TRANSACTION NETWORK

Service doesn't work today

Not because people do bad work, but because the system is built wrong.
We know, because we built that system for a decade.
This is the story of why we tore it down, and what we built instead.

We didn't improve it.

We rebuilt it from the ground up.

> It all starts with an email. Then come the follow-up questions.
> Then everything stalls. And everybody thinks that's normal.

A manifesto by TRANSACTION-NETWORK

What we believe

Industrial service is broken.

Not a little — fundamentally.

It is not broken because the people are bad at their jobs. The technicians, the dispatchers, the operators — they do good work. They do it inside a system that forces friction on them at every step.

You cannot be efficient inside a system that is built wrong. You can only fail bravely.
So we stopped trying to make a broken system run faster. We asked a harder question: what would service look like if you designed it correctly from the first principle — the machine?

This document is our answer. It is not a product brochure.
It is the position we are willing to defend, and the reason we exist.

The most expensive thing a machine does is nothing

Picture the typical service case. A machine reports a fault. What happens first? Somebody writes an email. Or picks up the phone. Then comes a question: which machine, exactly? Which serial number? Which software version? Then a second question. Then the search for the right person. Then scheduling. Then figuring out which spare part is even needed.

And while all of that happens, the machine does one thing: nothing.

Downtime is the most expensive state an industrial asset can be in. It isn't the service case that drains the money — it's the gap between problem and solution. Every hour a line stands still costs thousands. Machine-hour rates, idle labor, restart losses, knock-on costs down the chain — the bill climbs fast, for one machine. And the cruel part: most of that gap isn't repair time at all. It's coordination time.

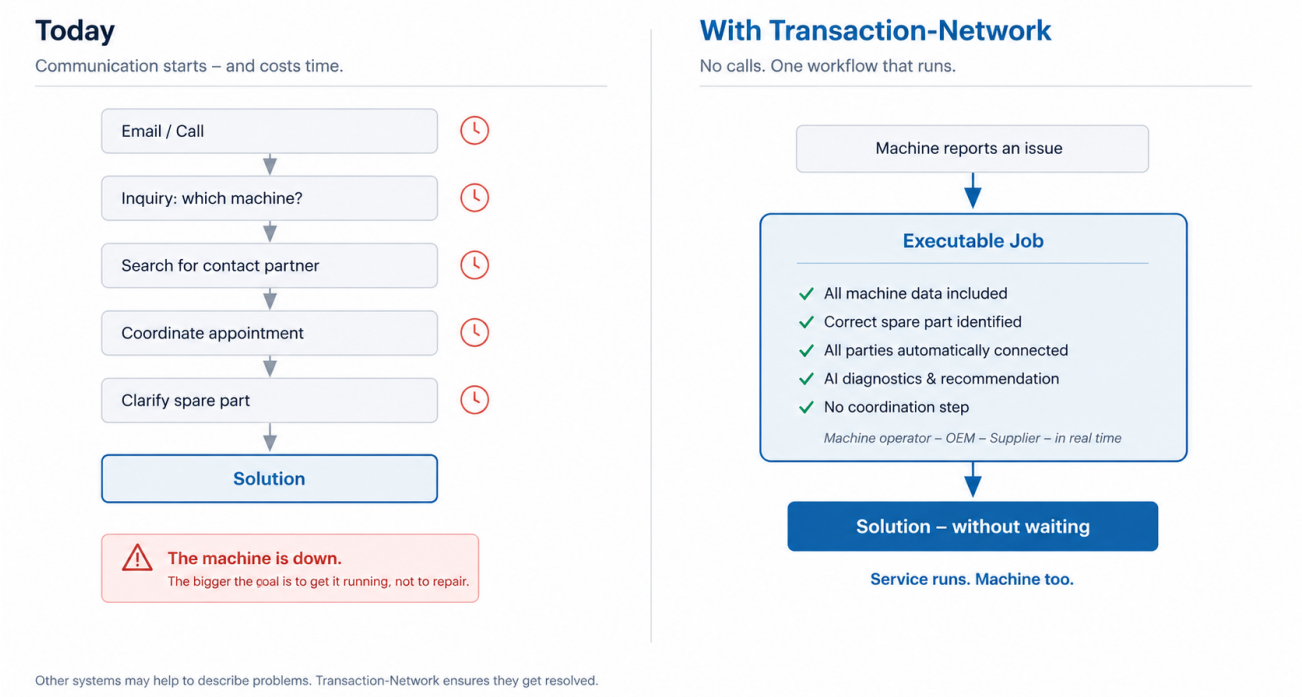

Figure 1: The same service case, before and after. Today, a chain of waiting. With TRANSACTION-NETWORK, a single flow.

