TNT Express Global Associates Customer Care Gains Agility with Mendix

Recognizing the need for closer governance of the customer service centers in their associate countries around the world, TNT Express central associates team decided to centralize the associate customer care management. Assigned to lead the strategy, TNT's newly appointed global head of associates customer care, Janet Keeling, urgently needed visibility of local customer care operations. After a careful selection process the Mendix platform was selected on which to build in just one week, a reporting application for up to 170 countries.

Challenge

TNT delivers documents, parcels and pieces of freight to over 200 countries around the world. Great customer care is vital to its reputation and success. In some 170 countries the company is either represented or supported by associates and for these countries customer care centers were managed regionally. TNT determined that it would benefit customers and improve corporate governance and compliance if these associate care centers were centrally managed by its central associates team.

One of the first hurdles TNT's global head of associates customer care encountered in realizing this strategy was a lack of visibility into associate care center operations.

"Before beginning to manage and improve the service customers experienced via our worldwide associates, I first needed insight into the operations of our associate care centers," said Janet Keeling, global head of associate customer care at TNT. "I needed to understand what our customers were contacting us about and how well we were responding to their needs."

Keeling needed detailed insight into the operations of key associate care centers and she needed it quickly. A survey gave the basics, but regular intelligence updates would be needed to gain an understanding of real-time activities; incoming and outgoing customer communications, contact channels, nature of enquiries, complaints and of resolutions. One option might have been spreadsheet-based reporting, but that would have presented an unwieldy daily exercise for care center staff. Spreadsheets would have also demanded a great deal of time and effort from Keeling's team to manage, collate and interpret. A more efficient answer was needed.

Solution

TNT chose the Mendix platform on which to build 'MyCustomerContacts,' a custom software application for country associate care center reporting. The company's trust in the platform had been earned many times elsewhere across the business and key people internally were recommending Mendix for its visual, model-driven approach to rapid and agile development. Keeling herself had encountered Mendix in an earlier role with TNT's worldwide special services group. There she'd needed a charging and invoicing solution to enforce compliance with standard charging structures and reduce customer payment queries.

Keeling took charge of the 'MyCustomerContacts' project herself. She has a keen eye for business process and logic, but would not describe herself as technical or as having any software development skills. Her approach was to first document what information she needed from the care centers. Then, she defined how questions should be phrased for care center staff to capture the required insight.

As a part of this process, Keeling approached country and regional associate care center managers for input, which also helped to engage their support. When it came to building the application, Keeling contracted Mendix professional services.

"I worked with a single developer from Mendix explaining what we needed and watched him build and mold the application right there before my eyes," said Keeling. "The value of Mendix to any business leader seeking rapid development is clear and I've not seen anything else like it."

It took just three days to build the application, Keeling and the Mendix developer working together for half of that time to define requirements and collaborate on the structure of the application. A user experience (UX) designer created the user interface and page layouts. Within a week, the application was ready to deploy. Today, it is fully managed and hosted by Mendix and resides on the Mendix Cloud.

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Global Head of Associates Customer Service
TNT

Results

TNT first deployed 'MyCustomerContacts' to some 200 users across 30 countries, planning to extend from there in stages to all countries where associates operate. With Keeling acting as application administrator, she can add users, set access rights, add new regions and make many business-side enhancements to the application herself, without needing to call upon a developer.

Just one month since the application was deployed, Keeling has a wealth of data, from thousands of customer contact records, providing the insight she needs to understand customer care services in countries served by TNT's associates and to guide improvements in the operations of their care centers. There have been no complaints about the application, says Keeling, only requests for new features and positive user feedback.

"Everyone is excited at the idea of being able to innovate quickly and deliver in days or weeks instead of months or years." said Keeling.

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