaS models, which helps organizations optimize IT infrastructure efficiency, reduce overheads and lower cost of IT ownership. Our focus on helping companies deliver top-line value has been well demonstrated in the manufacturing sector with customers including RUAG, Leaf and Hutchinson.