

Beneficial for all parties involved

Online marketplace for industrial additive manufacturing

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

Blomberg-based Protiq GmbH has already been established in the field of industrial additive manufacturing for several years.

The online marketplace operated by the company offers benefits to both customers and manufacturing service providers.

In addition to pure 3D printing, the marketplace now also covers conventional manufacturing processes.



An automated quotation and ordering process makes the most of the advantages of fast "overnight" production. The fully digitalized architecture of the Protiq Marketplace makes this possible.

The additive manufacturing industry has been growing steadily for years. The increasing demand for 3D-printed components and the great interest shown by all industrial sectors is opening up numerous opportunities for both suppliers and customers. However, due to the rapid technological development and the wide range of products on offer, it is becoming difficult for customers to find the right process for their application. On the other hand, it is a challenge for manufacturing service providers with an innovative but not yet sufficiently well-known solution to gain more visibility in an increasingly confusing market.

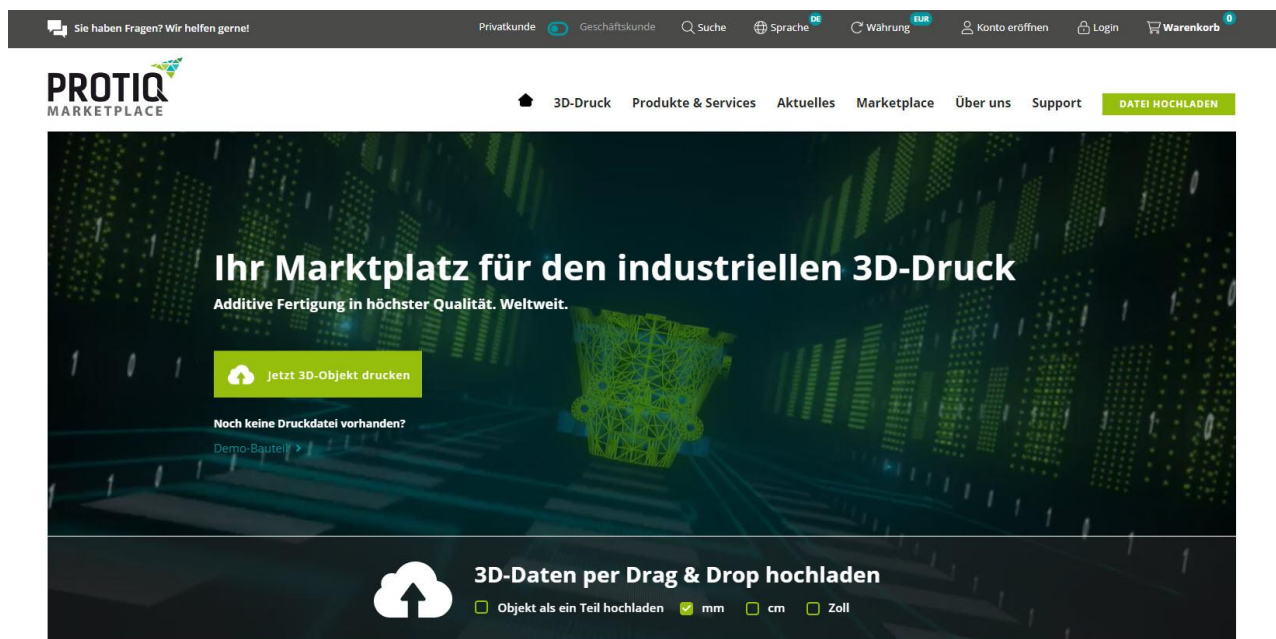
According to the guiding principle "Precise. Fast. Reliable.", the Protiq Marketplace, which now comprises almost 30 providers, provides an intuitive platform that meets the needs of customers and service providers. Protiq focuses on the high requirements and quality standards of the industry, but the online platform is also deliberately aimed at private customers.

Digital price comparison

The Protiq Marketplace gives customers the opportunity to place their order for an individual 3D component quickly and easily without having to go through a lengthy quotation process. To do this, they can upload the data set of the component to be printed on the start page. The marketplace supports all common 3D data formats for this purpose. In the background, an algorithm checks the data set for general buildability and geometric dimensions. Any data errors in the model - such as open contours - are automatically corrected by powerful repair software. Customers then receive visual feedback on their component and can scale it or download the repaired file free of charge.

Customers then select the desired material, including optimal post-processing, from the marketplace's comprehensive process and material portfolio. In this context, they benefit from the live pricing of all suppliers, whose offers are compared at a glance.

