



STIHL Trims Time to Resolve Critical Incidents

INDUSTRY

Manufacturing

ABOUT STIHL

Based in Waiblingen, Germany, STIHL sells outdoor power equipment in 160 countries and reported record revenue of EUR 2.98 billion in 2014.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Reliable alarming** improves response times and productivity.
- **Tying alarms** to service tickets gives managers insight into how team members and service providers perform, allowing them to spot opportunities for improvement.
- **Based on success** at STIHL headquarters, the company is actively expanding xMatters and ServiceNow to other locations as its service management best practice.ts.

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Oliver Gallus ▶ IT Service Management, STIHL

(x) matters®

xMatters, ServiceNow Are Pillars of Global Service Strategy

From handy homeowners to forestry professionals, millions of people around the world rely on chainsaws and other outdoor power equipment from STIHL. Based in Waiblingen, Germany, STIHL sells its products in 160 countries and logged record revenue of EUR 2.98 billion in 2014.


STIHL's information technology team provides the tools and services to keep 14,000 employees across 40 countries working productively. When interruptions occur, whether an individual workstation glitch or a widespread outage, IT associates need a rapid, coordinated effort to get systems back online as quickly as possible.

Challenges

STIHL prides itself on equipping customers with high quality tools. Until recently, the IT team had no comprehensive tool-set it needed to reduce resolution times for business-impacting incidents, especially during nights and weekends.

When a critical issue came in, STIHL alerted all IT team members via text message using an SMS/voice gateway and via Microsoft System Center Operations Manager (SCOM) in other countries. But managers had no idea who had actually taken actions based on notifications. Nor were alerts connected to a ticket in the company's IT service management solution.

“It was fire and forget,” says Oliver Gallus, leading IT Service Management Initiatives at STIHL. “Did anyone receive notifications? Did they take action? To confirm receipt of the alarm, people had to dial in every time. Then we had no link back to the service ticket.”



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Complicating service management visibility, STIHL works with Service Providers in several locations. Lack of any record about response times kept managers in the dark about how well Service Providers performed on service-level agreements.

Ultimately, the team recognized that it could prevent certain failures if it alerted team members earlier. But to do so, the company needed a more consistent, sophisticated approach to alarming across its many business locations, as well as alerts tied to service tickets.

Intelligent Alerting Launched from ServiceNow

STIHL chose to implement xMatters' intelligent cloud platform to enable targeted alerting across its many countries and third-party service providers.

“As a cloud-based application,” Gallus says, “xMatters would be easier for us to manage and deploy across our many locations. Plus, it integrates with ServiceNow, giving us consistent documentation in our service management system so we can truly measure gaps and find time-to-fix opportunities.”

Beginning with its German headquarters, STIHL configured xMatters in just three days with support from xMatters Professional Services. The rollout was then done gradually with manageable effort step-by-step for each Support-Unit.

“It took very little effort to customize xMatters to our needs,” Gallus says. “And we felt well supported from design through rollout by our consultant.”

ServiceNow triggers xMatters alarms based on predefined preferences for who should receive certain types of alerts and how (SMS, email, phone call). STIHL reserves xMatters alerts for times when issues impact business productivity,

dispatching notices only to the relevant team members. xMatters then confirms whether someone actually received the alert, eliminating any doubt and removing the need for team members to confirm manually. The on-call person or Service Provider then owns the ticket through resolution.

xMatters also gives STIHL new ways of connecting distributed team members. For times when IT associates are not at their desks, the xMatters iPhone application allows them to send and receive push alerts without incurring carrier fees. And all activity using the app is documented in ServiceNow. Likewise, one-touch bridging enables hundreds of people to join a conference line from anywhere at the touch of just one button.

Benefits

With xMatters and ServiceNow, STIHL has made significant strides in meeting its service goals. For one, reliable alarming improves response times and productivity. Tying alarms to service tickets also gives managers insight into how Support Teams and Service Providers perform, allowing them to spot opportunities for improvement.

“Before, the Service Provider would say they met their service-level agreements when maybe they had not,” says Gallus. “Now we have an audit trail and know for sure whether they met targets.”

Based on success at STIHL headquarters, the company is actively expanding xMatters and ServiceNow to other locations as its service management best practice.

“With cloud applications, we will all work with the same tools no matter where we are,” Gallus explains. “xMatters is a key part of that.”

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