



## **Diary Thesis: Customer Support Agent**

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Haaga-Helia Bachelor's Degree

2022

## Abstract

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<b>Degree</b> Bachelor of Business Information Technology
<b>Report/Thesis Title</b> Diary Thesis: Customer Support Agent
<b>Number of pages and appendix pages</b> 49
<p>This is a diary thesis that follows my development as a customer support agent for an electric mobility enhancer during an 8-week period. During that time, we can follow my evolution and growth regarding my daily tasks with new set of tools that need to be used, or way of communication that need to be set up to answer clients' issues as fast and as efficient as possible. The main tasks consist of troubleshooting issues different client may encounter and at different level of business (B2B and B2C). Every week daily notes and weekly analyses will be provided to have a better understanding of the current situation how to improve and on what to focus next.</p> <p>In that thesis I will explain the differences between B2B customers issues and B2C ones and bring into more details the different processes and tools involved to resolve these.</p> <p>I will discuss about the difficulties of managing the same issues but in different countries, and the impact of a multicultural environment in everyday task. Indeed, depending on where the customer is located, the terminology might differ, and the expectations are different too.</p> <p>Finally, I will present the different tasks that are not traditional customer support task as one could think about, but that are still crucial for the company and the customers such as doing translations, participating to different meetings with different actors or even the documentation of the issues encountered and the importance of presenting them the proper way so external employees could still understand and refer to these documents for learning or training purpose.</p>
<b>Keywords</b> Customer support, communication, B2B, B2C, multicultural, troubleshooting

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# 1 Introduction

This thesis is a diary thesis that will document my professional journey for 8 weeks as a customer support agent for a company called Virta, a company specialized in the charging of electric vehicle on a weekly base. The purpose of this thesis is to bring enough insight and information from my point of view on what it is to be working as a customer support agent, what are the challenges faced, what are the tools available, what are the limit curves and limitation to the current position and what can be career evolutions. All these observations are made to help people outside of a customer support position to understand better what the job requires and, and on a personal level, what can I improve and build on to be better at my daily tasks and feel more confident every day that goes by.

The observation period will be (to be determined).

Virta is a company specialized into bringing electric mobility to everyone over Europe, and who recently started to be implemented in the Southeast Asia market. The company operates on two fronts:

- B2C side, where they provide a platform where customers (called end-users in that case, customers are for B2B) can register and create an account. Once this account has been registered, end-users are able to charge their vehicle on Virta's network which is currently one of the largest in Europe with over 100.000 charging points implemented in more than 15 countries.
- B2B side, where they provide a payment platform for their customers (EMP for Electric Mobility providers and CPO for Charging Points Owner), where the transactions made by EMP's customers on Virta's network are billed, and ensure the stability of the operations by providing support to the charging points and constantly developing new tools for B3B customers to be able to manage these charging points (such as naming them, changing the prices, power delivered, restriction of use, etc.)

I work in the customer support branch of the company where we currently are 11 people to supervise the well being of our customers. I started my position on the 25th of April.

Our current way of operating things is to be divided into a queue for a week, and roll onto a next one the following week. There are currently 4 queues, where each has different issues and different level of support/knowledge required.

- The Consumer queue, which represents the end users' requests. It is the one I have started with when I arrived at the company since it requires little knowledge as the main tasks are very often simple ones such as refunds, termination of accounts, and

contacting owners of offline charging points to ask them to check on these. There are more challenges of course, and these ones will be explained later.

- The First Line Partner queue. Like the consumer one, where people called the hotline, and if the issue couldn't be resolved over the phone, it arrives to us.
- The CPO queue, which concerns B2B customers, where issues can be some of the charging points that are not working, settlements not properly done, update of firmware, etc. This is a much more demanding task than simple requests from end users and I started to learn about these after a month of work, to get familiar with the tools and gathered enough knowledge.
- The EMP queue. The most demanding that has every kind of possible issues. It can go from application issue to several stations being offline, bugs, system not working as intended. This is the most demanding one, and for two main reasons. The first one is that it requires a lot of knowledge and in the majority of the case, issue has to be solved by developers, and is independent from support. The second is that because these partners are essential for the company to exist, they expect a quick resolution time, and developers might be already working on something else than their issue at a time, which can create frustration to the customer, which reflects on support (since we are the contact between the developers and the customers).

We use for internal communication Slack and Outlook in order to quickly communicate with our developers our CSMs (Customer Success Management) in order to be aligned and on the same page regarding an issue. We also use Microsoft Team when meetings are necessary.

For external communication, we use Zendesk, a platform that allows us to receive the requests from our customers with a notification system in order to reply to them on time.

My daily work consist in finding a balance between replying to existing tickets, replying to the new ones created and contacting the different services involved for ongoing issues asking for updates.

Moreover, we are in constant internal communication in order to improve some processes and improve the work conditions and user/customer experience.

In order to perform these daily task, here are the key professional concepts that are needed:

- Communication: We need to find the proper way to communicate with the different actors, internally and externally.
- Problem solving: The mind needs to be set the proper way to approach an issue known or unknown in order to provide the best possible answer or investigating it the most precisely

possible.

- Escalation: This is when the limits are met for an issue. In that case, when the station is offline for instance and all the troubleshooting steps haven't fixed the issue. In that case we need to escalate this to the manufacturer of the charging station. It can also be done internally when a bug has been encountered and needs to be fixed. We use a tool called JIRA (which is a tool used for management of tasks. ((Jira software.))).

As for objectives and limits of professional development, since I have been for less than 6 months in the company, I haven't yet projected myself into another role than the current one I have, but I am trying to include weekly meetings with French CSM (French being my native language), in order to receive feedback from them on how things are currently in France, and not just through the tickets we receive.

## 2 Description of the initial situation

The next chapter in the report is a description of the initial situation that analyses the current work, stakeholders, and workplace interaction situations.

Today, for a company to be able to exist and be relevant, there are 2 possible options. Being the only one to propose a product so the customers have nowhere else to go or retaining the existing customer by supporting them after their purchase (Oracle, 2011).

The first one is getting less and less likely due to the fast-growing market and how there is always somewhere making the same thing that you better or/and cheaper. Therefore, excellent customer support services are mandatory for a company that want to last (Qasim & Asadullah, 2012), and especially for the newly created one. For this reason, Virta is aiming to propose a great customer support, the best possible as it is a relatively new starting company (founded in 2013) and it has been showed that good customer support is beneficial for technology-based company (Goffin, 1994; Lawless and Fisher, 1990).

For that role, the agents need to be there for already existing customers but also for potential ones. The customer support is here not only to answer questions but also performs tasks and a lot of different skills are required (Helpscout).

As previously mentioned, Virta operates on 2 level or customer support services, for B2B and for B2C. This required versatility from the agents and the capacity to switch from one to the other quickly. Among the very large quantity of skills that are required, it is important to mention a few ones that are indispensable. To be able to thrive in that role, you need to have:

- Problem service skills (identify clearly what is the issue, and ensuring the customer reported the proper issue).
- Clear communication skills (explaining in common words what needs to be done and formulate as clearly as possible the solution). For Virta, because we do not operate on phone support level, the communication needs to be written. It is primordial to be able to understand what the customer need, transfer this information to the different department is needed, and share the answer back to the customer.
- Product knowledge (you cannot simply answer tickets not knowing how the system, application or charging stations are supposed to behave).
- Time management skills (there is a lot of different tasks to be performed, that requires a lot of different tools, and to be able to perform better, managing time (knowing when to be focused, take breaks, answer to the customer, forwarding the cases) is essential.

- Willingness to learn (Virta is developing new technology patterns all the time, and processes are changing constantly). Without being up to the page can create issues in the answer given to the customer or internally on what the expectations are.

And many others... Having these solid bases, the daily work becomes slowly easier and easier to be performed as we start to recognize the customers, their habits, what kind of answer they are expecting or issue they encounter. And based on all of these informations, it allows us to deliver a better customer support experience and increase the retention of existing customers with our services.

With all of this exposed, the ultimate goal of having a good customer service is to be able to provide a better customer loyalty and satisfaction, which will improve the brand image and reception toward the public, and make it more recognizable and trustworthy, hence increasing the revenue (Berg and Loeb, 1990; Hull and Cox, 1994; Knecht et al., 1993). The other importance of having a good customer support is because customers *will* sooner or later contact the customer support (Roos & Edvardsson, 2008), and having a great one prevent customers to be afraid to ask questions and fortify their relationship with the company. Because the Electricity mobility is a relatively new market, the possibility here is to attract new customers from already existing competitors before the feeling of loyalty or strong relationship could appear between them, and give the edge to Virta not only through the product quality, but with the after part (Blodgett et al., 1997). That said, despite all of the efforts made to provide the best customer experience possible, there are some external factors that can't be controlled (customer's mood, vehicle brand, weather conditions, etc.) and that can also influence it (Heinonen et al., 2010). The only thing here is to provide an answer with empathy and as clear as possible, and trying to educate customer without being patronizing (Bitner, 1995) so they will retain. Frequent interaction, especially in the B2B cases, can also lead to a better relationship and trust between the two parties, beneficial for everyone (Doney and Cannon, 1997).

To summarize and explain what is the purpose of this work, I will try to demonstrate through my daily work tasks how interacting with customers goes beyond simply fixing issues, and in what way this need to be done. A lot of work is required to be done internally in order to provide the best answer possible which is requiring an adaptation time and a constant evolution because the market is constantly changing, the technologies evolving and the customers more and more demanding. Adding to that the fact that Virta operates all over Europe and Singapore also brought the cultural aspect part, and how the communication must be done according to the customer.

## 2.1 Analysis of your current work

There are too many different tasks to be able to name them all and gather them here, but I will list the main ones that are the most often encountered and give a better explanation on how they impact the end users/customer and what I am expected to perform to resolve them.

1. Consumer tasks.
  - a. Termination of account: I simply need to ensure the request has been sent from the right email address (the one the user used to register with us) then refund the customer if there is some balance on the account (for Prepaid customers), disable the account, and delete it. All personal information from the customer is automatically permanently deleted after a few weeks. I then simply need to reply to the customer the request has been done.
  - b. Notification of stations not working: If a charging point or station is not working as intended, I will first try to troubleshoot it and determine what the issue is. It can come from the network, so I need to check that the SIM card integrated to the charger works properly. If not, then I need to fix this, if yes, then I must remotely reboot the station. If I can do it and it works, I reply to the customer the issue has been fixed, if I can't reboot it, I need to directly contact the owner of the station to notify them of the issue and ask them to locally reboot the station. If after that the station works, I can reply to the customer, if not, I need to escalate this matter to the manufacturer or let the owner know they need to contact the manufacturer (depending on contracts).
  - c. Order status: Customer may have ordered and RFID to be able to charge without having to use the app. The current waiting time is about 21 days after the order has been made for the customer to receive their card. If before that time the customer contacts us, we first verify if the order has been made, if yes, we tell them to wait, if not we explained them no order has been made. If it's after the 21 days, if order was not made, we explain them. If an order has been made, I manually send an RFID from our office.
  - d. Unknown transactions: Very often, customers are not fully aware of the terms and conditions of the service and contact us regarding charges present on their bank account. I need to check in their account if they have one with us or one of our partners where this charge is coming from to explain them the situation. If no account is linked, I must check in the SQL database where the order comes from.