The Protiq Marketplace currently contains over 130 different materials, 14 different manufacturing processes and 28 service providers. In addition to price information based on the number of items, the marketplace also provides information on the average delivery time and shipping costs. For the customer, this simplifies and shortens time-consuming online research and the conventional process of obtaining various quotes.



The Protiq Marketplace has long ceased to offer only additive manufacturing. Instead, all players benefit from numerous other options and advantages

Automated quotation generation

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

A role rights system integrated into the platform also simplifies internal processes for the customer: they have the option of archiving and sharing the configured shopping baskets as a project. For example, the designer or developer can assign a purchase requisition to the operational purchasing department, which shortens communication and service channels. The requesting developer defines all component-specific characteristics of the order - for example the manufacturing process, the current component version or the selected material - themselves.

Extended range of services

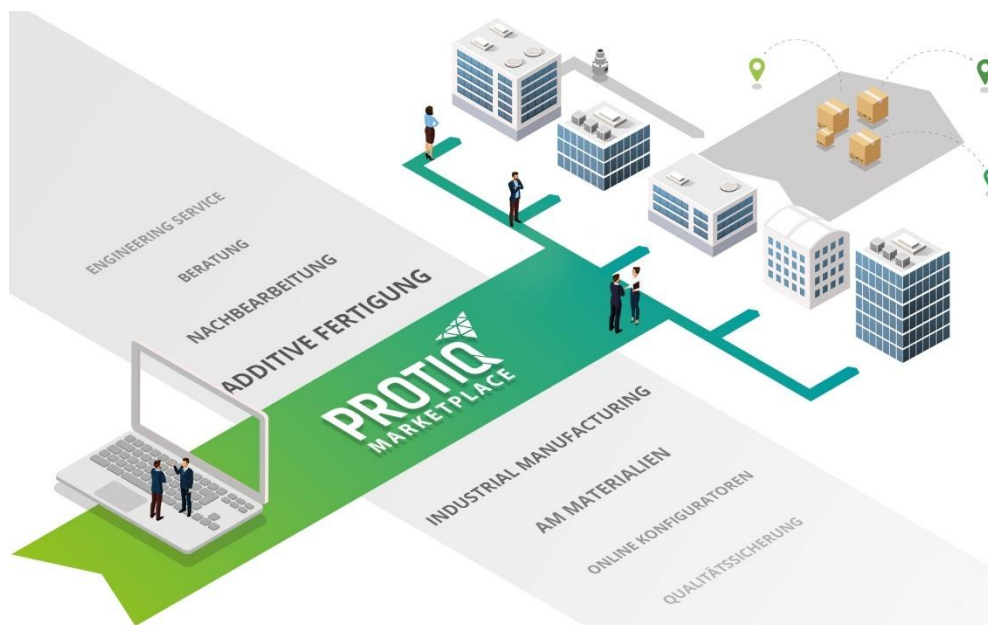
In addition to additive manufacturing, the Protiq Marketplace portfolio also includes training and engineering services. Customers thus benefit from the company's more than ten years of experience in the field of 3D printing, the production-oriented design of additive components as part of a design service and simulation-based component optimization. Furthermore, the scope of services offered by 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 results in considerable added value for the customer. In addition to additive manufacturing, it is also possible to map complex milling processes on the additively manufactured components or classic tool shops.

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

Complete transparency

Another advantage of the marketplace is its transparency: customers can consciously decide which provider they want to place a production order with. In addition to the individual prices of the various service providers, information on average delivery times and a star-based rating system support the customer in their decision. They also benefit from the improved visibility of lesser-known technologies with new processable materials and innovative solutions.

For the providers of the marketplace, transparency provides a basis for appearing with their own name and logo and benefiting from the platform's high profile. By participating in the ProtIQ Marketplace, they expand their own business areas as a basis for expansion. Due to the constant growth of the entire industry, the increasingly comprehensive range of manufacturers is making it much more difficult for small and medium-sized 3D printing service providers in particular to position themselves on the market. It is therefore essential that they recognize and leverage the potential of online trade for themselves.



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 premises. These measures result in a high level of data security. Furthermore, the uploaded component data is only saved when an official quotation is issued and an order is successfully placed. All other data is deleted again after a short time. The data is only accessible to the respective production service provider, who only passes it on after consultation with the customer if necessary.

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 providers have a reliable quality assurance concept and can present relevant certifications - for example in accordance with ISO 9001. The successful activation of a new provider on the ProtIQ Marketplace therefore always requires a personal qualification process. Customers also have the opportunity to rate the quality and delivery times of service providers using a public star system. This creates an additional basis of trust on the part of the customer. Service providers stand out from the crowd with positive feedback and gain more visibility.



Further information:
www.protiq.com