The worst part isn't the delay. The worst part is that everyone treats it as normal. Follow-ups, coordination, waiting. "That's just how service works," people say. It isn't. It's just how a badly built system works.

The industry keeps misdiagnosing the disease

When service doesn't work, the reflex is always the same: build a new system. A customer portal. A service portal. An app. A dashboard. Every machine builder builds its own — with good intentions, real money, often seven-figure budgets.

From the operator's side, the result is perverse. The more manufacturers build their own portal, the worse the operator's life gets. Because the operator doesn't own one manufacturer's machine. They own a mixed fleet, grown over decades, from a dozen makers. And now they're expected to log into a dozen portals, learn a dozen logics, maintain a dozen sets of contacts.

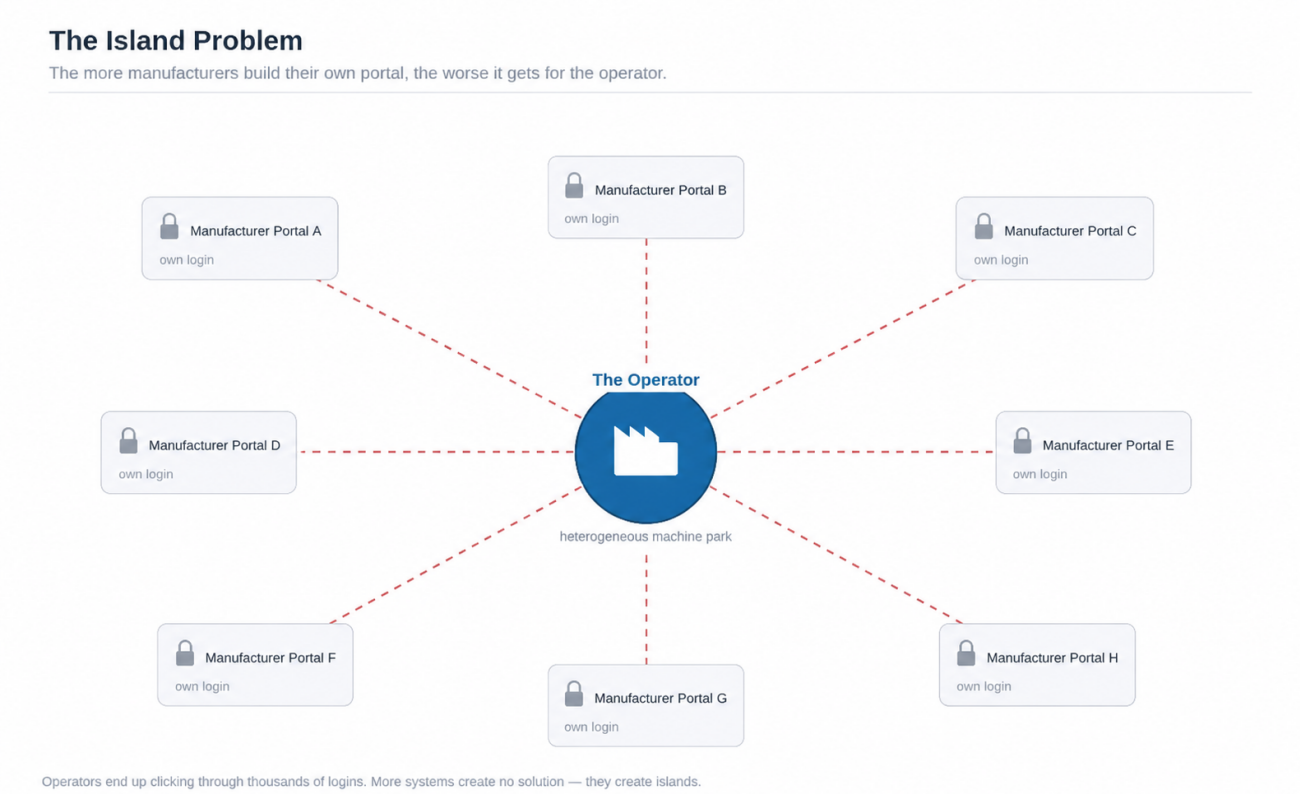

Figure 2: The island problem. More portals don't shrink the operator's problem. They multiply it.

