

# Merz Pharma Group

Internal services provider Merz Group Services controls infrastructure and IT service management with FrontRange Solutions via a central dashboard, which allows the company to automate all of its IT management processes.

## Customer

Merz Pharma Group

## Industry

Pharmaceutical, Healthcare

## Solution

- FrontRange™ IT Service Management in combination with
- FrontRange™ Infrastructure Management

### Modules in Use:

- FrontRange Infrastructure Management
  - FrontRange Client Management
  - FrontRange License Manager™
- FrontRange ITSM
  - Incident Management
  - Problem Management
  - Change Management (currently being implemented)

## Business Benefits Realized

- Faster ticket processing makes for higher acceptance among employees
- Help desk employees save time thanks to enhanced self-service functions
- Definition of service level agreements for external help desk service providers for more control and transparency
- Central control of infrastructure management
- Infrastructure management and IT service management controlled via a shared dashboard

## Customer Profile

Merz Pharma Group in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, places strong value on research and development. The pharmaceuticals company has these two cornerstones to thank for its international success. In addition to its six locations in Germany, the company is also represented in the U.S., Mexico, and Russia, in addition to other European countries. Merz Pharma is composed of five subsidiaries: Merz Pharmaceuticals, Merz Consumer, Merz Dental, Merz Hygiene, and the internal services provider, Merz Group Services.

The company's product range covers everything from prescription medications and personal care products to materials for dentists and dental technicians.

For Merz Group Services GmbH, which handles the finance and controlling, human resources, purchasing and IT departments of the Group, growth means constantly facing new challenges.



Source: Merz Pharma Group; Production at Merz Pharma

Over the years, the number of clients and locations in the global IT network has increased. The IT help desk provides support for approximately 1,400 computers.

*“We’ve taken a fundamental step towards centralized, cost-efficient IT management with the consolidation of FrontRange Infrastructure Management and ITSM.”*

**Christoph Schneider,**  
Head of IT Services & Infrastructure, Merz Group Services GmbH

## Challenge

With the old software, incoming help desk calls could only be handled with certain latency periods. This led to more than just dissatisfaction among employees. It also quickly produced unnecessary additional costs for the average of 2,000 incoming calls per month.

In addition, the solution could not be implemented in multiple languages and was not ITIL-capable. Reporting, which was carried out in Excel lists, was also extremely time-consuming. And those in charge were unable to map the help desk processes.

For these reasons, the company began searching for a new incident management solution that would reduce processing time while simultaneously allowing the control of service level agreements (SLA) with the assistance of uncomplicated reports. Merz had assigned operational help desk services to an external provider.

As Merz has relied on FrontRange Solutions for its infrastructure management since 2003 and has had very good experiences with the solution, evaluating FrontRange's ITSM solution seemed like the obvious course of action.

In the run-up to the decision, FrontRange installed a test environment, which allowed users to test all the necessary functions, in order to simplify the decision-making process for the responsible parties at Merz Group Services.

In addition to the implementation of a stable system and rapid modular launch, Merz also focused on another goal: In the long term, the company wanted infrastructure management and IT service management to be managed centrally with one tool. "Because both solutions come from FrontRange, we can link the two systems together, avoiding the problems that arise from a silo infrastructure," says Christoph Schneider, Head of IT Services & Infrastructure, Merz Group Services GmbH, explaining the company's decision in favor of FrontRange.



Source: Merz Pharma Group; Research at the Frankfurt Biotechnology Innovation Center

### Test Phase of the Incident Management Module

The test project for FrontRange ITSM Incident Management started in April 2008. For this project, the old system had to be mapped while it was in operation. The old data was archived in Access databases, and experts imported it from the native directory into the new system via an interface.

Schneider comments: "Thanks to the support we received from FrontRange Solutions, the transport of our databases into the new incident management system went smoothly.

Luckily, this meant we were able to avoid temporarily deactivating the help desk, which would have cost us a great deal of time."

FrontRange employees subsequently programmed the respective workflows for process control into ITSM. Processes were defined in close consultation with the Merz employees responsible for IT prior to beginning the work. The new help desk was thoroughly evaluated during a test run headed by Christoph Schneider. "We didn't run into any problems while testing the new processes. This phase was particularly important for us, because we wanted to see as early as possible if the workflows tailored to our help desk really worked in the field," Schneider explains.

### Implementation of the ITSM Module

Merz Group Services was satisfied with the test phase, and the dashboard was implemented in August 2008: The current status of the help desk can be viewed at any time by way of the real-time dashboards with integrated ITSM from FrontRange. The problem board simultaneously provides the technicians with an immediate overview of error reports and the corresponding status information. This ensures that IT management is always informed of the current status of the help desk and can react to issues immediately, significantly reducing the risk of a worst-case scenario.

