

Alemba Ltd. for Incident Management

Executive Summary – vFire Core

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong Incident Management offering• Available as web service or app
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experienced player in the market• User friendly
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No automatic link to IT Service Continuity process• Potential for confusion for some customers around Infra / VMware / Alemba
Primary Market Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium to large

Independent Review

You'd be forgiven for not having heard of Alemba before because the tool has been around longer than the company. I first encountered it way back in 2006 when it was known as Infra. Then, the ITSM industry being what it was in the pre credit crunch era, it went through various acquisitions and name changes; EMC Infra, EMC Service Management and VMware Service Management but now it's back as Alemba vFire, headquartered in Woking, UK.

The customer portal rocks! I know, not exactly a technical term but it was my first thought on seeing it during the product demonstration. Customers are greeted with a newsfeed of important information and Major Incidents and can raise Incidents or Service Requests with a single click. Further options such as the Knowledge Base and Service Catalogue are positioned at the top of the screen. Rather than using plain text to display them, the tool uses bubbles so that they're easy to see and interact with. When an end customer has successfully raised an Incident or Service Request they get a green tick message displayed on the screen, a nice visual cue that means they are confident their Incident has been raised properly without having to wait for email confirmation.

The analyst view has a SLA traffic light alert system towards the top of the screen along with full email integration. The bubbles come into their own here as, if a customer has responded by e-mail to an Incident or Service Request, the notification bubble has an unread flag (similar to Facebook type alerts) prompting the analyst to respond and helping to make sure that nothing is lost, ignored or forgotten about.

The Incident form aligns nicely with ITIL; the priority is calculated by impact and urgency and SLAs can be attached to a CI or service attribute. An orbiter tool at the bottom left hand corner of the screen displays available options as they change in a way that flows nicely with the Incident lifecycle and Problem and Change records can be easily created using the bubble links at the top of the screen.

Incident forms can be configured to require a minimum set of data, if you try and submit the ticket without the mandatory content you will be prompted by the system that more data is required. For those of you who remember playing Zelda on the Nintendo 64, this isn't like the useless "Hey! Listen" prompt by Navi (seriously, the most annoying character in the Zelda universe ever) but a reminder to fill in selected fields, helpfully highlighted in red.

Major Incidents are a top level category in their own right, and both the self-service and analyst views list all open Major Incidents. There is also a handy "Add me" option so users can add themselves to a Major Incident quickly and easily.



Analyst – Vawns Murphy

Irish mum of 3. ITIL V2 Manager (red badge) and ITIL V3 Expert (purple badge). SDI Managers certificate. Further qualifications in COBIT, ISO 20000, SAM, PRINCE2 and Microsoft. Author of itSMF UK collateral on Service Transition, Software Asset Management, Problem Management & the "How to do CCRM" book. Reviewer for the Service Transition ITIL 3 2011 publication. When not being pelted with brightly coloured balls in the name of ITIL, I am a senior analyst for Enterprise Opinions.



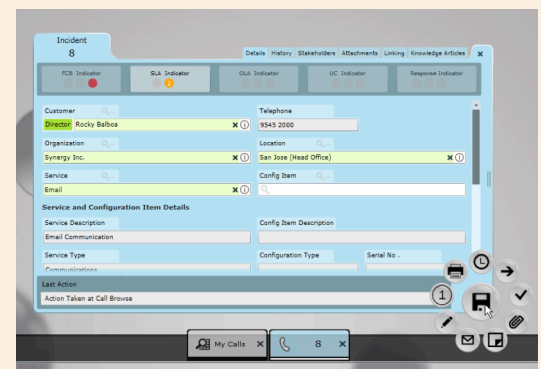
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One of my favourite things about the tool is that it has a module especially for large Service Desk display screens. No more faffing around with USB sticks and having to manually update content, the reporting module of vFire will project predefined call info, Major Incidents and SLA targets as required.

The vendor primarily works with medium and large sized enterprises and has an ever increasing client list. This product is a good option for medium and large sized organisations to get up and running quickly without sacrificing functionality.

Technical Summary

Incident logging, categorization & automation options	Incidents can be created directly from the Service Catalogue or from emails, phone calls and social media. vFire incorporates an Event Management function that can interface with external network management systems e.g. SolarWinds for the logging of incidents where thresholds have been breached. The vFire integration platform supports Event Management integration to alert monitoring tools. Standard connectors for tools such as MS SCOM are available off the shelf to consume events/alerts deployed by the tool. Furthermore, vFire can intercept email alerts to create/update incident records where breaches have occurred in the specific monitoring tool of choice. Alemba can provide a connector for any alert management system. The connectors allow alerts in the remote system to create, update and close calls in vFire
System access options (web, fat client, mobile, etc.)	Web and native app.
Incident tracking and lifecycle	Email notifications can be deployed during any stage of the Incident lifecycle. By default automatic notifications are sent when a call is logged, updated or resolved/closed. The customer has full control of the different types of notifications and when these are sent. There is a bounce count that alerts Incident Management if an Incident exceeds a predefined number of re-assignments as well as automated SLA status notifications.
Prioritizing and escalating incidents	<p>vFire fully supports the derivation of Priority from Impact and Urgency. On a call record the agent enters the Impact and Urgency and the system inserts the priority based on a predefined priority Matrix.</p> <p>The following category types are provided out of the box.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance degradation • Loss of Service • Not functioning as expected • Error report investigation • Component failure <p>Additional categories and subcategories can all be added via the admin console.</p>
Major incidents	Major incidents are logged by an Analyst using the vFire UI. Existing Incidents can also be promoted to be a Major Incident. Auto notifications such and email/text message notifications can be configured to be automatically sent when a MI is raised.
Applying industry models and frameworks	vFire is primarily aligned to ITIL; Alemba are supporters of itSMF, SDI and regularly engage in industry events.