Today, everyone works alone. The machine builder works alone. The operator works alone. The materials supplier works alone. Three parties with one shared interest in the same machine — that it keeps running — and yet they sit in separate systems, with separate data, talking over separate channels.

More systems don't solve an island problem. They make more islands. And almost nobody stops to ask the only question that matters: **whose point of view are we designing service from in the first place?**

We can say all this because we built the broken thing

We didn't arrive at this from the outside, as critics. We arrived at it as builders — the ones who built the islands. This is the part of the story we owe you honestly, because it's the reason we believe what we believe.

2013–2020: a decade of building beautiful islands

Since 2013 we built customer portals for the machine-building industry. Not toy projects — serious systems. Asset management with the full bill of materials behind every machine. Spare-parts catalogs. Online shops. Complete technical documentation, live and available to the customer. Some of them you may know by name: myBühler. myMultivac. KHS Connect.

They were good portals. They worked. Customers liked them. We were proud of them, and we had every right to be.

But we built them **one at a time, over and over**. Every project started from zero. The same building blocks, taken apart and reassembled and re-skinned for the next customer. A project like that swallows €500K to €1M and a year of people's lives. And at the end of every single one, we had produced — with great care and craftsmanship — exactly one more isolated island.

We did that for the better part of a decade. We were very good at building the wrong thing.

2021: the question that wouldn't go away

When we founded TRANSACTION-NETWORK in 2021, it began with a question that had been nagging at us for years: does this really have to be new every single time?

The first answer was the obvious one, and we almost stopped there. You productize it. Instead of hand-building every portal, you build one standardized product and roll it out. That alone takes a huge burden off the machine builder — no more reinventing development, maintenance, operations, and security for each project. A real improvement. A good business.

And it would have been one more island. A nicer, cheaper, faster-to-deploy island — but an island.

> ***That was the moment the real insight landed. It doesn't matter how good your single platform is. As long as you think from the manufacturer, all you will ever build is one more island.***

Because here is the thing we finally understood: service at the line cannot be triggered from the individual machine builder. The machine builder isn't at the machine. The operator is. The supplier is.

The problem lives where three parties meet — and no single-vendor system can ever sit at that intersection without tilting toward its owner. It needs something above the vendors. Something neutral by construction.

So we made a decision that, on paper, looks almost irrational for a company that had spent a decade selling vendor portals: we would not build another one. We would build the thing the portals could never become — a shared, neutral infrastructure that belongs to no single manufacturer, and on which all three parties finally work in the same flow.

We had to unlearn our own best product to see it. That's why this is a manifesto and not a pitch: **we are arguing against the very thing we were once paid to build.**

Think from the machine, and everything reorders itself

The fixed point in service is not the manufacturer. It is not the portal. It is the machine.

The machine builder sells a machine. It lands on the operator's floor, and from that second on, everything is about that one machine. It has to run — in many industries, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For that to happen, the people who work on it have to finally work together: the machine builder with their equipment know-how, the operator with their process knowledge, the supplier with their material. Today they don't. They work in parallel, in separate worlds.

> ***The machine has to run. 24/7. For that to work, people have to work together. Not across a thousand inboxes, but inside one flow.***

Design service from the machine and the conclusion makes itself. These people don't each need their own tool. They need one shared infrastructure to work on together. And it cannot belong to a single manufacturer. The moment it does, the next manufacturer opens the next island, and the operator with the mixed fleet has gained nothing.

Here is the subtle, decisive part. A merely connected system is not enough. Connection alone just means everyone can talk to each other, and talking is exactly the disease from Chapter 1. The goal isn't to link the parties so they discuss better. The goal is to put them into a flow that runs on its own.

What TRANSACTION-NETWORK is and what it refuses to be

Start with what it is not. It is not a tool. It is not a platform in the usual sense. It is not one more system to operate on top of the ones you already drown in.

TRANSACTION-NETWORK is the industrial service infrastructure that service runs on.

