

NLMK

NLMK achieves visibility and control of the workstation life cycle and efficient IT budget planning by implementing a comprehensive approach to IT asset management with Micro Focus SMAX.

About NLMK

NLMK Group is a leading international manufacturer of high-quality steel products with a vertically integrated business model. Raw material production and steel production are concentrated in low-cost regions and the production of finished products is carried out in close proximity to the main consumers in Russia, North America and EU countries.

IT Asset Management Calls for a Comprehensive Approach

The story of IT asset management at NLMK Group began in 2016, when management concluded that a large fleet of workstations needed to be monitored. In the absence of built processes and a tool to automate IT asset management, it was impossible to achieve

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Head of IT Assets Department
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transparency in the operation of user systems. It was difficult to pinpoint which computers needed to be replaced, which ones needed to be recycled, which platforms needed to have their operating systems upgraded, etc.

Dmitry Zudin, Head of IT Assets Department at NLMK IT, says that the introduction of the Russian-made ITAM system four years ago played an important role: The company developed a methodology and launched IT asset management processes. However, it quickly became clear that the functionality of the solution was not adequate for the large-scale tasks of NLMK, primarily because it does not factor in the complex interdependencies between assets.

A search for a new platform was launched in 2018, the key requirement for which was a comprehensive approach. As became clear at NLMK IT, the company was looking for an IT asset management solution that would allow important related tasks to be implemented in the future without problems and complex integrations—financial management, contracts, procurement, licenses and CMDB. Other significant factors in the selection process included the availability of the manufacturer in the Russian market and the possibility of local deployment, as the company did not want to move their data to the cloud.



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Manufacturing
- **Location**
Russia
- **Challenge**
Implementation of a comprehensive IT asset management platform for monitoring the lifecycle of user workstations at the group's enterprises
- **Products and Services**
Micro Focus SMAX (Asset Management X)
- **Critical Success Factors**
 - + The on-premises system was easily deployed including platform installation, development of scenarios for migration and integration between internal information systems by a single specialist
 - + Microservice architecture and "out of the box" model simplifies information consumption and sharing enabling efficient IT budget planning
 - + SMAX provides lifecycle transparency for tens of thousands of IT asset categories.

"We carefully analyzed the market, reviewed many solutions from Russian and western manufacturers and eventually our attention was drawn to Micro Focus's new SMAX platform," says Dmitry Zudin. "This system accumulates years of IT management experience and best practices and implements the most comprehensive approach, which is what we needed."

Pioneers of Implementing SMAX in Russia

Service Management Automation X (SMAX) is a machine learning based ITSM and ESM platform that has built-in process automation and IT asset management capabilities to meet an organization's service desk and IT service management needs. NLMK IT started its development with a free test version that was deployed in the spring of 2019. The efficient support for asset management tasks, discovery capabilities, user-friendly interface, easy configuration and regular product updates have confirmed that the company's specialists made the right choice.

At the end of the year, the decision was made to transition to SMAX from an outdated ITAM platform. As Dmitry Zudin explains, the economic justification in purchasing Micro Focus was that buying an on-premises license for this product would cost significantly less than the subscription needed for the previous platform.

Implementation of SMAX at NLMK began in February 2020 and deployment and configuration of the system unit for the tracking of material assets were carried out in-house, without the involvement of an integrator. "The vendor was extremely helpful: our colleagues at Micro Focus answered any queries we had," Dmitry Zudin highlights.

The system has been in productive operation since May 2020, data has been migrated from the previous platform and about one hundred users of the new solution have been trained

(the NLMK employees involved in material asset management processes). Now the process of creating and filling in directories is underway. The specialists who implemented the system continue to independently utilize its capabilities and train users. Dmitry points out any difficulties are alleviated by the detailed built-in instructions (Help) for all the system functions, a friendly interface and the fact that no programming is required.

An important conclusion that the company has made as a result of the project is that SMAX is the right product. After all, because it was not possible to automate their existing processes, it was time to consider modernizing rather than trying to adapt the old system. That would have been the wrong way of doing things.

Luckily, no drastic changes were required at NLMK because the asset management processes created in previous years coincided with the SMAX design. This confirmed that the company's decision to switch to SMAX was correct.

First Steps toward Full-Scale IT Asset Management

There are now tens of thousands of user workstations being monitored by SMAX. "Our first priority is to put things in order in this huge economy," Dmitry Zudin says. "Not all of the extensive list of capabilities of the asset management system are currently in use, but we are carefully studying them and trying to apply them in practice."

In SMAX the assets are based on configuration items (CIs) and the interdependencies between them. CI attributes allow technical data, financial characteristics, related purchases, projects, agreements, incidents and software assets to be associated with a configuration item (device) and all this information to be displayed in the Service Portal. The interdependencies between CIs allow you to build a

layered structure from the peripheral devices and underlying infrastructure to the system elements (application servers, databases, virtualization, software etc.), the service components that link these elements together and business services.

The system thus provides a comprehensive view of IT assets and all the interdependencies between them that arise in the implementation of services for the business. NLMK IT are working to fill this structure with up-to-date information.

"Having deployed SMAX in a productive mode, we realized that many of our directories were not conducted correctly or indeed at all," explains Dmitry Zudin. Therefore, the primary focus now is aligning the key information needed to effectively manage IT assets with the system's requirements. The following is therefore being filled in: Asset Location Directory (workstation buildings); Model Directory linked to an accounting system for the organization of purchases of user desktop equipment in accordance with corporate standards; Financial Performance Directory showing cost centers—the Group's companies that purchase assets; Financial Index Directory—asset inventory numbers.

The company also implemented an interesting system capability, which is subscriptions—reserve assets for users that enable a record to be kept that equipment is taken by the owner outside the enterprise. This feature has proved particularly useful in the mass remote environment due to constraints caused by the pandemic.

SMAX provides a flexible reporting and scheduling system and visibility into IT asset management processes for managers and decision makers. "The dashboard allows me to track how many assets are set up in a month, how many are tied to a particular organization and

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what assets are in what phase of the life cycle,” says Dmitry Zudin. “This classic reporting is implemented in a convenient format and is very helpful in your work.”

The System That Shapes the Worldview

“SMAX is a comprehensive integrated solution that shapes a particular worldview of IT management,” Dmitry Zudin notes. “It is one thing to study ITIL books in theory, and quite another to work in a system where this theory is applied in formats and algorithms. SMAX sets the rules within which a complex IT structure must exist and develop.”

At the same time, it was especially appreciated at NLMK that SMAX is a product with “ready to go” deployment. “You receive the product, make certain preparations and you can get it to work right away, which is what we did,” Zudin stressed. “There are no alternatives in the

market that provide such a comprehensive and fully ready-to-launch solution.”

In the near future the company intends to complete the updating of workstation data in the system, which will allow this information to be used to shape the IT asset budget for the following year: It will be clear how many user systems are outdated and require replacement at which sites. In the future it will be possible to build a link in the system between assets, projects, administration of contracts and final budgets on projects.

Another plan for the future is to enable any user to track their assets through the SMAX service portal. The system enables complete information about devices to be obtained and change requests to be submitted if necessary. In addition, managers can control the use of IT assets by staff.