

Beneficial for everyone involved

(A technical article from 2022, author: Max Wissing, Technology Manager Additive Manufacturing, Protiq GmbH, Blomberg)

Blomberg-based Protiq GmbH has been established in the field of industrial additive manufacturing for several years now. The online marketplace operated by the company offers advantages to customers and manufacturing service providers alike. In addition to pure 3D printing, the Marketplace now also covers conventional manufacturing processes.



▼ An automated quotation and ordering process makes optimal use of the benefits of fast “overnight” manufacturing. The fully digitalized architecture of the Protiq Marketplace makes this possible.

The additive manufacturing industry has been growing steadily for years. The rising demand for 3D-printed components and the strong interest from all industrial sectors open up numerous opportunities on both the supplier and the customer side. Due to rapid technological advances and the broad range of offerings, however, it is becoming difficult for customers to find the right process for their application. On the other hand, manufacturing service providers with an innovative but not yet sufficiently well-known solution face the challenge of gaining more visibility in an increasingly complex market.

In line with the motto “Precise. Fast. Reliable.”, the Protiq Marketplace, which now comprises more than 40 suppliers, provides an intuitive platform that meets the needs of customers and service providers. Protiq focuses on the high requirements and quality standards of industry, but the online platform is also deliberately aimed at private customers.

Digital price comparison

On the Protiq Marketplace, customers can place an order for an individual 3D component quickly and easily without having to go through a lengthy quotation process. To do so, they can upload the data set of the component to be printed right on the home page. For

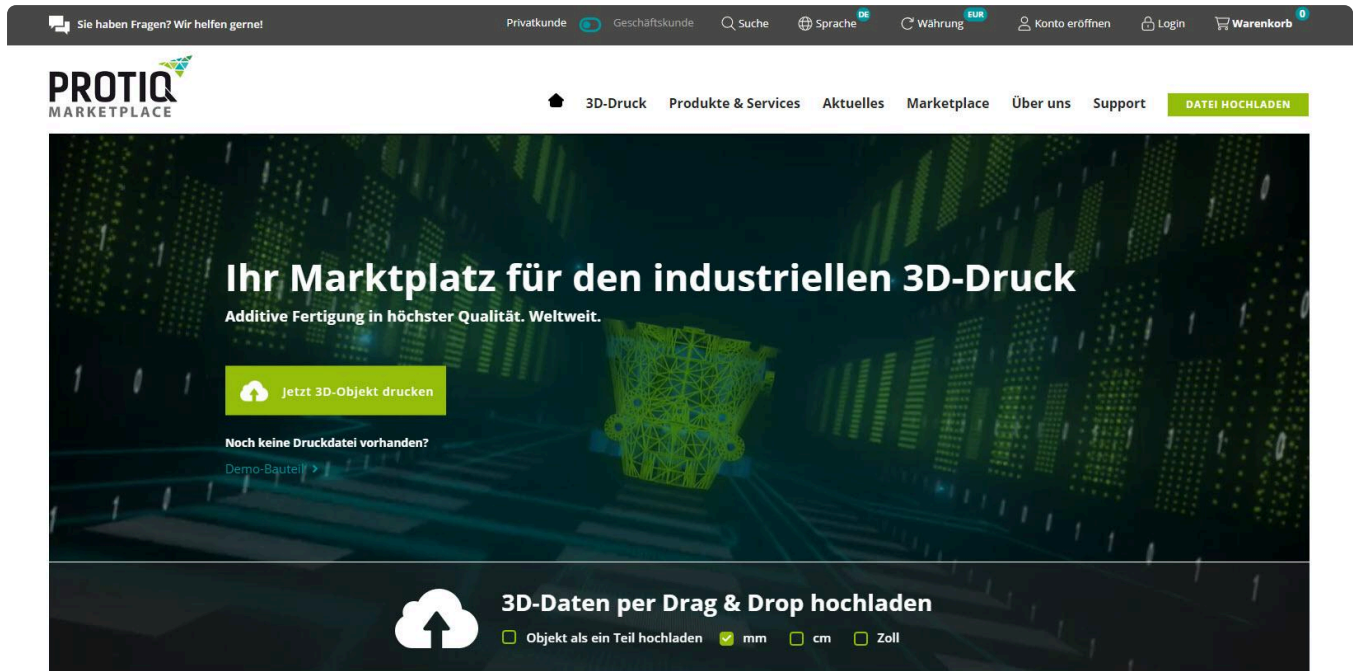
this purpose, the marketplace supports all common 3D data formats. Customers then receive visual feedback on their component and can scale it.

Next, customers select the desired material, including optimal post-processing, from the marketplace’s comprehensive process and material portfolio. Here they benefit from the live pricing of all suppliers, whose offers are compared at a glance.

