

An interview with Jörgen Nilsson | Mittnät

Jörgen Nilsson is the CTO of MittNät, a Swedish network operator formed by combining 9 municipal city networks and sharing competencies to create a service with the most secure delivery possible. Jörgen is employed by Karlstads El & Stadnat AB, one of the city networks. He has been in his role for 5 years.

In this interview, Jörgen discusses the partnership between MittNät and PacketFront Software – what drove it, how the companies work together and the benefits they're reaping as a business now.



Firstly, who are Mittnät?

Mittnät is a corporation between 9 open access city networks in Sweden. This means, instead of each network doing everything for themselves, they work together and have an interconnection point where their networks and services are handed over from the ISPs. At Karlstad, we already had that interconnection infrastructure in place with a large variety of service providers and services built in, so we invited the neighbouring municipalities to join us and use our service platform.

The strength of the city network's local presence together with MittNät's range of services makes city networks stronger. We are an attractive partner for suppliers and operators who can reach several municipalities through one hub with secure technology.

What are you focusing on now, in your current role as Chief Technology Officer?

I've moved along quite a lot in the Mittnät organisation, but I have predominantly been in charge of our centre piece platforms like BNG, BECS and BBE. This means I'm responsible for how the systems work together and for building the infrastructure needed for our network business. Previously, I have overseen the maintenance and management of those parts of the business. So, when customers create trouble tickets around their services, the service provider works out whether it's their problem or ours to resolve and then, as required, sends the tickets to us to either replace hardware, or to reconfigure or fix fibre services.

My focus now is to maintain the BECS and BBE platforms to make sure they work optimally and that all the API integrations work for our service providers, so they don't have to do anything manually. The easiest way to do this is by inviting the service providers inside of our BBE system, to allow them, for example, to undertake basic troubleshooting, before they send a trouble ticket to us.

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What drove the partnership between Mittnät and PacketFront?

The word of PacketFront Software came from our system integration partner. We were not happy with our existing communication operator running the network, and so took the leap of faith to start Mittnät and use PacketFront's solutions as our OSS/BSS platforms. Our system integrator demonstrated how we could use BECS and BBE and integrate with the networks with them holding our hand along the way.

Was it a good decision?

Of course. The drive to work with PacketFront came from the realisation that our current customers weren't happy with our communication operator. One reason for this was that they were supposed to give customer queries and complaints directly to the service providers, who would then come to us and tell us to fix the fibre. We soon learnt that they didn't have the right structures in place to solve customer problems. This meant customers could have problems like halted tv services or bad picture quality, for months without getting a resolution, so they started calling us directly instead. Our old communication operator also promised to help with our marketing and sales efforts and didn't – so all in all, we were unhappy with the service they delivered.

When we stopped our work with them we needed OSS/BSS platforms and, as we started doing all the work of old communication operator ourselves, we realised what a great help PacketFront platforms were to support our business. Our customer services and sales improved almost immediately.

What are the main business benefits that PacketFront Software brings to Mittnät?

For us, without a network orchestration system, we would have to manually configure everything. We have 40 thousand ports which would be a mammoth task to configure manually and would take a huge amount of time. With PacketFront, we've noticed a trend. The more ports we build, the less costs per port we have. So, the software helps us to drive down costs. It also improves the customer experience because we hand over some of the easy tasks to the service providers, who can solve them quickly by using BBE.

Before we had a full-time employee performing these tasks manually, switching network ports on and off, and activating and deactivating customer services as and when. Now we have our systems set up so that we or our customers can easily push a button and get the services they want in an instant – so we don't ever have a queue.

The software also improves our speed to market i.e. the speed that we can deliver new services or campaigns to customers. Ultimately, we're now able to do much more work, with much fewer people than we would have usually required.

Would you recommend other businesses to invest in PacketFront Software?

When you reach a certain size of business you need automation to reach the ROI we achieve per port. Really small companies might have one dedicated person that does that work for you. For us it is a huge benefit from a time and cost perspective.

It all boils down to the business case because it's not 'freeware' you're investing in. PacketFront Software costs money, and it all comes down to scale and ambition. A small company may be able to utilise in house skills, but if you've got a desire to scale you need to orchestrate and automate your services, especially the commodity services, and you need to get your end users to do as much of the ordering on the portal as possible to take away work and hassle. PacketFront's technology has enabled us to do that.

Learn more about the impact of automation at Mittnät by **visiting our webpage**.

To learn more about PacketFront Solutions please **get in touch**.

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