If it's a fraud, due to GDPR reasons I am not able to tell the customer who did the purchase and can simply tell them to contact their bank.

2. CPO tasks:

- a. Settlements: The way the charging vehicle business work is that when a user charges their car, a share goes to the EMP (the entity the customer has an account with), and the CPO (the owner of the charging point). Sometimes, the share might be wrongly set up, or the bank details provided need to be updated in our system, for the CPO to receive the proper amount of money they are due.
- b. Notification of stations not working: In that case, this is the same way than for the consumer task.
- c. Status update on station not working: This is once the station has been escalated to the manufacturer. I need to give an update on what the manufacturer has been replying to us regarding the issue (might be a spare part that needs to be sent, a visit required from a technician, a firmware update, etc.).

3. EMP tasks:

- a. Notification of stations not working: In that case, this is the same way than for the consumer task.
- b. Issues with the application: In that case I need to be provided with what is the issue, the version of the app used, and the version of the operating system used. I then transfer this information to our developers so they can investigate.
- c. Report of a bug: In that case, I need to be able to reproduce it. If I can troubleshoot it, I do it and reply to the EMP that the issue has been fixed. If not, a Jira ticket is needed to explain the issue so the bug can be resolved.
- d. Questions about features: In that case, I can report that to our developers or tell the EMP to contact their CSM to discuss about future projects.

Because there is a multitude of tasks and issues encountered, it is fairly hard at the beginning to recognize a pattern or pinpoint exactly what the problem is. Because the EMP queue is very demanding, it is important to not overload the backlog with a tickets to not lose track and keep a healthy attitude. Stress management and being able to not take things personally is very important to be able to perform well. Currently, I still have issues with the EMP queue as I feel I need to provide more for our customers, but can't because this is independant from me. It is a bit frustrating, but I am learning on accepting the fact that not everything can be solved immediately.

Since issues are happening all the time and may vary from intensity, it is hard to put a proper level of performance. Overall, I might be currently skilled enough for 80% of my tasks to be able to resolved them by myself, and require some helps from my colleagues in about 20%. Thats said, most of the tasks I need ot perform in the EMP queue needs to use a different set of tools that we do not have in the support Team.

## **2.2 Stakeholders**

It is impossible to list a current list of all the stakeholders involved into our company since there are more than 180 employees, but as to the key stakeholders that are essential in my work, I can bring more detail:

The payment team: This is the team that is checking every issue there might be regarding transactions, bills, some API related issues. They are here to enable the payment platform to perform the best it can.

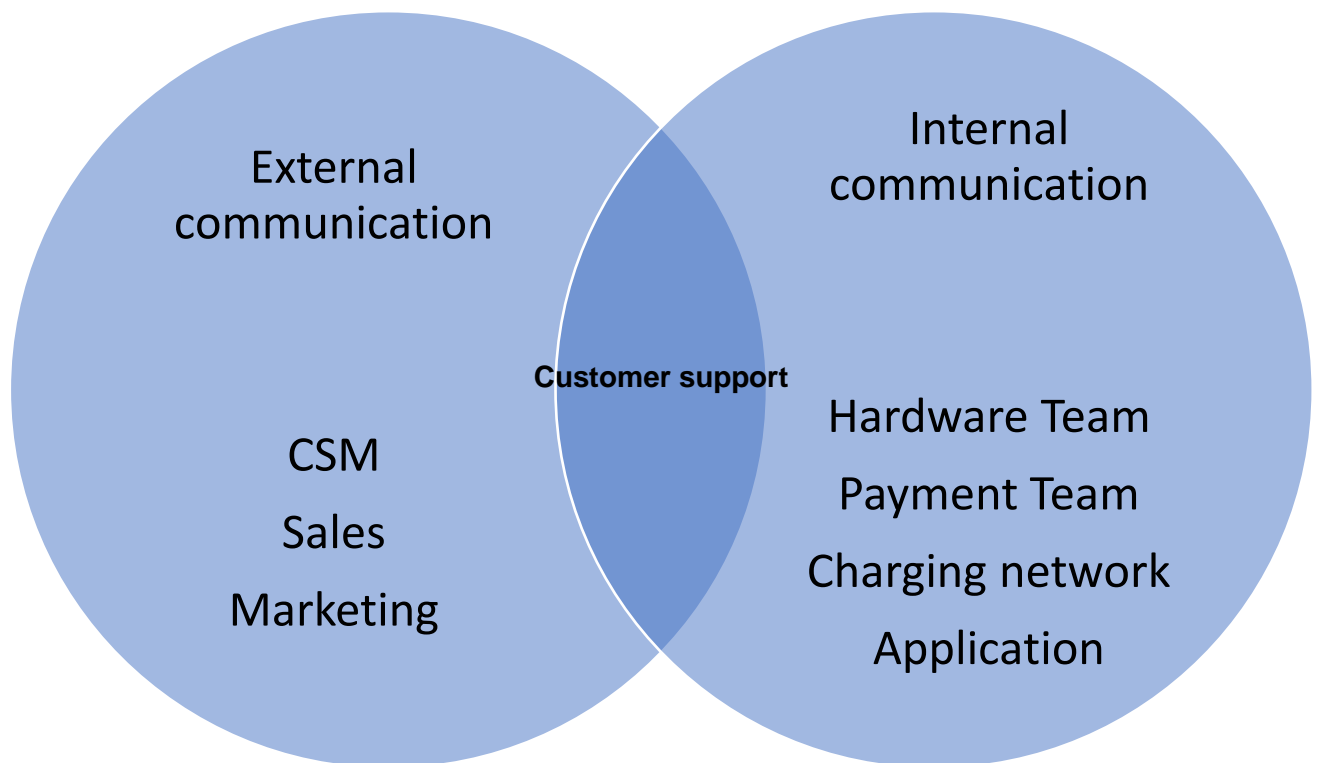
The CSM/Sales Team: They are the first line of contact with the B2B customers. They can raise some issues themselves to prevent them to grow or give better instructions to their customers on how to operate certain things (using our tools).

The hardware team: They are the one helping in case something goes wrong with stations and can provide help and knowledge regarding these issues (recurrent issues with certain models, integration problem, etc.)

App developers: They are the one constantly updating the app. They need to check the features are working as intended and provide a better customer experience.

The charging network team: They are here to be sure that the charging stations communicate properly with Virta's backend

Administrator Panel: They are here to ensure customers are able to use our management tool, the Administrator panel, so they can perform the changes they want.



### 2.3 Interaction situations

We have daily meetings with the colleagues from the support Team, and weekly meeting on Friday afternoon to discuss about the week.

In daily meetings, everybody explains in which queue they are, which task they are waited to perform for the day, if they need help and such. This allow everyone to know the current situation of everybody and is necessary to know if someone is very busy or not to ask for help or guidance.

In weekly meetings, everyone discuss about how the week went, what they have achieved, what went wrong, right, and the overall feeling. We also discuss about if new processes are incoming, or any change that might impact our work.

Though most of our work is done remotely, we have 1 or 2 office day per week where we try to gather everyone at the office (though some colleagues leave far away it's not convenient for them to join at the office).

With our customers, we must explain them if the issue takes some time to be resolved that we do not forget them, it is just that this is a task that might require more time to be performed. We must ensure that the customers are kept in the loop. If the issue is resolved, we just ask them to confirm that everything is in order on their side too.

Internally we use slack and creates thread to bring the issues and ask for updates on them so anybody being part of the slack channel can see and bring their knowledge on this. This allow the knowledge to be shared quickly as we can get notified of progress made and share it with the rest of the employees that might encounter a similar issue. We work mostly with internal communication stakeholders asking them to fix issues or bugs.

The biggest issue is the communication and expectations. Despite communicating often, I have very little knowledge on what tool do the developer use or how it works, so something that for me could look like it takes 10 min to be solved, might take days. This creates confusion and frustration on some occasions, as we are getting pushed back by the customers expecting quick results.

To resolve that, we need to develop more shadowing and spending days in different department so everybody inside the company can understand better what other actors are doing, which tools they use so everybody can be more aligned.

### **3 Diary entries**

The plan decided for this chapter is to write the notes of a week of work everyday and then proceed to analyse the week with how it went, what were the challenges, if they have been overcome or not. The purpose of this is to create a better reflection of the current work, with enough time to process the thoughts and write them down, but in a short time after the work happened so the cases encountered are still clear in memory.

Usually, all my weeks are very similar. I have a minimum of one day at the office that is decided on Friday of the previous week, where we try to come at the office (though it's not possible for everyone, between sickness, working from far away or even having to stay home). The purpose of this is to talk to each other directly and interact with other colleagues which is quite important as a good part of my work is to ask other departments the question we have received in our tickets. We may also sometimes need to directly mail some SIM cards or RFID and that can only be done from the office.

I check twice a day every ticket we have opened with the manufacturers of charging points we have sold, since there are cases that requires their maintenance to go on site fixing the issue. I need to check these case to ensure the customer is not forgotten, and to let them know what are the next step in order to resolve that issue according to the manufacturer.

Because in my work we have 4 different queues as previously explained (EMP, CPO, end user and first line partner), we will have the possibility to analyse for each two weeks of work in these queues. That said, because the work doesn't switch completely from one week to the other, it always happens that at least, at the start of the following week, the priority is to clear the backlog of the previous week and therefore spend less time in the current queue assigned. This is so the current tickets do not stay without an answer for a too long period of time. We are usually 2 to 3 agents in the same queue, the third one depending on where it is the most needed.

The goal tried to be achieved here is to start from a position and compare it at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> week to realize if any progress has been made as a professional development, or if similar tasks were handled in a more efficient way, all of this in order to be better at my job, and able to achieve more without stress or mistakes.

#### **3.1 Observation week 1**

*Monday 12th December 2022*

This week, I am in the EMP queue. This mean the most demanding and intensive queue, as a lot of different requests are asked from a lot of different organization. Though there are the

typical services requests we usually handle, such as termination of accounts or moving charging stations from a CPO to another one, the most demanding cases are usually here for much longer, usually weeks, and sometimes even month before being resolved.