That distinction is not wordplay. It is the whole point. When a machine has a problem, no conversation begins on this infrastructure. A flow begins. A clear, structured, executable job — carrying every piece of information the solution needs, and every person the solution needs, with the coordination step that eats today's time simply removed.

> ***Other systems help you discuss the problem.***
> ***TRANSACTION-NETWORK makes sure it gets solved.***

For a flow to truly run on its own, the infrastructure has to carry the full, messy reality of everyday service — in one place, not scattered across inboxes and portals:

- **Asset management & installed base:** which machine, which configuration, which history — there instantly, no question asked.
- **Bill of materials & spare-parts catalog:** the right part is part of the flow, not the subject of a separate hunt.
- **Ticketing:** not an inbox, but the trigger for a structured job.
- **AI assistance:** suggestions, diagnoses, and predictions that move the flow forward instead of commenting on it.
- **IoT monitoring:** machine data in real time, so the problem is caught before it becomes downtime.

And not for one installation — across thousands, worldwide. Because a machine builder has thousands of assets in the field, scattered across the globe, and has to work with the customer on every single one.

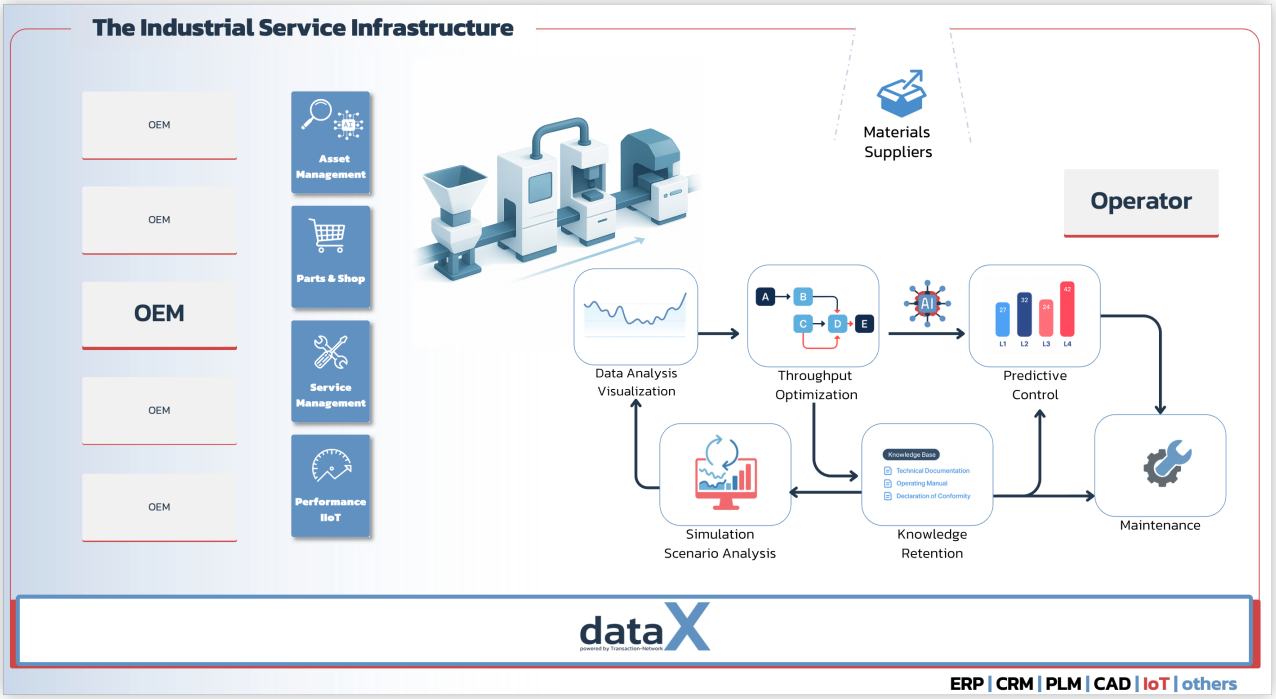

Figure 3: The service infrastructure. One flow at the center, carried by the building blocks of everyday service — neutral and cross-manufacturer.

This is what "from the machine" looks like once you actually draw it. The production line sits at the center. Not a vendor, not a portal. Around it runs a single closed service loop instead of a chain of emails: sense the problem, analyze the data, optimize throughput, predict what comes next, maintain, and feed everything learned back into the loop. The OEMs plug into that loop from one side, through the building blocks of everyday service — asset management, parts, service, performance and IoT. The operator and the materials suppliers work the same loop from the other side. All three on one flow, at the same time.