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Technical Summary continued

Incident closure	Two stage closure process. vFire ships with a customer survey module that makes customer surveys easy to create. The customer surveys allow information to be gathered from customers and vFire automatically consolidates the results into reports.
Reporting and analytics	<p>The system ships with 188 reports by default which provide on demand reporting across all areas of the solution including Incident Management, Problem Management, Change Management, CMDB, Availability, Knowledge Management, Service Level Management and much more.</p> <p>All reports can be exported into all common file formats and can be scheduled to run periodically and emailed or placed in centralised file repositories for ease of access.</p>
Interaction/workflow with Problem Management	<p>All functions of the vFire application offer complete interoperability, meaning that any record can be linked to any other record in the solution e.g. Incident→Major Incident→Problem→Known Error→Knowledge Article.</p> <p>Linking is easily performed by simply selecting the calls to be linked in the call search screen and pressing the link button, you can then choose the call that you wish to be the parent.</p> <p>The linking Tab on a call will provide a diagram of all the calls linked to the current call in order to showcase any linked records.</p>
Incident Mgt beyond the service desk	vFire promotes Enterprise Service Management and customers not only use the tool specifically for ITSM, but across business processes such as HR, Facilities, and Case Management.

Strengths

- Strong Incident Management tool
- Experienced player in the market
- User friendly

Weaknesses

- No automated link to the IT Service Continuity process
- Potential for confusion for some customers around branding

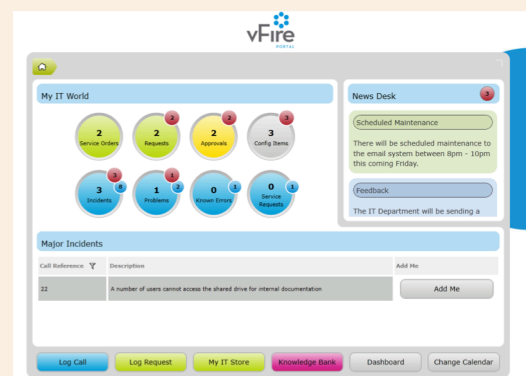
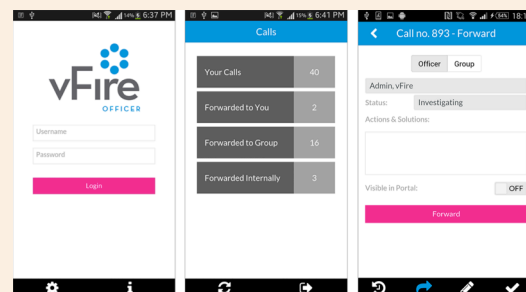
Customers

- Cardiff University
- Arqiva
- St Helens Council
- The World Food Programme
- Barnardo's
- Children's Hospital Wisconsin
- Northrop Grumman
- PPG Industries
- Dumfries and Galloway Council

In their own words

"vFire is an Enterprise level IT Service Management Software tool developed by Alemba. As the successor to VMware's Service Manager product (formerly Infra Enterprise), Alemba's vFire has inherited over 20 years of industry knowledge and offers a truly innovative user interface that puts customer experience front and centre.

vFire provides out-of-the-box ITIL functionality for ITIL processes, including: Incident, Request Fulfilment, Problem, Service Level, Knowledge, Change, Release & Deployment, Service Configuration & Asset, Service Catalogue and Availability Management.



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In their own words continued

With vFire, you can:

- Build the system to your own requirements with flexible configuration options and a powerful screen designer.
- Easily deploy an integrated, actionable Service Catalogue that aligns IT activities to business services.
- Publicize service expectations and reduce the impact of service outages on business operations.
- Effortlessly identify and map interdependencies between infrastructure components, applications, and business services, across both physical and virtual environments through Federated CMDB connectors.
- Monitor and report performance against Service Level Agreements and Service Availability targets to demonstrate the value IT provides to the business leveraging third party event management tools.
- Easily model and automate your organization's business processes in a powerful workflow builder which can be used to automate any IT or non-IT processes.
- Ensure processes are carried out in a consistent, best practice manner that adhere to audit and compliance requirements.
- Guarantee that ITIL processes implemented are tailored to meet your site specific needs."

Further Information

Product Brochure: <http://alemba.com/docs/default-source/brochures/vfire-brochure.pdf?sfvrsn=12>

Technical Brochure: <http://alemba.com/our-software/vfire/demo>

This independent review is part of our Incident Management group test 2016, read the full report at <http://www.theitsmreview.com/2016/02/incident-mngt-2016/>.

Also participating; Atlassian, Cherwell Software™, HPE, InvGate Inc., ManageEngine, Marval Software Limited, Matrix42 AG, Nextthink, SUMMIT Software Inc.



Commercial Summary

Vendor

Alemba Ltd

Product

vFire Core

Version Reviewed

9.2.3

Date of Version Release

December 2015

Year Founded

2007

Customers

350

Pricing Structure

Pricing is per IT Analyst user with named/concurrent both available. An unlimited number of end users are included. No additional module costs apply.



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