I usually, like everyday (at the exception of office day) start my shift around 7.30AM. This morning there was over 70 tickets in the EMP queue, which is a high number, and indicates that a lot of work is going to be required for the week. The first step for this is to check if every ticket in that queue is in the proper queue. For this, it is only needed to check with which email address the ticket has been sent, a feature Zendesk allow you to check quickly, to sort tickets that are not supposed to be here and focus on the proper ones.

Prior to this week of work, our manager got a meeting with our most important customer, this one about SLAs (Service Level Agreement) and KPIs (Key Performing Indicator) where this customer was basically asking for clarity on a few cases they judged would have required more care from us. This has created quite a lot of stress on our management, and despite their best efforts to protect us from this, it reflects on us as we must be even more careful than before and quicker on resolving issues or at least giving answers to the customers.

I tried to clear the majority of my backlog from the previous week, and at 10AM we have our daily meeting where everyone explains what are their tasks of the day, which queue they are in and the overall feeling. After this meeting, everybody goes to work.

For this Monday, I have currently 1 huge case still ongoing with our biggest partner, and issue regarding emails that cannot be fixed and that is lasting for over 3 weeks now. It started with only me and the customer support agent of the company in our first exchange of email, but there are now over 20 people involved into this case. Biggest issue here seems to be internal communication on the other side though, where when we ask them to perform a task, then don't seem to know who the responsible person for this is. Because it is going to be a hard week, for this day, I focused mostly on clearing my backlog from the previous week, and simple service requests to clear a bit the queue. At the end of my shift, around 15.30, there was about 50 tickets left (still a high volume but manageable).

*Tuesday 13th December 2022*

At the start of the shift there is 68 tickets. I also realized while trying to clear my backlog that my mailbox (Outlook) as a higher number of tickets compared to Zendesk. The reason for this is that there is a new major client in France, and as I am the only French native speaker in the team, the new client is directly messaging me all of his issues, instead of creating tickets. I had to create a ticket for each of their 3 requests, explaining it is important to go through the ticket system and not personal email, because if the agent is sick, nobody else

will receive the request. Because this is a new customer, I briefly talked with their CSM (Customer Success Manager) who explained me they are an important new client on the French market and if I could help them that would be great. Though I still have other tickets, my day as pretty much being solving issues for this French customer. Termination of accounts and creation of a new one, requests to our developers about the application that should be released for the AppStore, and issue encountered with the welcome email and password reset email for their customers, received in English.

Each of these task required me to contact our developers via Slack, and do the communication exchange between them and the customer, in order to explain the situation what steps were necessary to be done, This requires a lot of time (taking screenshots, finding links, etc.) and my day is basically spent doing their tickets. At the end of the shift there are 49 tickets on this queue.

*Wednesday 14th December 2022*

Office day for today. Start the work around 8.15. Our RFID provider service encountered a few weeks ago an issue with customer registering and asking of RFID to not get their orders automatically processed. In this case, we have created an Excel sheet where every agent that encounters a situation where a customer should have received their RFIDs but haven't can add the case and ticket to the excel sheet. On the office day, I then take care of the Excel sheet, and send manually the RFID to the customers. For this, I need to take an RFID, go to our system, assign it to our customer, put the RFID in an envelope and post it. On average, there might be between 5 to 10 RFIDs that need to be sent every week but due to this issue, there are more. After sending the RFIDs, I spent some time with one of our new team members that asked questions regarding different cases, and I tried to help her the best I could.

During the afternoon, I tried to clear my backlog again and checked the reviews made on Google Play and the AppStore. The point here is to thank customers to give us feedback, inviting them to contact our support if they encountered an issue that can be solved, or giving an answer to their feedback. At the end of the day, there is 51 tickets in the queue, I didn't take much of them on that day, I had a lot of other tasks to do.

*Thursday 15th December 2022*

If Tuesday was "French" day, today is "Icelandic" day. One of our biggest customers has recently sent a lot of tickets and is complaining about the resolution time.

Most of the issue with that client is that the questions are very specific and that nobody can

give a clear answer, and it creates frustration on both sides. But for this week, it seems that there have been several payment issues. The biggest we have is that ISK (the Icelandic currency) does not have a decimal system, and because our system is built onto every transaction being recorded in cents, it sometimes creates some confusion on what is displayed. The case presented by our client here, is that a customer got charged for 100 times more they should have due to something and want to know what the reason is. I contacted our payment team, that ensured me that after double checking our system, and asking our transaction service provider, on our side no fault has been done. I replied to our customer who immediately refutes any possibility we were not responsible by sending us a reply in which he states that all the Icelandic banks and a lot of customers are confronted to that issue and that we need to investigate deeper. I replied we need more cases if we want to evaluate them and ask him to provide them. Other issues with that customer were some charging events being faulty according to their customers, which were not (we can check this with the access of the logs of a charger to check the events in detail), and weird transactions on one of their customers. For this one, it was simple, the customer being a taxi driver, they charge their car a lot which explained the high bill.

At the end of the day, there is 42 tickets.

*Friday 16th December 2022*

Today is a special day as we have our 3h long biannual "all employee meeting" where we are required to attend, in which the CEO presents the results of the year, what are the next steps, challenges met etc. and every department present at their turn, their results too, what processes they have changed, new products or solution, etc. Before the meeting started though, I checked our EMP queue and noticed a lot of similar tickets from different customers, after contacting the developers, they indicated us that indeed some changes were made, but they need to be reversed. This should be done during the afternoon. I then took the different tickets from different customers to explain the situation. At the end of the biannual meeting, we had our weekly meeting inside the support team, in which we talk about our week how it went etc. I explained that it was a very intense week personally with a lot of requests from France and Iceland, and that the bug at the end of the week was the overkill.

At the end of the week I still managed to do around 60 tickets which in terms of productivity is pretty good in that queue. After the meeting ended, I had another one regarding translations for our support webpage and tutorial videos explaining how to charge the vehicle.

## *Weekly analysis*

This week at two purposes at the start of it. Getting tighter and better with our SLAs and KPIs and managing to decrease the number of tickets in the EMP queue. Though these are the top priority, a lot of different cases, and different events may have switched the focus onto something different. Even though I personally think like I have done a better job at "ticket typing" (which is how we can have an impact or SLA's), I still feel a lot of tickets were left without an answer at the end of the week, but it is nobody's fault. It simply is that there are a lot of requests, this being due to the high number of customers we are, and that we are 11 agents, counting our manager and our new colleague who started a month ago, and that even being 3 in the most demanding queue makes it very hard to quickly diminish the number of tickets. Overall, it went down over the week, which is a good thing.

I also will need to have a discussion with our French CSM (we usually have it every Friday, but due to the bi-annual meeting we couldn't this week), so they can discuss with our new big customer to explain them even though I speak French, I am not a dedicated only French market agent, and while I do their tickets, I can't do others that have been waiting for a longer period of time.

We still are also experiencing an issue with our manufacturer where they don't answer back our tickets. So, our customer expects an answer, that we cannot provide because the manufacturer is not providing one. This creates quite a stressful situation where we need to chase the manufacturer and hope to get an answer before the customer will contact us otherwise, we can only reply to them the same thing, that we are waiting, and the satisfaction level goes down, which impacts our KPI, which is bad for everyone. Several meetings have been organized between our management and the one from the different manufacturer, and hopefully we can very soon come back to a situation with a reasonable amount of waiting time before an answer.

Finally, the changes made without information provided into our system that has created a lot of confusion is worrying, as the issue was still ongoing when I left work on Friday (around 15.30). These are the situations where a lot of tickets are created by different customers where they should have not been made if properly communicated in first place. This increase our volume of tickets for something that could have been prevented, and internal discussion is required to fix this.

To summarize, that was an intense week, lot of different tasks, but I managed to keep my stress level at an acceptable level, while still performing enough to resolve a good number of tickets.

## 3.2 Observation week 2

*Monday 19th December 2022*

I start this week in the consumer queue (also called end user queue). This queue is the most demanding in terms of volume of tickets. We started the week with 869 tickets when I have started my shift, but first I must check the cases from the week before, especially these regarding I had open cases for the changes made in our internal system. After a weekend of investigation, the root cause was found out, and it was time to revert these. I had then to communicate this to our EMP customers I had tickets open with, while also communicate internally to know when the deployment of the fix will be effective. Indeed, the fix can't be brought instantly, the code needs approval, and being deployed always presents a risk for the global infrastructure, which is the reason why we have time slots dedicated for these where everything is prepared properly. Clearing my backlog took me approximately 1h30, and I can finally start to take end users tickets.

By starting to take new tickets, I noticed a new trend coming in. Some chargers that were disabled in our system started to appear on the app, and a lot of users were contacting us to ask us why these chargers appeared. After internal discussions, it was shown that this issue relates to the changes previously made, and that the fix should not be ready as previously thought. The solution has to be found out very quick though, because when issues are raised by end users, it is only a matter of time before they contact their EMP who contact us after.

At the end of my shift, which was mostly doing internal communication, there are 861 end users' tickets and I have a healthy 11 open.

*Tuesday 20th December 2022*

I started the day with the issue that was finally told to be solved. After a lot of exchange with our developers a fix seems to have been found out and worked for everyone. I can then focus on the tickets I have opened and reply to them and start to actively work on the end user queue. Because there is a very high number of tickets in this queue, I will focus on termination of accounts and refunds, which are between 3 to 8 min per case, making it relatively simple and fast for reducing the tickets amount. Meanwhile, I also have to respond to the tickets customer may have replied, and I have an annoying case from France.

Most of the time in our job with CPOs and EMPs, is that we are the point of contact, but we do not have any decisional power of else. And it creates a lot of confusion between them and us. I have this case for instance where the registration link of a CPO to subscribe to our services doesn't work anymore. After investigation it was found out that a verification email

template was missing. Developers have then indicated me that they need to fill a form to get it back, but the customer refuse to do so, stating that it worked before, and issue is on our end. And here is one of the challenges of my daily tasks, how much time and energy should I spent once a solution has been found but the customer doesn't want it. The case is not solved yet, but there is a solution that could fix it. And I can only report that to the developers but there is nothing else I can do, and developers have more urgent things to take care of. I ended the day with 13 open tickets, and 2 cases ongoing for a while now.

*Wednesday 21st December 2022*

Today is office day, but there is only my team leader and me from the support team at the office. Flue has seemed to arrive as a lot of my colleagues are communicating, they are sick, but my presence is necessary since I am healthy, live close to the office and work need to be done from the office directly. Nothing major on that day, just the usual sending RFIDs to our end users who have not received them on time, removing RFIDs from users' accounts who have mailed us the RFIDs back, and trying to clear the queue.