And none of them owns it. Underneath everything sits a single neutral data layer that already speaks the systems you run — ERP, CRM, PLM, CAD, IoT. That neutrality isn't a feature we added. It's the whole point. The moment the infrastructure belongs to one manufacturer, it stops being infrastructure and becomes the next island.

This is not just our opinion

We hold a strong position, so we owe you more than conviction. As it happens, the industry itself reached the same conclusion back in 2020, in two independent studies. One set the strategic line; the other supplied the hard numbers. (Both are German studies, from the VDMA — Germany's mechanical-engineering association, and the Fraunhofer Institute. The logic, however, is not nationally bounded.)

The VDMA/McKinsey study "Customer centricity as an opportunity for the digital breakthrough" (September 2020) asked what end-customer industries actually want from machine builders when it comes to digital platforms and value-added services. Several of its findings back our position directly:

Finding of the study (VDMA/McKinsey)	What it means for TRANSACTION-NETWORK
Own platforms don't pay off for most machine builders — better to bet on compatibility and standards.	External confirmation for "no additional system."
"Winner takes it all": platform markets tend toward a few winners; going it alone is risky.	Argues for one neutral, shared infrastructure instead of many competing portals.
Manufacturer independence is a stated customer demand — operators fear lock-in.	Exactly what our neutrality addresses.
The value is in measurable benefit, not the platform; the platform is only an "enabler."	The heart of "service runs" instead of "service gets discussed."
Cooperation beats the lone wolf — around 70% see it as the most promising path.	Precisely what a neutral ecosystem is built for.

Source: VDMA & McKinsey & Company, Customer centricity as an opportunity for the digital breakthrough, September 2020.

And then there are the numbers

Where VDMA and McKinsey set direction, a second, independent study supplies proof. The Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research (ISI) surveyed 1,256 manufacturing companies for its study "Digital platforms on the rise?" Three findings back us with hard data:

The island problem is measurable. For IoT service platforms, the large majority of companies rely on their own island solutions. Only 2% of industrial companies use their own and third-party platforms at the same time — and interoperability between the islands is, in the study's own words, only severely limited. That is precisely the state a neutral infrastructure dissolves.

The game is still open. Unlike the consumer world, industry's network and scale effects simply haven't kicked in yet. There is no dominant platform operator, no monopoly. Which means the window is open right now — the moment in which machine building can shape this infrastructure itself, and neutrally, before someone else does it for them.

The value is in the service, not the platform. Companies using IoT service platforms show, on average, 6% higher innovation revenue — and digital services, the study finds, are the decisive element of the platform business. Tellingly, these platforms are used above all for complex products and small batches: the very heart of machine and plant building.

The Fraunhofer researchers' conclusion lands on the core: anyone who wants real network effects has no choice but to cooperate more with other companies and build an infrastructure together. Two independent institutions, one direction.

Source: Fraunhofer ISI, Digital platforms on the rise? Diffusion and revenue effects of the platform business in manufacturing.

> ***These findings are from 2020. What was a recommendation then is now — with connected assets, end-to-end data, and AI — no longer an option. It is the price of staying competitive in service.***

The service moment is being handed out right now

Service will change, whether the industry wants it or not. The only open question is who provides the infrastructure underneath it — the machine builders themselves, together and neutral, or outsiders who seize the access to the customer and never give it back.

Whoever sets the course now keeps the position that matters: closeness to the process, deep equipment know-how, the relationship with the operator. Whoever waits risks watching someone else take the service moment — and that ground is brutally hard to win back.

The beginning is unspectacular, and that's exactly why it's right: service stops being organized. Service just runs.

> ***The question is not whether service changes. The question is who provides the infrastructure — you, together and neutral, or someone else who wedges themselves between you and your customer.***
>
> Gerd Bart, CEO, TRANSACTION-NETWORK

Let's talk.

If you want to see what an executable service flow looks like for your installations, talk to us directly. A conversation, not a sales call. We'll show you what service looks like when you finally think about it from the machine.

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WE ARE TRANSACTION-NETWORK.

The industrial service infrastructure.

Service only works when everything works together.

Machines. OEMs. Operators.

One connected system.

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