

# MAN standardises its processes in international after-sales

The commercial vehicle producer, MAN, has developed a new procedure to standardise its service support processes in international after-sales. The maxim: IT follows process.

The MAN Nutzfahrzeuge Group is one of the world's leading suppliers of commercial vehicles and transport solutions. Its core business includes trucks, buses and special-purpose vehicles, such as chassis for airport water tenders.

All over the world, MAN repair shops and service partners are the first port of call for MAN customers when their vehicles require maintenance. Its sales and service regions are linked up to the existing ticket system, ServiceDesk. This system allows technical questions requiring quick clarification to be passed on to the central service support in Munich, Germany, where service staff deal with between 3,000 and 4,000 trouble tickets a month relating to all of the company's bus and truck series. In contrast to the car industry, a wide range of vehicle superstructures and retrofitting has led to a huge variety in the vehicle population. Clearly it is impossible for all repair shops

to have an expert knowledge of all models, so they frequently have to call on the expertise of the highly qualified technicians and engineers at head office.

## A new support approach was needed

As soon as a problem is registered, the technical support's first level checks with head office whether the problem is known and if a solution already exists. If so, the enquirer is immediately informed of the solution. If a trouble ticket however requires further attention, it is forwarded to second level where interdisciplinary teams, each specialising in a particular vehicle series, get straight to work on the problem. Although ticket handling at head office is standardised, there are national differences between the regions, such as local



The two new truck series MAN TGX and MAN TGS were voted "Truck of the Year 2008" at the European Road Transport Show in Amsterdam in 2007. This is the seventh time that the international jury has awarded MAN Nutzfahrzeuge the renowned accolade.

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laws, which have to be taken into account. Previously, tickets were created in the local language and then translated into German or English from the first level upwards. In spite of a general decrease in sales volume, the demand for support has remained steady in the first quarter of 2009.

ServiceDesk, the solution currently in use, is based on Lotus Notes and was not originally designed with global use in mind. This means, among other things, that the service processes cannot have further languages and country-specific features added. As a result, processes have ended up being gradually adapted to the tool, since any changes to the tool would have been too complex. It was apparent that this no longer made sense, so MAN launched a project in autumn 2007 to develop a new process-oriented, integrated and transparent solution for its international after-sales service.

### Faster results with structured project management

MAN embarked upon an intensive analysis phase, starting off by identifying the requirements of all process stakeholders at international level. This included all support levels, such as repair shops and importers. As it turned out, 90 percent of the features requested of the new after-sales solution were identical.

The project team subsequently evaluated and prioritised the different requests in the form of a requirements matrix. “We had a list of more than 300 requirements. We discussed them in small workshop teams and the steering committee eventually decided which ones we would include. This helped us to keep focussed and make rapid progress,” explains Christian

Körner, project team leader of the After-Sales business unit at MAN and responsible for the repair shop processes. Although this was not a typical approach it proved to be extremely successful, as the consultants at MATERNA confirmed. As soon as the analysis phase was completed, MAN brought in MATERNA to accompany the project with its advice. “In the end, it was the fact that we made such quick progress and kept within our time and resource budgets that convinced our colleagues of the method,” smiles Körner. Clear communication channels and regular status reports also contributed to the positive outcome. “During the analysis phase we also had a look at how the competition and other comparable suppliers organise their technical support. They tend to deploy a trouble ticket system along similar lines to the way we imagined ours to be,” continues Christian Körner.

### Standardised processes right down to repair shop level

It was clear that the new service desk solution should work with processes which were standardised worldwide and would be available at repair shop level in all countries. A major requirement was that the ticket system should conform to the processes and functional requirements of MAN. “As a rule, standardised processes lead to efficiency. Yet the system has to be flexible, to take account of country-specific factors. At the end of the day, the acceptance of the users can depend on it,” explains Wolfgang Kuchler, responsible for Technical Support at MAN Nutzfahrzeuge.

MAN also wanted to optimise its service desk with regard to performance, system stability and user-friendliness. New

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functions were needed, such as self service in the repair shops. Helping others to help themselves would cut the volume of queries arriving at head office, thus allowing staff to respond faster to more critical cases. Further shortcomings of the existing system were its inability to filter, track and escalate problems – not to mention a lack of monitoring and reporting functions.

### Technical specifications classify and prioritise requirements

For the setting up of a process-oriented and integrated ticket landscape, the commercial vehicle manufacturer sought help from outside. The company commissioned MATERNA to draft a structured and useable technical specifications document for a trouble ticket system based on the analysis results. “It was important to us to have professionals on board for the technical specifications,” explains Christian Körner. For the drafting of the technical specifications, MAN kept to its chosen route and compiled the results in small workshop groups. In the space of just three months, a detailed technical specifications document was put together. “We used less than 60 percent of the project costs we had put aside for this purpose,” Kuchler points out.

The technical specifications describe the situation at the outset and the ultimate target in addition to the processes, interfaces and organisation structures, the data model, infrastructure, quality management, functional requirements, reporting and the schedule. Country-specific features were also taken into account, as well as the fact that After-Sales is responsible for all vehicle series. All of the requirements of the new system are described, explained and prioritised. A conscious decision was made not to look at any software products in particular. The specifications are so flexible that it is easy to visualise the effects that future changes might have, e.g. in the organisation. Furthermore, the technical specifications were to serve as a tender document at a later date. In a series of workshops MATERNA transformed the general wording of these requirements into clear and unambiguous specifications for the IT implementation later in the project.

As soon as the technical specifications were complete in summer 2008, the bidding phase started. Unfortunately the poor economic climate has delayed the project for the time being, so that a schedule for the implementation has still to be arranged. For Kuchler, however, the target is as clear as ever: “The world keeps on turning. Even if our service is excellent today, tomorrow we have to be even better. That’s why we’ll press ahead with the development of the ticket system.” ■

The core business of the MAN Nutzfahrzeuge Group includes trucks, buses and special-purpose vehicles, such as chassis for water tenders at airports.

### Advantages of the after-sales solution based on the technical specifications

- Accelerated processes
- Optimised deployment of resources
- Long-term networking of data and structures

### The company

The MAN Nutzfahrzeuge Group, based in Munich, Germany, is the largest division of the MAN Group and one of the world’s leading suppliers of efficient commercial vehicles and innovative transport solutions. In the financial year 2008 the company and its approx. 36,000 employees made a turnover of 10.6 billion Euro, with more than 96,400 trucks and over 7,200 MAN and NEOPLAN buses and bus chassis sold. Its share of the European market for trucks over six tonnes increased to 16.6 percent in 2008. In the same year its brands, MAN and NEOPLAN, held a 12.8 percent share of the European bus market. The company has four production sites in Germany: Munich, Nuremberg, Salzgitter and Plauen. These are joined by manufacturing plants in Vienna and Steyr (Austria) and in Posnan, Starachowice and Krakow (Poland). In 2008 the MAN Group celebrated its 250th anniversary.