That said, because half of the team is almost missing due to sickness, I jumped into the CPO queue from time to time to keep the level of ticket on a reasonable level. The day went without anything major, even though there is still this very annoying case regarding the registration link where I must come back and forth on both side despite having a solution ready. This will need to be discussed next week with my Team leader.

*Thursday 22nd December 2022*

Today I work from home, and one of the first request I received was regarding the marketing team contacting me for some translations. Because I am in the least demanding queue, I have accepted to help them out. It took me approximatively about an hour to translate a questionnaire they had made regarding EV drivers and their habits.

Meanwhile, I received a few direct messages from the same EMP from the past week for issues ongoing with their product. This kind of causes a lot of stress because the case arrives to me, and I somehow need to prioritize it over cases where people may have waited longer. Issue is regarding payment where they have insisted on making changes, and we replied to them that even though we can, it would be a bad idea to do so. They are insisting and I did the changes. I then immediately have contacted heir CSM to explain the situation knowing he had a meeting planned with them in the afternoon

After the meeting, their CSM replied to me that they wrongly understood the situation, and that changes need to be reversed (as we previously explained them). When cases are

handled that way, it makes it much easier to be reactive and solve issues quickly. For the rest of the day, I focused onto closing accounts and handling requests from end users.

*Friday 23rd December 2022*

I took the day off to prepare for Christmas, so no entry for this day.

### *Weekly analysis*

This week has been less stressful than the previous one with no case that had to be resolved in the emergency (due to being in the end user queue, but in the end I haven't achieved as much as I wanted to. I wanted to hit close to 200 tickets to be resolved, and I ended up at 142. This is mostly explained though by all the interference between the issue with the system changes needed to be reported again, the translation, the registration link case and others...

Unfortunately, there is another communication issue that needs to be fixed though regarding the registration link where I have to make understand on one hand to the customer that we have provided a solution and if they are not happy with that, there's nothing much we can do (as I'm not even sure they are paying Virta any fee), and on the other, I have to explain to the developers that we can't just "lose" links or materials and that asking customers to fix themselves issues they haven't created is not a good business practice.

Next following weeks are going to be lighter weeks too. Next week, Monday 26th is a bank holiday, the week after, the 6th of January is also a bank holiday, and the 12th of January, we have a workshop day where all the Virta employees gather in Helsinki to have activities together, meaning that I still have another 3 weeks in a row with only 4 days a week of tickets doing, which is very beneficial for the week being.

Overall, it was still a very positive week. I managed to keep a low stress level, and still clear (even though not as much as I would have liked to) the end user queue.

### 3.3 Observation week 3

*Monday 26th December 2022*

Today is "Boxing day" so this day is a bank holiday. No work today.

*Tuesday 27th December 2022*

I will be in the CPO queue for this week and the next one. Though this queue is not as demanding as the EMP one, the issue here is the fact that most of the requests we receive come from Finnish professionals, speaking Finnish, and unfortunately, my lack of knowledge in the language is an issue. Sure, Google translate does a decent job, and we use the tool DeepL (Macketanz, 2020) which do wonders in every day's tasks, but the issue with professional leans toward the terminology. For instance, some organization are going to be written "kiinteistö", but in our system will be registered as "KOy". The fact also that it's not always the owner of the charging point, but sometimes the "Isännöitsijät" makes it very complicated to try to find the ramification to see if this person is allowed to receive information or bring some modification to the system, since for GDPR reasons we cannot do any changes not explicitly asked by the owner of the charging point.

For this week, my 3 oldest colleagues at the company are on holiday, which will make it very challenging for resolving confusing cases and for the translation part.

For this week, I have decided that instead of clearing as much as I could, I will just maintain the queue level under 30 tickets and take new ones only when the level will increase. This will allow me to focus on clearing my current backlog and answer questions from my other colleagues as I will be the second agent with the most experience for this week.

*Wednesday 28th December 2022*

Today is office day for me even though it was not explicitly asked. Reason for this is that we still need to send some RFIDs from the office and our IT department had some questions about our process to handle some cases, and it's easier to explain them sitting next to them instead of doing it remotely.

The queue level is still relatively low, probably due to the holiday season and we receive just a few requests per day which let me do other things.

After a discussion with a colleague from another department, it taught me that we currently have a tool to manually invoice customers who couldn't be billed on time, which is clearly a game changer for us. Up to today, we needed to fill an Excel sheet with the information of the customer, the ticket number, wait the approval of a member from the payment Team to have a look at it, let that payment go through the database to manually invoice the customer,

verify the excel sheet and communicate this with the customer. This process could take up to days, sometimes even weeks.

Now that I have learned about that tool, my first reflex has been to discuss about it with the other team members as this greatly improves our quality of work. Though half of the Team is missing, it's simple to bring the subject even though a proper training will be needed for after. The main issue here is that though not all agents have access to that tool, as there is a restriction to use it based on the number of characters the username has, and majority of the agents go over that limit. This feature needs to be discussed and resolved.

The day ends where I didn't do many tickets, but simply having this talk and demonstration will make us save plenty of time and potential mistakes into the future, so this was a great long-term investment done.

*Thursday 29th December 2022*

Today is like the other days, at the exception our team leader is here. This doesn't change much, except the possibility to ask a few questions, but nothing major appeared that day. At the same time, we keep receiving requests for settlements and billing issue, but at the end of the month, our financial department is right in the middle of the process of sending these, so there is nothing more to do that just replying to the customer to be patient and that the process is currently ongoing. Because the level of current ticket in the CPO queue is still under 30, and that the cases left in my backlog need my missing colleagues to be here (for knowledge or use of tools I do not have access), I went back to help a bit into the consumer queue that went close to a thousand tickets. I managed to take easy and fast tickets cases to clear a bit and not being cramped by cases that I would have to carry over a long period of time, as between the current CPO tickets took this week, and the backlog still ongoing I could very soon arrive to a situation where it becomes almost impossible to manage everything.

I received at the end of the day a request from one of our French CSM for an escalation to the manufacturer of 31 of our chargers that are currently offline. After checking and verifying that there was no communication issue and that the SIM card was not responsible and ensuring that the maintenance person from the CPO has done the troubleshooting steps required by the manufacturer, it is decided to escalate each charger to the manufacturer. This is a long process because I need to fill a form for each charger, and not just one in which I could put all the chargers. It took me about 1h30 of copy pasting information from our system to the tickets to manage to finish this.

*Friday 30th December 2022*

Last day of the week, of the month and of the year.

I started the day by checking all the ongoing current tickets escalated to the manufacturer done the previous day to check if some more information was required.

At the same time, one of our customers is still having issue with their charger they reported in September. The issue here is the lack of communication with the manufacturer who does not necessarily reply to our message and creates a lot of frustration with the customer. In this case, the manufacturer came twice on site, but after each visit, a new problem occurred. I decide to then report this to our logistic team and ask if it wouldn't simply be easier at some point to change the charger, as we need to pay a fee for each visit since the chargers are still under warranty. I got a reply that a meeting is planned for next week with the customer to discuss about this.

Meanwhile, our app developers are releasing a new version of the app and need a translation for the different countries it is released in and since our French translator is on holiday, I have been chosen to perform the translation. The issue here is that we are limited to 500 characters and using DeepL to translate from English to French the base document, we arrive to 965 characters. A lot of improvements need to be done, trying to not lose any information given at the same time. It took me about 45 min, but I managed to trimmer this to 493 characters, which fits.

The afternoon is straight forward. No events, just checking the tickets ongoing and clearing queues left and right.

### *Weekly analysis*

This week was special for two main reasons. The first being that more than half of the team is on holiday, and the second that this is toward the end of the year, where not only in our workplace but probably everywhere, the motivation is harder to find and the requests from customer not as numerous. The key here was to still manage to do some work despite the conditions mentioned and not overwhelm for the start of the next year.

The week really took a good turn after the meeting with the colleague from the payment team, because the support team was clearly lacking such a tool for the invoices which is going to make our work life much easier and avoid mistakes. Now, we simply need a proper training on how to fully use the tool, even though I managed to grasp most of it, and transfer the knowledge to my colleagues.

The main issue for that week though was that again, the escalation of tickets to the manufacturers is still not reliable and not efficient as it should be. This creates frustration with the customers who keep asking for updates, or even internally, where we have to very often remind the manufacturer, they have tickets ongoing, and we need to bring an answer. This is something that definitely needs to be solved for next year as this is a major part of our work.

Overall that week was fairly short, due to the one day off and the schedule of the end of the year, and even though I have not performed a huge number of tickets for that week, simply the invoice tool discussion itself was worth of that week.

### **3.4 Observation week 4**

*Monday 2nd January 2023*

Second week in a row in the CPO queue. This week should in theory be manageable for at least two reasons. The support team is back at operating at full efficiency and because it is still the holiday season for this week, the number of tickets and request should not increase yet. Motivation is again quite low for this week, probably due to the fact it is still the holiday period and that spending two weeks in a row in the same queue can bring a feeling of lassitude (even though it is necessary, based on colleague's schedule and needs).

I start the week by replying to the tickets from the previous week, and for this one too, I will try to manage the queue under 30 tickets instead of trying to clear it. The reason for this is that there are still some questions where I need answers from people from other departments, and they are currently unavailable (sickness or holiday). That said, I have checked these tickets, and created the threads in Slack, in the proper channel of communication, so if I am unable to pick the ticket for this week, someone else should be able to the following ones by checking the thread and follow the instructions given there. The issue is that if I start to take all the tickets, I have created the thread with, I'll have a backlog that is not manageable.

Because most of the tickets in that queue are in Finnish like previously explained, the return of my colleagues allows me to take new cases that do not require an external intervention. So, for this Monday, nothing special, trying to maintain the queue under 30 tickets and answering the existent discussions I have with cases opened. I also checked the tickets I had escalated to the manufacturer on Thursday and no answer yet.

*Tuesday 3rd January 2023*

As expected, the motivation is not there yet, and it's also the second day of the year, meaning that all the JIRA escalation tickets for bug fixed or task that required a work from the developers are getting delayed due to more pressing needs. This creates some frustration, even though it is perfectly understandable, but I have to reply to the customer that there cases are still ongoing work and we can't yet solve their issue.

I also received an answer from our manufacturers. One case that was ongoing from September seems to finally come to a resolution. The charger was fixed several times in the past, but always had another issue arriving straight after. It started with an error code that indicates that a spare part needed to be replaced. After it got replaced, the coolant liquid was not enough to assure a proper charging event for the vehicle. Then they refilled the reservoir, but after that there was still some issues with the power delivered. Once that was fixed, the RFID (Radio-frequency identification) reader stopped working. But now I got confirmation from the manufacturer that everything was back to normal. I replied this to the customer, who explained me he will check on site directly if everything works properly as they are on holiday now. The issue with that kind of situation is that us, as the middleman, we have to transfer information between the two parties, but a lot of time is lost in the communication. Then the manufacturer needs to dispatch one of their technicians on site, which takes time, and cost money also.

