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— Natasja Wientjes,  
Director Customer Service, Thales Transportation Systems

## THALES

### Headquarters

Hengelo, The Netherlands

### Geographies

The Netherlands

### Employees

170

### Business

Transportation

### Challenges

- Engineer time focused on handling critical breakdowns of near end-of-life ticketing equipment, with no planned maintenance or upgrade strategy for hardware in the field
- Engineer idle time of around 450 hours per month, due to reactive approach to incident management
- No ability to monitor and measure bespoke KPIs for individual customers, leading to missed targets and penalties

### Solution

- Customer Service Management

### Results

- Utilisation of the engineering team has been maximised, reducing engineer idle time by 66 per cent and no more than 30 minutes per day per engineer
- Proactive planning and performance monitoring has saved the time of eight full-time employees that is now applied to new customer work
- Achieving approximately 99% availability by reducing mean time to repair

## Safe, simple and seamless travel on the Netherlands' public transport networks

RCS Netherlands is a subsidiary of the Thales Group, a multinational company providing integrated systems for the aerospace, defence, transportation and security markets.

In the Netherlands, RCS Netherlands designs, manufactures, installs and maintains ticketing and revenue collection solutions and services to multiple national transport organisations. This includes equipment for vending, validating and controlling travel rights, and granting access in metro/tram and buses.

However, ticketing and revenue collection systems is a highly competitive market and that means meeting customer expectations is critical.

Natasja Wientjes, Director Customer Service at RCS Netherlands, explains: “Customer expectations for innovative, high-quality ticketing and revenue systems are rising. Ensuring maximum availability of the transport network to travellers is paramount to their business, so it’s essential that Thales can deliver against stringent KPIs.”

The RCS Netherlands’ customer service team plays a highly-influential role in the success of business, as the interface between RCS Netherlands and the transport organisations it works for. Yet the team was struggling to keep up with customer issues, manage engineering call outs and plan for potential outages.

“We needed to retain our position as the market leader in the Netherlands and saw the opportunity to differentiate on customer experience,” says Natasja. “Transforming our customer service from a reactive function to a proactive and predictive department was key.”

### From reactive to proactive to predictive

For RCS Netherlands, the ability to service an extensive customer portfolio, simultaneously, is critical. In 2015, the company implemented the ServiceNow platform to monitor, manage and respond to all incidents, problems and change management across its customer base.

Incidents can happen at customer sites for multiple reasons, such as a software failure, hardware malfunction or a breakage, for example due to a traveller forcing a gate to open, with the incidents either created by customers or triggered by monitoring the functionality.

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The customer service desk is the single point of contact with the customer, with the customer service team able to review the nature of the incident remotely and only arranging an engineer visit an on-site visit is required for resolution.

RCS Netherlands has also been able to evolve its customer service operation and introduce a more proactive approach. The different monitoring systems are linked with the ServiceNow platform, enabling continuous monitoring of back-office systems and applications, plus equipment and hardware out in the field, driving a planned approach to maintenance and upgrades.

“We have a vast amount of hardware out in the field, which typically used up valuable engineer time resolving breakdowns,” explains Natasja “ServiceNow allows us to plan our maintenance and update our programmes across multiple transport networks, stopping incidents in their tracks.”

Today, RCS Netherlands is using ServiceNow to manage an average of 48,00 incidents and 70,000 configuration items every month, supported by its 130-person team of customer service staff and engineers.

### **Performance monitoring and meeting SLAs**

RCS Netherlands is responsible for keeping the transport networks of the Netherlands running and meeting KPIs on availability and quality is the lifeblood of the company, and paramount to proving its value as a strategic partner. In addition, when these KPIs are missed, RCS Netherlands can face significant penalties from its customers.

“We have a diverse range of customers and that means a diverse range of KPIs and SLAs,” says Natasja. “The beauty of ServiceNow is its flexibility to deliver insights on any element of our service, so we can create bespoke reports for every customer and measure our performance against any SLA.”

Through dashboards, RCS Netherlands has instant visibility of all incidents and planned tasks across the entire customer base down to a specific customer site. Key information, such as how many incidents are open and how many are closed within agreed service levels, are proving invaluable in reporting back success to customers and pre-empting missed targets so action can be taken.

For Natasja, another primary benefit is the visibility to inform resourcing decisions: “For our organisation, it’s all about the people we have and how we apply them. Do we have enough people to carry out the work our customers require? “We are growing in maturity and the visibility we need to make strategic resourcing decisions for today and the future.”

### **Focusing on the benefits**

Maximising the utilisation of the engineering team has been a significant benefit, reducing the amount of waiting and travel time to maximise productivity.

Natasja explains: “Before, our engineers were collectively clocking up hundreds of hours of waiting time per month. Today we can proactively plan tasks and ensure the workforce is deployed productively. We have cut the amount of downtime of our engineers by around 66%, with no engineer waiting for more than 30 minutes every day.”

Productivity has also increased through automation, enabling RCS Netherlands to free up the time of eight full-time employees and apply this to additional contracts to meet rising customer demand for maximum efficiency.

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Thales Transportation Systems

“We have saved considerable time by using ServiceNow to automate the handling of operational activities,” says Natasja. “Rather than reducing the team, it means the business can readily handle an increasing volume of work. We can do more work with the same people.”

RCS Netherlands has also achieved approximately 99% availability by reducing mean time to repair, as engineers can be applied efficiently to the most appropriate tasks through the ServiceNow control centre.

#### **A platform for future success**

Looking ahead, Natasja is confident that ServiceNow will support future growth and allow RCS Netherlands to meet the evolving demands of its customers.

“Every day, ServiceNow proves its ability to empower our team to take a proactive approach and deliver exceptional experiences to customers,” says Natasja. “The flexibility of the platform has allowed us to develop customer-specific services, like a portal or bespoke dashboard, while managing every incident and requirement on the same system for a single source of information.”

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