SUCCESS-STORY

Sunny outlook for service with KIX

The City of Freiburg administration has switched from a significantly extended KIX4OTRS to KIX. The cape IT product has applications for a number of departments that go well beyond IT service desk functions. The software is also being used in four other departments and in the building services for the city's new town hall. But it will not stop there by any means: There are plans to integrate KIX gradually into other departments as well.

cape IT had not long released the KIX service management system when the service desk in the Breisgau city's IT department began to look into the suitability of KIX in a test environment in June 2016. Thorough testing was essential, because KIX4OTRS was running here with a variety of extensions that had been specially tailored to meet Freiburg's IT requirements. The switch to KIX finally took place in December 2016.

The initial situation

Five years earlier, almost to the day, the city administration had introduced OTRS to help provide better structure to the work of what was then called the help desk. A number of extensions had subsequently been added. Whilst such extensions have advantages, they also have the disadvantage of needing to be manually updated every time the core software is updated. OTRS had promptly lagged behind at Version 3.3.

The Freiburg IT department realised that the KIX standard package already included a number of their extensions such as the area disruption function, which testing revealed to be comparable with the Freiburg repeated disruption function. "In any case, it makes sense to rethink your own processes from time to time", explained Marcel Boos, Head of User Support in the Freiburg IT department. He felt it was sometimes more economical to change previous processes than to extend software.

The project

The somewhat outdated OTRS Version 3.3 also had the potential to become problematic, because updating to KIX first requires OTRS Version 5 in combination with KIX4OTRS 8. However, this did not prove to be a major obstacle. "We ran it all in one go as a single changeover" reported Boos. The additional time required was negligible. It required more effort to adjust the queues so as to create more granular processing. According to Boos: "For us the process of change is continuous."

And it remained so when connecting the PostgreSQL database, Novell's PC inventory database Zenworks, Groupwise and the eDirectory for user data. The latter ran in parallel with Active Directory, to which the Freiburg IT department was going to be switching in the near future. The inventory of the Universal Management Suite of the Igel thin clients continued to be managed in the service management (CMDB). KIX ran, as before, on a VMware ESX virtual server with the SUSE Linux Enterprise Server operating system. This server was the responsibility of the city IT service. However, administration of the KIX application and any updates or patches was transferred to cape IT under a support contract. The Chemnitz company would then also undertake any changes or extensions. "This was important to me", explained Boos, "because these kind of things are forever causing problems. cape IT knows what it's doing and the support function works well."

Problem and solution

Client: City of Freiburg

Request: Switch from OTRS Version 3.3 with many extensions to KIX, transfer all support functions to cape IT

Scenario: around 3,000 accounts, 2,500 desktops (including 1,000 thin clients)

Special circumstances: To be used not only by the service desk but also for order management for other municipal offices outside of the IT

Integrated IT Environment: Suse Linux Enterprise Server on VMware ESX, Nagios, PostgreSQL, Groupwise, eDirectory, Active Directory, Igel Universal Management Suite, Zenworks

Time frame: Pilot deployment in June and project completion in December 2016

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The service desk needs to be able to concentrate on its main tasks. It is staffed by 6 employees, with the same number responsible for providing user support, i. e. for city employees with hardware or software issues. And support entails significantly more work than it did five years ago. There are now 3,000 accounts and 2,500 desktops, an increase of 500 in each case. There has been a particularly large increase in the number of thin clients; there are now 1,000 instead of 450. In the near future, desktops will need to be migrated from Windows 7 to Windows 10. In line with the increase in desktop numbers, the number of tickets has also risen, from about 50 to 80 per day over the last 5 years. However, increased use of the service system is also the result of changes in user behaviour as well as increased usage across the board. So the IT department is not alone in noticing that the system is helping work proceed in an orderly manner.

The conclusion

A lot has changed for end users as well. If they have problems, they can still contact the service desk by telephone or email. However, more and more are using the web portal, which also shows them the status of their report. Or, they are clicking on the life-saver icon (IBI-helpMe from IBITECH), which triggers an incident report in the same way as the web portal and simultaneously passes on information about the relevant system to the service desk.

> " *The service desk already had a good standing, which increased even further. We have contributed to a significant improvement in the reputation of the city administration's IT.* "

Marcel Boos, Head of User Help Desk, City of Freiburg

In addition, users in every department have a so-called customer spokesperson, usually a power user, who passes on concerns. The service team is specially trained in dealing with staff, and two employees are often available as customer advisers for on-site training and information events. "That makes a big difference" said Boos. "The service desk already had a good standing, which increased even further. We have contributed to a significant improvement in the reputation of the city administration's IT."

The outlook

This has paved the way for Freiburg to use KIX for purposes that go beyond IT. The city's online editorial team (Communications Office) has a queue that it uses to process internal jobs and external enquiries. The same thing happens in Geodata Management. The City of Freiburg's homepage has a downloadable holiday calendar with a large number of leisure activities for children and young people during the school holidays. Organiser registration, approval of proposals and general enquiries about holiday supervision all operate on the ticket system. A while back, over 700 city administration employees moved into the new town hall, where all the technology is managed via KIX. The aim is gradually to equip more and more departments with cape IT software.

The increased usage speaks for itself. Boos summed it up accordingly: "We are happy with the system; it's running smoothly and doing exactly what we want."

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