The other manufacturer has replied to me regarding the 31 tickets created with 2 options, either we return the 31 faulty stations, or they can remotely help the maintenance person of these charging points to help them to fix the issue. They do not have any technician to dispatch. I informed the customer who doesn't seem to understand none of the technician from the manufacturer can come on site, and that I need for him to give me a proper answer and choose one of the two options so I can inform the manufacturer.

This took me a good portion of the day, as I had to handle the communication for the 31 tickets. Meanwhile, doing a few other tickets regarding moving stations under a different organization so they can have control of these, and sending reminders in Slack for the ongoing threads created last week.

*Wednesday 4th January 2023*

Today is the office day. And the day starts in a very busy way. Several customers (end users) are waiting for RFIDs delivery that I need to send from the office, other customers (EMPs) are waiting for some SIM cards to be sent from the office. And all of these SIM cards need to manually be set up with the correct communication plan, rate plan, and customer ID. This takes me approximately the whole morning. In the afternoon, after a discussion with our IT manager, she informs me of a person I could be in touch with regarding several of my

cases. Thankfully this person is at the office, and I exposed him my issue. We have several customers contacting us as they are private companies or public ones who want to offer our services as benefits for their employees. From the start, we have been told in that case, to create these companies as we would create a normal end user, and the company card to be linked to the account. The issue here lays with the RFIDs. On our side, if a “customer” (a company in that case) has several RFIDs all linked to the same account, it impacts our statistic reports and doesn’t reflect the consumption for everyone (all the RFIDs being linked to one account, this data appears as for 1 customer only). A second issue appears here and is about how to order RFID in bulk. Indeed, for end users, the current process is to go to the app, order an RFID, this go through or RFID providers as a pending order, and only once they have received the order, confirmed it had been paid, and they checked they had enough in stock, the order goes to be processed, and a second RFID can be ordered. RFIDs can be ordered only one by one with that process and the pending status can last several days. This create issues for companies that need to order a large quantity of RFIDs at once as they must do it manually and wait for the next one to be processed, etc. which can take up month. After a discussion with our Head of product, mobility service provider, he informed me that a new product was recently released that is designed for these cases. Because the product has been recently launched, there is no current process yet fully developed, but he informed me to forward him by email all the tickets related to such a case, and the ones from already existing “customer” in that situation to see if it possible to move them under that new product. This is a big relief as we have not a huge amount of these cases daily, but enough to create some issues in the way we were handling them and providing them services.

*Thursday 5th January 2023*

Last day of the week as tomorrow will be a bank holiday, and last day in the CPO queue (even though I barely could take any tickets this week). I still have not received an answer from the CPO for his 31 offline charging stations which will create an issue for next week, as the manufacturer has an automatic closing system of tickets of no answer as been provided after a week. There is still time, but I absolutely need an answer from the CPO to be able to provide it to the manufacturer.

Meanwhile, we received a document supposedly giving us instructions and some sort of training for the manual invoicing tool we discovered the week before. After internal discussion, though everybody agrees on how this could facilitate our daily job, we also agree that this could be a step into the direction where more and more responsibilities are given to the support team, and since I have been working, we have seen only more and more responsibilities coning to us, but none on the other way. Though we also agree that

everybody is extremely busy, and we might be demanding a lot sometimes, if we continue in that direction, more tasks will be given to us and increase our workload which is already very high. We agreed to discuss more in detail about this with the payment team as we would need a proper training about that tool and some guarantees that this won't become a trend into giving us tasks related with that tool that we should not perform usually.

For the rest of the day, I will focus on the settlements and billing issue cases we have encountered for the week. This is a tricky period to ask for some input because most of the invoices are done automatically, and our finance department is extremely busy at the end and start of every month due to the invoicing process. So for each issue we raise, this one might have been solved already with the current ongoing process of billing, and there is no possibility to know for sure before the end of it (which usually arrives around the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month). It is still important though to notify at least the retroactive settlements (when customer did not have the settlements activated for instance) as these ones are not automatically detected by our system and need to be performed manually.

*Friday 6th January 2023*

Today is a bank holiday in Finland but not elsewhere. No work today, but probably tickets still incoming for next week.

*Weekly analysis*

This week started very slowly and with not so much motivation but improved through the week to find some normal routine again. There are two major events for this one, the escalation to the manufacturer that is still a very repetitive and error prone process, requiring a lot of attention and very time consuming, and my discussion about the new product for organization wishing to provide their employees with E-mobility services.

Even though this was not the most productive week in terms of tickets done, it was still a very positive one, as it tackled on recurring issue, and fortified the possibility of a change for the manual invoicing process. It's been 2 weeks in a row now that going to the office allows me to directly talk with people from other departments, during breaks or at lunch, and two times it brought positive feedback and potentially improving our daily job routine. I guess on a personal level, because I have been there for quite some time now, and I start to be able to know enough of my work that I can discuss about it directly with other departments, I will try to be more involved into regular meetings with the different departments to bring my opinion and try to make things move faster.

### **3.5 Observation week 5**

*Monday 9th January 2023*

For this week, I will be in the consumer queue. Even though there is a lot of work to be done (I start the week with over 1100 unanswered tickets and some tickets are from November), it is much more “easier” to operate in this queue. Tasks are pretty straight forward. Account cancellation for the majority of these, and those that have an issue regarding payment or reporting an offline charger usually have been fixed themselves automatically. The most complicated thing here is to find a balance of when to answer the ticket to the customer and when to simply let it go if the issue has been fixed. Indeed, if a ticket was created over 2 months ago, about an issue that was resolved a few days after the ticket was created, answering the ticket that late can create some frustration to the customer. Instead, we can simply verify the issue is resolved, and close the ticket.

For this week, because we have a lot of tickets, I will focus mainly on account cancellation. After a discussion with our team, we agreed though that since the process for the manual invoicing and cancellation of accounts linked to that is not clearly stated and that there is still the character limit issue, we will continue to use the former process and add the accounts that need manual invoice to the excel sheet. More manual work for everyone, but we cannot risk making mistakes.

Before doing that, I must first answer the replies sent over the 3 days weekend, and I start the day with currently 33 emails of answers or new cases assigned to me. It took me the whole morning to first stabilize and answer them before starting to work on the consumer queue.

*Tuesday 10th January 2023*

Today is similar to yesterday. Just keep continuing onto clearing the consumer queue as fast as possible. That said, because I do speak French, I started to also receive tickets from EMPs that have been directly assigned to me through. This is an issue because the ticket creation is indispensable for us, as it not only gives us a proof that something as be required to be modified, but also in case someone is sick, others can have access to it and answer the ticket. The issue with France is also based on the cultural part where French customers are expecting an answer in French and dealing with a French agent. I need during my weekly meeting to bring that up with our CSMs to explain this, and how it's a bad practice and I can't be available everyday as I have other tasks and that EMPs need to use the proper channel to communicate. This also causes me some stress as I sometimes am assigned tickets I have absolutely no knowledge about, or tasks required to be performed

where actually support should not be involved. The main issue here is the expectations and how they should be tempered on the customer's side and be better inform on what we can and can't help with. The CSMs though are unavailable for today as they are travelling to Helsinki where we have our annual "Winter day" this Thursday where all the employees are required to participate. This event is about giving the direction for the year and what has been made in the previous one. If I have some time on Thursday, I will try to mention this.

*Wednesday 11th January 2023*

Today is office day, and even though no RFIDs nor SIM cards need to be sent according to our file, it is still important to have a presence at the office at least once a week. The day goes well, until one of the French CSM calls me on Slack.

He's explaining me the reason why I keep receiving a lot of tickets from one particular EMP in France, that they are a potential big customer in the future and that though it is frustrating, this customer needs to be taken very well. I explained him that I can take the tickets in priority if needed, but that I would need the approval of my team leader first as this was not required for me when I started my position here. I usually have been doing it when I do not have something urgent to do, but if I am already extremely busy, I simply cannot drop everything and take that customer as a priority. It also sends a bad signal for my colleagues, as if I start doing things that are not required, this increase the expectations of what support can do, and put more pressure on them. The call ends when he explains me that one of the other customers is in a big financial situation trouble. I told him we are aware of that, and we were specifically asked to stop dealing with them. He was very surprised and upset as according to him, despite having a customer not paying us, we have a contract that "forces" us to support the client. After reporting that to my boss, she told me that this was decided by the French sales representant in France and the CSM leader. Once again, communication issue that need to be addressed, where we still should not take tickets according to the management, but according to that CSM we should.

So far, the week has been with ups and down, but I still manage to clear the queue fairly well with my colleague and we are currently under 800 tickets in the queue.

*Thursday 12th January 2023*

Today is the "Winter day". Event starts at 12.30 and ends after 18. But because I want to keep clearing the queue, I started my shift at 7:00 to answer customers I won't be able for the rest of the day and keep cancelling accounts. I did that for about 3h before moving onto the center and have lunch with my colleagues before going to the event.

Once at the event, we have the schedule and topics that will be brought up. Broad overview

of the company's achievements for this year and objectives for the next one presented by our CEO. Then a presentation from our Chief Sales Officer about the current targets and how we solidified our position on the market. Then our Chief product officer elaborated on the new products that will be revealed this year and how they will fit a larger group of potential customers, followed by our Chief Financial officer presenting us the financial result of the year, with some great achievements and lot of technical terms I am unfamiliar with. Then our customer success and delivery manager explained us we have new partners for the hardware part and what processes need to be updated, removed or created. Then this was concluded by our Brand communication director on how they are trying to improve the marketing and reach out new customers. This took about 4h of presentation with a lot of useful information for the support team. Once the presentations are over, a workshop is organized where each department has to select a topic among those proposed by our board, and how we can have an impact on them. For the support Team, our goal is to improve the customer experience and satisfaction level, and we exposed that we have several tools available such as the FAQ (that probably needs to be updated) being aligned on our answers to customers, and possibility to create different level of support for different fees (phone support, faster response time, dedicated agents, etc.)

Once the workshop is over, it is time for celebration and we have a dinner with the rest of the company and an after party. The workshop ended at 18.