FrontRange simultaneously implemented problem management, which allows frequently occurring help desk errors to be managed as a life cycle. This makes po-

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tential system errors visible so that their causes can be permanently remedied.

The subsequent configuration of the dashboard according to Merz Group Services' requirements laid the foundation for the consolidation of infrastructure management and ITSM. "It allows us to make optimum use of our resources," explains Schneider. "With one interface, we can access all of our IT data simultaneously: the amount of hardware and software used, the incoming change requests, and the number of error reports that appear on the help desk."

Based on these numbers, the specific Merz Group Services employees can define the service level agreements for the outsourcing partner.

### Definition of Service Level Agreements and More Efficient Processes Lead to Savings

Without well-engineered processes and common operations for service and infrastructure management, the IT departments cannot calculate the costs for the provision of specific services and support of particular customers. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to adhere to business SLAs.

A combination and complete integration of infrastructure management and IT service management streamlines and automates the service management process and leads to improvements in the number of calls that can be resolved immediately. Furthermore, this also increases transparency with regard to the overall quality of service and adherence to compliance



Source: Merz Pharma Group; Merz Pharma Group Headquarters

guidelines, while simultaneously reducing redundancies and total cost of ownership.

Merz profits from the fact that the help desk service provider's performance can be adjusted weekly: The external partner can step in as needed, according to the number of incoming tickets, which helps to reduce costs. Thanks to the reports, service level agreements can also be reviewed for compliance, saving additional costs. At the same time, IT constantly maintains an overview of the origin of the incoming tickets, which shows the department which areas require IT support most frequently. This allows IT to offer targeted consultation or training in the future.

The integrated solution from FrontRange has effectively accelerated Merz's help desk. Users now have a direct interface to IT support. With the old system, tickets could only be submitted via the intranet; now FrontRange even supports email, too. The majority of employees use this function. If an employee has a problem, he or she enters the appropriate call number in the subject line of the email. The error report does not need to be entered in a difficult-to-use mask; it can be sent in a short, succinct text. Within half an

hour, a dispatcher at the help desk categorizes and allocates the emails according to priority and type of problem, then generates an automated response regarding troubleshooting. The help desk only makes contact via telephone when the problem cannot be clearly identified. When the Merz Group Services employees responsible for IT decided on FrontRange, they made that decision for the long term: "We've taken a fundamental step towards centralized, cost-efficient IT management with the consolidation of Infrastructure Management and ITSM from FrontRange Solutions," says Schneider in summary.

### Future Prospects

FrontRange Solutions Change Management has been in implementation since April 2009 in order to make the Merz Group's IT landscape more efficient in the long term. This module maps all applications from Office to SAP. Merz is also focusing on automation in this area: Incoming changes are sorted according to priority and category, and the responsible parties can approve them simply by email. This helps to avoid complicated coordination processes, saving time and money.

## About the Merz Group

The Merz Group, with headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, comprises two companies: Merz Pharma GmbH & Co. KGaA and Senator GmbH. Merz Pharma unites the activities of its five subsidiaries: Merz Pharmaceuticals, Merz Consumer Care, Merz Dental, Merz Hygiene, and Merz Group Services. Merz Pharmaceuticals researches, develops, produces, and sells innovative medications for the areas of neurology and psychiatry, dermatology, and metabolism. In Alzheimer research, Merz Pharmaceuticals earned itself a leading position in the field by being the first in the world to develop an active ingredient that treats moderate to severe Alzheimer-related dementia. In the German-speaking world, Merz Consumer Care is the leading provider of health and personal care products with its well-known brands tetesept® and Merz Spezial®. Merz Dental develops and markets synthetic teeth for dentists and dental technicians. Merz Dental developed the world's first prefabricated, fully anatomical (pre)molars and front teeth, the artegral® ImCrown. Merz Hygiene specializes in the development of innovative compounds for disinfection, cleaning, and maintenance in clinics, medical practices, and laboratories.

Merz Group Services unites the departments of finance/controlling, human resources, information technology (IT), technical operations, and supply chain and purchasing.

## FrontRange Solutions

FrontRange Solutions develops software and services that growing mid-sized companies and distributed enterprises rely on every day to build up excellent customer relationships and deliver high-quality customer service. The company applies a unique combination of innovation and automation with a standards based approach to simplify core business processes, including IT Service Management, Customer Relationship and Sales Force Management, and Infrastructure Management. More than 150,000 users and some of the world's best known brands use FrontRange services to quickly improve their interactions with external and internal clients and achieve better business results.



### MORE INFORMATION

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