The Protiq Marketplace currently includes more than 160 different materials, more than 12 different manufacturing processes, and more than 40 service providers. In addition to quantity-dependent pricing information, the marketplace provides information on average delivery time and shipping costs. For customers, this simplifies and shortens time-consuming online research as well as the conventional process of obtaining multiple quotations.

Automated quotation

In the next step, the configured components are transferred to the shopping cart. Registered customers can now enter an internal order number for all accompanying documents and save and download an official quota-



▼ The ProtIQ Marketplace has long since ceased to offer additive manufacturing exclusively. Instead, all players here benefit from numerous additional options and advantages.

tion for the configuration they have created. After selecting the shipping and payment method, the order for the shopping cart is placed within a few seconds in the final step of the process.

A role and permission system integrated into the platform further simplifies the customer's internal processes: customers can archive and share the configured shopping carts as a project. For example, the designer or developer can assign a purchase requisition to operational purchasing, which shortens communication and reporting channels. The requesting developer defines all component-specific characteristics of the order – such as the manufacturing process, the current component version, or the selected material – themselves.

Extended range of services

Apart from additive manufacturing, the ProtIQ Marketplace portfolio includes training and engineering services. Customers thus benefit from the company's more than ten years of experience in 3D printing and from design for manufacturing of additive components as part of a design service. Furthermore, the scope of services of the ProtIQ Marketplace has been significantly expanded in terms of industrial manufacturing. The integration of the conventional manufacturing processes of vacuum casting, CNC milling, and plastic injection molding creates considerable added value for customers. In

addition to additive manufacturing, complex milling operations on the additively built components as well as classic toolmaking can also be covered.

On the other hand, the injection molding production process offers the option of manufacturing components in series in very large quantities. ProtIQ's service portfolio therefore covers the entire component life cycle, from early component development through initial functional prototypes and pre-series samples to full series production. In the "Materials and More" section, the ProtIQ Marketplace also offers consumables and goods related to industrial additive manufacturing for sale.

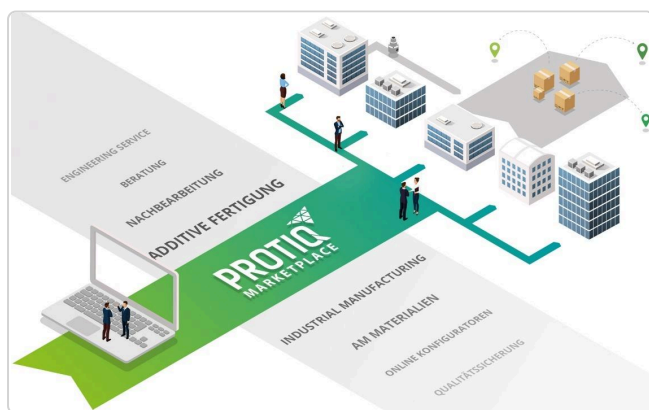
Complete transparency

Another advantage of the marketplace is its transparency: customers can make a deliberate decision about which supplier they want to award a manufacturing order to. In addition to the individual prices of the various service providers, information on average delivery times and a star-based rating system support the buyer in making a decision. Furthermore, the buyer benefits from the improved visibility of lesser-known technologies with new processable materials and innovative solutions.

For the marketplace's suppliers, transparency provides a basis for appearing under their own name and logo and



benefiting from the platform's profile. By participating in the ProtIQ Marketplace, they expand their own business areas as a basis for expansion. As a result of the steady growth of the entire industry, the ever-wider range of manufacturers means that it is becoming considerably more difficult, especially for small and medium-sized 3D printing service providers, to position themselves in the market. It is therefore essential that they recognize and tap into the potential of online commerce.



Data security on the digital level of the ProtIQ Marketplace is particularly important for industrial customers. To meet this requirement, ProtIQ relies on the best possible encryption of the online platform and its own professionally secured server architecture on its own company premises. These measures ensure a high

level of data security. In addition, the uploaded component data is only stored in the case of an officially generated quotation and a successfully placed order. All other data is deleted again after a short time. The data is accessible exclusively to the respective manufacturing service provider, who passes it on, if necessary, only after consulting the customer.

High quality standards

The quality of the services offered on the ProtIQ Marketplace proves to be one of the most important factors for a positive customer experience. An essential prerequisite for participation in the marketplace is therefore that suppliers have a reliable quality assurance concept and can present relevant certifications – for example in accordance with ISO 9001. The successful activation of a new supplier on the ProtIQ Marketplace therefore always requires a personal qualification process. In addition, customers can rate the quality and delivery times of the service providers using a public star system. This creates an additional basis of trust on the customer side. Service providers stand out from the mass of suppliers through positive feedback and gain more visibility.

Further information:

www.protiq.com