*Friday 13th January 2023*

Last day of the week. I did not have time to discuss with the CSMs about my issues and ticket creation process, and new tasks are incoming. Because I couldn't answer customers yesterday afternoon, a lot of new replies have arrived and need an answer. It takes me again the whole morning before being able to start working on the consumer queue again. Most of the employees have also taken a day off there either to travel back home or to have a long weekend, but that does not impact me at first. Issue arrives in the afternoon where our main tool, our administrator panel, used for creation, checking and deletion of customers and organizations is down. This massively impact our workday as we cannot work not using that tool and it requires a fix. That said, because most of our developers are not available today, the fix is not coming and it is only a matter of time before the EMPs, who use the same tool as us, start to realize this issue and report it. As I am in the consumer queue this week, it impacts me to not being able to do tickets, but next week, because I will be in the EMP queue, I start to see what kind of tickets I will have to answer and the high volume of them probably. This creates some stress, especially after one of our sales representant in France emailed me directly again requesting my help for an issue one of his customers as

reported and that could make them lose a lot of money. I replied that I currently have no access to the admin panel (which is also probably the reason why the customer had an issue) and I cannot do anything more. Since it's an email, I also explain him again to create a proper ticket so an agent can take it and answer the customer.

Then I received an email, directly by the customer, but my shift has already ended. In it, the customer is very angry because they feel abandoned by not receiving an answer after a few hours. This creates some additional stress, but the week is over and I will check on that on Monday.

### *Weekly analysis*

This was supposed to be an "easy" week with no or very little worries to have, and slowly it started to actually build up more and more stress every day.

I do need to have a proper talk with the French team, CSM and salespeople, but due to everybody having different schedule, it is almost impossible to find a time to book a meeting. But they need to understand that I cannot work every case I am emailed as soon as it arrives in my mailbox and that I have other responsibilities. When I started to work, I was saying yes to all the requests to show good faith to help everyone around, but it seems now that we are getting close to an abuse of it. I will discuss about that with my manager too and see what can be done, because it cannot continue like this (as I also lose time to answer to them to stop doing what they are doing). I have no issue into helping others but sending me tasks that support agents are not required to perform is a major problem.

Other than that, the event on Thursday was very interesting and productive and the kind words of our CEO made me feel better about the company. There seems to be an empathy on how customers need to be accompanied properly after they start using our product and the workshop was extremely useful with the possibility to meet people from different department and expose the different point of views. The next year seems to be bright, and a lot of work is waiting for us, but people seem to be heading into the same direction.

Overall this was a positive work on terms of volume done. The consumer queue ended under 750 tickets, the workshop was very useful, and my backlog, did not grow as I was in a queue that does not require external help.

That said, my backlog is not fully cleared yet, and next week in the EMP queue will bring a lot of stress on it as there will be a lot of tickets in need of fast action. The issue with the direct messages for cases need also to be resolved as fast as possible as it impacts not only my performance but also the one of my colleagues.

### **3.6 Observation week 6**

*Monday 16th January 2023*

This week I will be in the EMP queue, and as predicted, the start of the week is very busy and stressful as there was indeed a major incident that happened to our system on Friday and that is not currently solved. Thankfully, all the developers have been made aware of it before I start my shift and have already to start working on it during the weekend. This issue is still here in the morning, but after a few tests by the developers, it is decided to roll back to the previous version of the system and investigate after where the issue came from.

I got confirmation in the afternoon from all the cases I had ongoing regarding this issue that it was solved. The issue was at the synchronization of data level between the system and the app, where modifications happening in our system did not reflect in our app, and made the stations disappear. The start of the week is quite exhausting, and I do not have time to either clear more of my backlog as I have to take the newly created tickets and confirm if the issue was resolved for our partners. Starting like this is tricky for the rest of the week but is necessary in that case to not let the queue get out of control. I had to work an extra 30 min for that day without taking lunch to be able to answer the tickets created and answer the customers from the previous week. I also received a direct message from the CSM of our second biggest client, who is extremely unhappy regarding a bug they have displaying the currency on their customer's account. Because I had inherited from that ticket, I explained the situation to the CSM who advise me to create a JIRA ticket and put it with a very high priority as it became the issue number one according to him with this client.

We also had a meeting with the technical service team and new processes that need to be adjusted, and how support and their team will cooperate. This meeting was very useful.

*Tuesday 17th January 2023*

This day is going to be similar to the 15<sup>th</sup> of December where I had cases from our Icelandic client, and the queue has still quite a lot of them the oldest one being waiting for an answer for 6 days. Several issues with some charging points are reported, but at first glance it seems that the issue does not come from the charger itself. Indeed, it is reported the customer cannot charge on this charger with their RFID, but after verification in our system, we found out that the RFID used was not linked to the customer's account. This is a great relief as it is easy to solve these cases instead of escalating them to the manufacturer which takes weeks, sometimes months before being fixed. Second issue is regarding the receipts for their customers. Indeed, this client was registered under a certain type of contract, but recently signed a new one, and the way of delivering the receipts changes under the new

terms and conditions. It seems that they were unaware of the situation and annoyed by it as their customers were also unaware of it, and they received a lot of complaints from customers being unable to find their receipts. I discussed about that with their CSM who told me he's not responsible for the contract part. Person needed is a salesperson and is never available on Slack which makes the communication with the client harder on my side. They asked us why they could not retrieve the receipts themselves and give them to their customers. I explained that the new contract was under GDPR rules that deny this possibility. Client was very upset about this, but once again, as support agents, we can only share the info, and are not responsible for the actions. Rest of the cases are some account deletion and escalation of some faulty chargers to our hardware team.

*Wednesday 18th January 2023*

Office day for today. My leader has a day full of meetings so I won't be able to discuss with her about the direct message I keep receiving from France and how we can tackle that issue. That as reported to their CSM several times, who confirmed me they reported it to their customers, but they keep sending new direct messages which are counterproductive as our ticket system allows to select a priority and type of ticket to see if they should be treated as fast as possible or if they can wait. Using personal email address cancel this which makes it even harder for me to justify using resources for a case that is not listed as important. This time, the issue with France is about documents that haven't been updated and the registration email for their customers is still using the wrong template (colors, language, and links). I have to get a hold onto their CSM so he can approve the document, while I can't answer to the customer that he was responsible for sending them and forgot. I also can't put the blame on the developers because they are not responsible for this delay. I simply managed to find a generic reason as to why the changes had not been made yet, and as soon as the confirmation was given by their CSM, replied to the customer that this issue should be fixed. This took me the whole morning simply on that case because I had to juggle between 3 parties, the developers, the CSM and the client. No RFID needs to be sent for the second week in a row, which seems to indicate our issue with our RFID provider is over. The day goes well for the rest of it, until just before ending, one of my oldest cases, that has a thread of currently 400+ messages on Slack reemerged. It is an issue regarding emails and the company that contact us has a lot of internal communication issue where they don't seem to be able to fix the issue by themselves and instead shift the blame on us. Last time they canted a meeting that occurred, but none of their participant at access to the account that was having issue, resulting in a pure loss of time. This time they send a message regarding the inability to access our internal system, which is normal since it's internal, but

they do not seem to understand the issue. They asked for another meeting, and I replied in the thread for the concerned people so they can give me their availability time so I can transfer that to our client and book a meeting for them.

*Thursday 19th January 2023*

Today is probably the easiest day of the week. No major bug, no direct messages for new cases, I can finally start to work on my backlog and try to clear it and if I have some time to take more tickets in the EMP queue (which I haven't had time to do since the start of the week, at the exception of those regarding our major incident during the weekend). For this day I have only one meeting in the afternoon regarding our first line partner. We have created a guide tool for their agents after noticing common mistakes that happened on a high frequency, and it would be beneficial for everybody to be able to tackle them as soon as possible as it would prevent the first line partner to create a ticket to send to us, and for us, to answer that ticket and to the customer. Most of these cases are very simple ones and can be fixed very easily, and hopefully this guide will lower our workload and make the process smoother for us, the first line partner and the customer (who would get a straight answer at the end of their phone call). For this day, I managed to take a few cases and clear a bit of my backlog due to the manufacturer fixing chargers in some of my cases. There are still a lot of tickets though in the queue, and it was decided to have a workshop tomorrow to be able to gather between the 4 agents in that queue for today and thing together for the most confusing cases.

*Friday 20th January 2023*

Last day of the week, and after checking the schedule for next week, I realized that I will be in the end users' one. My plan for today is to take as many tickets as I can in the workshop to empty the queue, and slowly clear them next week since the end user queue is the one providing the less hassle.

The plan though did not go as planned as I spend the day from 10 to 15 in different meetings and couldn't do as much as I planned to do. After our daily meeting at 10, I went into our workshop at 10.30, then switched to the French CSM meetings that I have every week, except this one that usually last for an hour lasted 2 here, because the 2 CSMs were not available at the same time. At 13 I had the weekly meeting, where we got more information about the process talked about on Monday, meeting that ended at 14.30, a 30min lunch break before getting a tech demo presentation for something that will impact the support team as it is about the change of payment plan for currently existing customers. During all of these meetings, I received a lot of messages on Slack, answers for my cases, question for

new ones, and new tickets from France, which made it extremely hard to juggle in between. The most important info of the day though is the fact that the manual invoicing process has finally been settled, and the character restriction left, which now allows us to perform that task. This is a major new tool for us in support, and for the next week, in the end user queue, I should be able to use it a lot. The week ended on a positive note with that news.

### *Weekly analysis*

This week was the most demanding since I started this diary as I did not have time to take cases in the queue for the first time I have started to work for Virta. The major incident really affected us for the rest of the week as there was a very high volume of tickets regarding this that needed to be done on Monday for SLA reasons which kept us behind for the rest of the week.

The issue with the direct messages has not stopped, and even though I got again confirmation from our CSM that they told their client to stop doing it, it seems it did not work. Even myself, in heir reply, I add the part where I explained them how essential this tickets system is for us to justify any action taken on the system and about the priority and possibility of being sick, but it seems that it won't be solved. At that point, the issue is cultural as it seems French customers want to deal with a French agent, the issue being I cannot satisfy everybody with fast response time.

The issue regarding the currency was also fixed, despite the manager originally telling me it would take a couple of weeks to be done. This was a big relief as I had given only bad new so far to the same customer, and fixing their top issue was very important for everyone. Overall, it was a very demanding week, which did not necessarily reflect on the number of cases solved, but still very stressful and intense. Two big positive notes though with the manual invoice process set up, and the currency issue fixed. I can now slowly fix my backlog next week being in the end user queue and restore a bit of energy.

## **3.7 Observation week 7**

*Monday 23rd January 2023*

As explained, this week will be dealing with end users' tickets, meaning the occasion for me to try the new invoicing tool and process that has been implemented for support. This week, will primarily have two goals. First one will be to clear as many tickets as possible since I start the week and there are over 800 tickets, and the second one will be to clear a bit more my backlog. Indeed, next week I am back in the EMP queue, meaning the backlog will

increase, and it's important to have it under control before.

The day starts ok, cancellation of accounts and clearance of tickets that are already resolved (for instance, customers reporting offline charging stations, but they appear ready of use and had successful charging events since the message). The day is ok on my side, but a new deployment provoked a major bug. All the charging points have disappeared from the app, making our services unusable for the time being. Very quickly a lot of tickets start to appear in the EMP queue, and even though I am not in it this week, I must follow the thread to be aware of what the issue is, since I'll be back in it next week and nothing can guarantee that the issue will be completely fixed by then. As for the invoicing tool, it works as intended, and it really eased up our life as we are now able to process cancellation of accounts much faster than we used to. That said, there is also currently a work from the developers to automate completely that process since it's the most consuming task for us in support. Overall good day and managed to clear a few tickets from my backlog too.

*Tuesday 24th January 2023*

Today is office day. Despite being in the end user queue, I ended up doing for my morning tickets for our very demanding French client from the EMP queue, where this time it was an issue with QR codes on several of their chargers. The issue here was that these QR codes were provided by another company, and after ensuring that on our side the links they are referring to did not change, I replied that they needed to contact the QR provider. But the client was insisting, making me use more of my time for a case where we were not responsible for it. This brought up a discussion with my manager on what can be expected from support agents, and how it is crucial that we are aligned on the level of service we provide as if one agent starts to be overzealous, then it will increase the client expectations. It is a thin line to find where the help should stop and despite being there for over 9 months, I still have issues with determining when I do too much.

In this case though, after several hours, the salesperson responsible of that client replied in Slack that he actually had a deal with another company, and he was responsible for the QR codes and has now fixed them. This is where the line got even more blurred as it is impossible for us in support to know all the details of the contracts that have been signed, and who is responsible of what, and what should have been a simple case to redirect the client to the proper entity ended up with our responsibility involved too. I will have to discuss also about that with my manager as again, the cultural difference between France and Finland is hard to explain for someone that has never lived there, and that expectations between clients are different because sales might have given too high expectations in some cases. Because I was at the office, I also spend a lot of time actually translating some tickets

from French to English so my colleagues would be able to provide them with an answer. In the end, another positive day, even though it seems that some internal discussions on Slack between different departments have heated up and has caused some tension. A rework of Slack channel will be ongoing to restructure how we communicate internally and try to tackle this issue before it becomes bigger. This is something that somehow concerns support because we are involved with all the other departments at the company, and this could create a situation where we might feel uncomfortable asking for help when needed.

*Wednesday 25th January 2023*

Nothing special about this day, except doing some reviews and answering the comments made there. The day is straight forward doing some more cancellation of account and checking if customers have received their RFIDs or not. It's usually good to do it in the middle of the week, as it gives enough time for customers to reply, and to be able to fill our sheet where these must be sent, so they can be shipped the next week. The issue seems to have been better a few weeks ago, but some issues have recently appeared again. Our French customer contacted me again regarding that topic since one of their customers ordered an RFID but hasn't received it after a long time. After checking in the database, it appeared that for this client, the option to automatically send the order of an RFID is not ticked. This is something that should have been done now the EMP became "live" and fortunately in that case, only one customer is impacted. The issue here is that once again, I had to deal with the ticket, but before after knowing the end of it was not supposed to be our responsibility, but the CSM's one. This becomes unfortunately more and more of a trend where for all issue clients are sent to support and in some of these cases, we do not have either the tools, or the authority to take a decision or make changes, and we lose time by taking care of the ticket, and by waiting answers from left and right. This is something that will need to be brought up at some point with the management as it seems that customers are not fully aware of when to contact support, and when to contact CSMs. Otherwise, so far, the week is on a very good pace, with a lot of tickets proceeded and a backlog under control ready to be full again next week.

*Thursday 26th January 2023*

The day started with Microsoft services being unavailable. This caused a lot of issues as Microsoft Teams is a very important tool we use for our meetings, and even though we use Zendesk for our ticketing system, notifications happen through Outlook. These two services being inoperative creates a massive issue of communication for the whole day as we can't be sure that we have been communicated some information or not. On the plus side though

it kind of forces clients to use our ticket system and not direct messaging through emails the agents anymore. This reduced the number of emails we received, but they slowly reappeared during the afternoon once the issue was resolved. The day was similar to the one before at the exception I had a quality meeting with my manager and our Quality analyst inside the Team. The feedback was extremely positive, which is always nice to hear, and I jumped onto the occasion to open the topics of where our limit is and being aligned with the rest of the team. My manager gave me a good answer, but this will need to be brought up more during our biweekly one to one as she is filled with meetings for the rest of the day. Before leaving my shift, I just quickly checked all my backlog tickets I have opened for a long time to see if any progress was made on them that the developers forgot to mention, as I will have to answer some of them for next week. At the end of the day, I received an email where I do not think I was supposed to be involved, from one of our manufacturer based in France, and a list of important points that need to be clarified as at the moment it is complicated to follow the processes and everybody has different views on the topic. The email is in French, but also sent o my team leader, and the Technical service leader, so I quickly read it and translated the most important information to discuss about th with them if they need something.

*Friday 27th January 2023*

Last day of the week in the end user tickets and I have achieved quite a lot despite the interruptions. I also received a lot of information during my weekly meeting with the French CSM teams, discussing mostly about the manufacturer's ticket. As they do not always have access to their customer portal, I explained them what the issues are encountered and what did the sender of the email try to empathize on. I also pointed out that some of the remarks made in that email were incorrect, especially regarding the communication process, which has been so far, our biggest challenge when escalating issues with to that manufacturer. there will also be questions regarding the prices, but CSM replied to me that they have no power here, and it is up to the technical service team to decide. Because the email was in French, I will bring that topic to our bi-weekly discussion on Monday with the technical service team as this is something crucial for us in support to be aligned on, knowing if processes can be different regarding the countries. During that meeting we also discussed about a lot of different topics which bring valuable information about the situation in France, and how it reflects on the requests our customers may have. At the end of that meeting, I had our weekly meeting inside the support team, where we all expressed our concerns regarding the global atmosphere and tension that there are at the moment with internal communication. This will need to be brought up to higher management and different

department to see how we could come back to a less stressful environment as it is already very stressful for us to communicate with customers.

The week ended with our bi-weekly tech demo, where this time there was the presentation of the roadmap for 2023 and what at the priorities, main tasks to perform and the sprint period impacted by this. It is valuable information for us, because this allow to temper expectations from customers sometimes when they ask something to be fixed immediately but they have brought up a more important topic before that they declared as a priority.

The week ended with an email received just before the end of my shift, from a French EMP who just bought another one, and they need to migrate over 500 customers to them. I explained that this might take some time as new terms and conditions need to be send for the customers, and that there might also be issues with how the billing or anything else might be different between the two EMPs. This will probably be my biggest task for next week.

### *Weekly analysis*

This was a very good week of work, minus the minor tensions internally. A lot has been achieved, the new invoicing tool is a success, the discussion with the manufacturer has been opened and despite still receiving personal emails, much less emails have been directly sent to me, which allowed me to spend most of my time working in the queue I was assigned and do a lot of tickets there. It also allowed me to clear most of my backlog, with at the exception of a few cases now, is left with tickets that won't be resolved for several weeks anyway, because the developers have communicated this before. So, a big part of the pressure here is out, which s always important before starting a week in the EMP queue. Most of the important issues that were reported this week have been fixed, which means that despite a potential large number of tickets in the queue next week, and answer can be provided.

For next week, the big project though will be this migration of customers towards a different EMP. I am not entirely sure that this is a request for support either as it involves a lot of different parameters, but I will somehow be involved in it anyway as this customer communicates in French with us anyway.

Overall, very positive week, lot of work achieved, conditions for next week are looking very good, and the stress level is normal.

### **3.8 Observation week 8**

I was supposed to be working for the week from 30<sup>th</sup> of January to 3rd of February, but due to sickness during this week, I only worked 2 days, so not enough material to bring here. I was in the EMP queue, and barely took any tickets as I was mostly trying to recover.

*Monday 6th February 2023*

For this week I will be in the first line partner queue. Though we have over 400 tickets in that queue, most of them are outdated. They are tickets that have been created several weeks ago, most of the time for issues that have already been resolved. So this week should be a fairly light one, allowing me to keep emptying my backlog and learn more about different topics.

For Monday, I spent the day going through all of the old tickets, back to December 2022.

When these were regarding offline chargers, if they were back online, I would simply close the ticket without a need to give an answer and just put an internal note explaining that the charger was back online since the ticket was created and no further action is required.

If the charger still present some issues, I can then try to find the contact maintenance details and reply to the message providing them so our first line partner can in return contact the person and explain the issue.

For customer related issue, it is the same, if the customer has trouble to access their accounts, then I check the usage history of the account. If some charging events have happened since, the ticket is solved, and no further action is required. If the issue still persists, I then can verify if the customer has contacted us directly regarding their issue and reply directly to them, or if not, reply with a detailed answer to our first line partner explaining them the issue. Most of the tickets for today being from December, the issues are resolved, and it is a lot of ticket closed. It will probably be like this for the whole week as there are a lot of old tickets, and they take time to be checked one by one.

*Tuesday 7th February 2023*

Second day in that queue and yesterday I cleared about 50 tickets. That said, most of the escalations made by our first line partner could be avoided. Indeed, they are very simple issues, and basic knowledge in a lot of cases, and it is frustrating to spend some time on this instead of fixing more complicated issues. I had my one to one with my manager today, and I've explained her this. The issue here is that we are in the process of changing or renewing our first line partner, and providing training cost resources and time, and it's not worth it on the long term if we should be changing from them. Decision will be made at the end of

March. We also discussed about the large number of tickets coming from France and how it takes me a lot of my working time. My manager suggested me to take less and “teach” the customer that there are other agents too that can be there for them, but the issue is in the language barrier with specific and technical terms making it impossible for a non-native person to follow the discussion. But we still have decided to try that, where I could more translate what the customer wants and verify that the answer given in return is grammatically correct. It will still require some time, but much less. This won’t prevent me to take their tickets, but at least, not feel as pressured as I was before to provide a quick answer and felt like I was the only one in charge of them. The day ends and I have done less tickets than yesterday due to the one to one, plus taking time to discuss cases with my colleagues, but the queue is still slowly going down.

*Wednesday 8th February 2023*

Today is office day, so I can join only in the afternoon as I have a personal matter to take care in the morning. I arrive at the office just after lunch and sent the RFIDs that were due for this week. It seems there was also some miscommunication inside the team, as the RFID supposed to be sent last week (I was sick) were not. It is not a huge matter, but definitely something that needs to be discussed about to avoid it to happen again. Rest of the day is mostly discussing with the colleagues about important topics and what are the status. When at the office, I usually do less tickets than at home, but end up doing more other things making it a nice break in the daily routine. I had a long discussion with my colleague who’s in place to implement a new process for the first line partner, and since I am in this queue this week, I could share some remarks and points that I think are very important. Overall, not a very intense day in term of tickets volume done, but much more constructive, into helping others. The token of doing over 100 tickets in 3 days starts to be felt, and for tomorrow I will try to help again if I can and do less tickets.

*Thursday 9th February 2023*

Today is mostly about doing tickets and keep clearing the backlog. I am at a very healthy place now, where have 11 tickets in my backlog, 6 of them being escalation to the manufacturer, meaning I simply need to wait for them to contact the customer and double check that it has been done so they can come fixing the issue on site, 3 tickets that are long term projects our developers told me it will take a few months in early 2023 to be solved, so there is nothing to do with them, and 1 ticket where I need to remind our finance department about invoices for a customer, but because they are busy, they don’t always see the messages, and 1 with a very long and confusing case regarding an SMTP issue with one of

our biggest partner. This issue has been going on for months now, and comes back and forth, and though it is not an easy case, it seems this time that our developers have made a breakthrough and could fix the issue rather sooner than later. We also received a very important training about a question that very recently came to our attention, with something called Advenir which is a program in France that gives CPO a financial compensation if they can prove that they are operating charging points. As this issue was very new, we got several questions about it and none of us really understood what it was about or how it worked. This training for 30min put the bases on which we can now work on to at least start the troubleshoot when the cases arrive.

The whole afternoon, one colleague needed help because she received an emergency ticket but was already in a meeting. Being doing mostly closing of all tickets, I took her task which consisted into archiving 73 charging points manually, then deactivating the SIM card associated with them, and deactivating the monthly settlements of the organization that owned these chargers. This customer was leaving us and needed to have everything cleared out on our system so they could migrate to another one. Because this was a manual work and had to be done individually for each charger, it took about 3h to finish the job. There is no automated process for this or a query that has been found out for it, but this is something that should be looked out in the future.

*Friday 10th February 2023*

Last day of the week, and last day of analysis for this thesis. Today is mostly made out of meetings as I have a meeting with the French CSM team at 11AM, followed by a demo that I will present for some of our developers regarding or cancellation process (that they want to automate) at 13, followed by our weekly support meeting at 14 and finally a tech demo for the ongoing projects from other departments at 15.

The automate process was really nice indeed, as it was something not planned ahead, but I saw the person in charge of the automation asking in a thread on Slack if it was possible to have a view as complete as possible about the process, and I took the initiative to show them how we acted in support. This is the first time since I have started to work at Virta that I was in charge of presenting something, and it felt really good, meaning that I have learned a lot during my time here to feel more confident with the tools and how to interact with people. Regarding the French meeting, it is essential for me to better understand the challenges the region faces as I can be some sort of a bridge between the headquarter here in Helsinki and hat work and doesn't in France. These meetings are always interesting, because they also tell me which issue we might soon face in support, and I can share that with the colleagues so we can be prepared to face them. It's also good the other way as I can provide insight on

our processes and such, so that the CSM can share that directly with their customers, making the communication with us less often and more specific when it happens. The tech demo also

### *Weekly analysis*

For my last week of analysis, there is not so many things that have happened this week in particular. It was probably the week since I have started this diary with the lowest effort given, not by lack of motivation, but mostly because the first line partner queue is in a rough spot at the moment, where there is a new process being created and most of the cases being simply to verify that the information is updated and not faulty anymore.

That said, that week I also felt for the first time that I was ready for more responsibility and took some initiative on my side, let it be to help my colleagues directly or the other department, and this one is a big change. I now know that I am able to perform this, now the balance as to be found in order to still do the daily tasks and job and incorporate these moments of initiative to grow as a person but also as inside the company. Next week won't be discussed here, but I am supposed to go back into the CPO queue and have my bi-yearly development discussion with my manager, and this week was exactly what was needed before that, allowing me to leave the comfort zone, and also empty the backlog before a more intensive week.

Overall that was still a productive week in terms of tickets as I mostly done them on Monday and Tuesday and a bit less over the week, but I also managed to do additional tasks that were meaningful not only for me but also for other employees in that company. A great week to end this thesis diary.

## 4 Discussion and conclusions

I have now finished to write my thesis and these 8 (almost) consecutive weeks of work. The writing happened as planned, where I was taking notes everyday on what challenges and what my day was made of, then collecting all the notes for the week and writing on every Sunday the week entry and weekly analysis. This offered me the possibility to not simply write down what I wrote at the moment it happened, but also to have some sort of reflection about it and be a bit more detailed, especially for the weekly analysis. It is hard just after a full week of work to be able to process the thoughts and write them down but having these 2 days windows give me enough time to structure it better and sort things that are important and those irrelevant, while it is still “fresh” in my mind, so I won’t forget to mention anything important.

I was already familiar with the company when I started to work there as I had been working there for over 7 months there when I started this thesis, which might also explain how most of the task I have described in my report were some daily routines at the exception of the major incidents or special events, and even these, I was not completely unfamiliar with them as I already had experience about this. Even though at first it was a bit weird for me to write this thesis, it came more and more naturally the longer we would advance in time. That said, it also was harder and harder to find the motivation as the work was still very demanding and personal life had an impact on my ability to write, but still managed to find a balance and enough time to bring weekly observations.

When I arrived at Virta, there was about 150 employees, and now that this thesis is ending, we are close to 200 employees, meaning a lot of new people and a lot of new ways to interact. Between the time I started to write the thesis, and end it, there has been about 15 new people recruited. I do not have any direct communication with any of them daily, but I have been for one case (which is still not fully fixed as of today). I can definitely say that the course in Haaga-Helia “Communication in a multicultural environment” has been a huge inspiration for me since I have started to work there, and still uses it every time we have new employees. Even though I have been living in Finland for a while now, and the company is very friendly for its employees, I still have some issues sometimes regarding the overall attitude to have at work and workload expected, and I mean that in a good way. Working in France is much more demanding, and you always feel threaten to do something wrong, and be afraid of asking for help as this shows some sort of weakness. You also tend to take less initiatives as it could be perceived as trying to take your superior’s position and put you in a very difficult position. Here at Virta, it is the exact opposite, and even though I felt more and more confident while writing the thesis, I still have sometimes issues to ask for help or tend to

avoid taking risky tasks knowing I could do mistakes there which somehow prevents me to learn more also. This tendency seems to fade away, but from time to time, there are still these moments keeping me from growing more as an individual and as an employee. And for this, the thesis has been really helpful, as it allowed me to reflect on myself and notice this moment where I could/should have done things differently. That said, I can say with confidence that I feel better than 8 weeks ago, and I think that my last entry tends to prove this as I took myself the initiative to organize a demo without consulting my manager first (she is extremely busy with meetings), and things went fine, and everybody gained something at the end. It's this kind of actions that gives me more confidence to continue to grow from, but there is still a long path before completely thrive inside the company. The change also for the manual invoicing tool was a precursor of that change, where I managed to bring an idea and wait for the approval of my manager, and the acceptance of it gave me the confidence to go the next step and take decisions by myself as the last entry showed.

These 8 weeks somehow passed very quickly, but there was also a lot of changes. That said, I think 3 majors' things are very important for what happened during this thesis:

- The first one would be the "winter day" meeting, where all the employees were invited and gathered to discuss about the new year and goals of the company. This was very important for me, because I arrived there last April, and I didn't understand sometimes the full strategy the company wanted to pursue, which could create some frustration as I felt abandoned. Knowing what the strategy is, why, and who is responsible of it, makes it much easier for this new year to start as I now have a clear picture with a proper roadmap and deadlines for the different projects, and I feel less frustrated when I have to wait a long period of my time for the developers to give me an answer regarding one of my cases that may be less important. Although, I still believe that the communication could be better inside the company and between the different department and this is something I want to focus on for the future.
- The second one would be the two consecutive weeks in which I found the opportunity to discuss directly with people from other departments at the office about the issue we encountered at support regarding some processes. This allowed me to explain to them what tasks we were facing and why that was an issue for us, which for them, they cannot see as they do not perform the same tasks than us or use the same tool. This has resulted into the manual invoicing tool and the fleet processes change which were two very big thing problematic at the moment that thesis was written. Now at the end of it, even though not everything is perfect, I can say that these two issues are now more and it's something I can feel proud of as I managed to explain the issue and find a solution by communicating it.

- The third one would be the last week of work, where I somehow felt empowered by the previous weeks, and this gave me the strength enough to leave my comfort zone and start to take more initiative and do other things than typically my required tasks, things that on the long run would improve our workload for the whole support team. This is something very important for me as I do have a lot of empathy for my colleagues, and I am constantly trying to find better ways to improve not only my situation but also theirs. By taking initiative, it frees them some space to do other things (there are a lot of meetings involved for my colleagues that have been here longer than me, with different partners), and it is one less thing they have to think about. That said, I also have to learn to stay at my place, and not do it every time, but once in a while, it can be a good idea.

As explained in my last entry, I will have my development discussion next week, and even though at the start of that thesis, I had very little thoughts about this (I am not a career-oriented person), this thesis allowed me to reflect on myself and see the things where I was good at and things that I would like to change. Because I have this position of being a French support agent based in Helsinki, I am in a unique position to be part of a bridge between the two very different culture, and my weekly meeting with the France CSM team as reinforced this. For the future, I want to improve the communication between the regions and strengthen the bond. I also have noticed that because I'm getting more and more familiar with the different employees, and the different cases we encounter, I can confidently talk about the issue we encounter with people that are unfamiliar with and explain them why these issues are important. Even though there was a direction and guidelines provided at the start of the year during the "winter days", changes happen sometimes, and it is needed to rectify some mistakes or change the direction before it is too late, and though the business side can see something, it is also important to see the support side of it, as we are in a unique position where we discuss both internally and externally with professionals, end users and other employees. The discussion is good in Virta, but it could be better, and I would like to have more influence on that in the future, so people would take more in consideration what the support team has to say before making decisions.

Overall, these 8 weeks thesis diary has been really helpful to help me to grow as an employee but also as a person, It made me discover some traits that I have never thought about this or realized my strength and weaknesses. I still sometimes for instance work too much, which can cause some stress and reflect on the rest of the team, and this is something that I definitely have to work on in the future. But it also showed me that I have the approval of my colleagues to take decisions and initiatives as they thanked me for the

manual invoicing process and the demonstration of cancellation of accounts.

Virta is a company that provide a great structure for its employees to learn more and being involved with more people from different departments will allow me to fulfill this need to be more successful. I still have a long way to go before being where I want to be, but I think am currently on the right path.

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