„At FRILO you get the opportunity to initiate change"

Frank Peiffer has been in charge of software development at FRILO Software GmbH for twelve years. In the meantime, the 45-year-old holds the position of department manager and is a member of the FRILO management. In the first part of the interview, he describes the demands placed on a software developer at FRILO, what he appreciates about FRILO as an employer, and why he is proud of his team, especially with regard to the development of the BIM-Connector.

Hello, Frank. Here's an important question to start with: How do you usually start your working day?

Frank: There are colleagues who say that I am unresponsive in the morning without a cup of coffee. So, when I come into the office, the first thing I do is go to the coffee machine. Greeting my colleagues and having a short conversation with one or the other is a good start to the day for me.

You have been an integral part of FRILO for twelve years now. How has your career at FRILO been shaped?

Frank: When I started at FRILO twelve years ago as a software developer, there was only one managing director who managed all the processes. It was only when the FRILO staff grew over time that further management positions were created - including that of development manager. To this day, I am grateful to be able to implement my ideas for the constant modernisation of FRILO development in this way.

Since then, how do you interpret your position as part of the management team with responsibility for software development?

Frank: Our developers are absolute experts. That's why I trust in their competencies and allow them sufficient freedom to shape their work. First and foremost, I try to coordinate cross-cutting issues centrally and ensure that we adhere to certain standards across the board. These standards include, for example, the architecture of our

Frank Peiffer is Head of Software Development at FRILO since 2012.

applications, a common idea of quality or the constant modernisation of the code base in order to be able to implement new requirements quickly. Recently, the search for new talented developers has taken on a special significance for me.

So, you are currently on the lookout for talented developers to strengthen your team. What are the requirements for the profile of a software developer at FRILO?

Frank: The great speciality of FRILO is that the developers are traditionally civil engineers themselves and also have an enthusiasm for programming. In the meantime, however, our team also includes pure computer scientists who have to acquire the knowledge of civil engineering in addition. In general, the scope of our developers' tasks is broad and ranges from planning the tasks and reading the standards to designing the technical solution and implementing the solutions as source code. Although focal points are set,

many of our developers are currently responsible for several applications at the same time. For new developments, we now tend to form teams in which the strengths of colleagues complement each other.

Which positions are currently vacant at FRILO?

Frank: At the moment, we are looking for a developer with in-depth knowledge of foundation engineering as well as a developer who is familiar with the overall structural analysis document that FRILO generates as output. We have made the experience that in-depth programming knowledge in a specific language is not essential. They can be learned. It is more important for us to get a civil engineer who is familiar with the subject, but who is enthusiastic about general solutions through programming.

You've been on board for a few years now. What arguments does FRILO have for you as an employer?

Frank: Right from the start, I had the feeling that the atmosphere and the way my colleagues treated each other were right. It is also important to me that I have a certain influence on how a company develops through my work. At FRILO, you get the time and the opportunity to initiate changes. That has fascinated me since day one.

Development sets itself the goal of constantly optimizing and modernizing the FRILO programs. Is there an achievement of your team in recent years that you are particularly proud of?

Frank: A topic that has occupied us intensively for many years is the conversion of our solutions to the PLUS programme line. In addition to the better display of 3D graphics and the simplified access to the user interface, our customers benefit above all from a modernised technological basis on which we can provide more memory and accelerate processes over time. The PLUS programme generation is the new standard that will replace all old programmes in the medium term. In addition, we as a team are proving time and again that we can react quickly to changes and inputs. This was

most recently demonstrated by the development of the FRILO BIM-Connector®.

To what extent?

Frank: From the initial idea to its completion, we have brought a pragmatic solution for simplified data exchange with other software solutions to the market in just one and a half years with the BIM-Connector. The error-prone and time-consuming re-entry of a lot of data is no longer necessary thanks to the BIM-Connector. Now we are happy to further improve the BIM-Connector based on feedback from our customers and to connect our building model GEO.

The interview was conducted by:
Tim Kullmann

ABOUT THE PERSON

Frank Peiffer graduated from RWTH Aachen University with degrees in civil engineering and computer science. He then spent five years as a doctoral student researching the topic of "Textile Concrete" and received his PhD in 2008 from the Chair of Structural Analysis and Structural Dynamics at RWTH Aachen University. Entering the job market, Frank landed at FRILO Software GmbH the same year and has remained loyal to the company ever since. Today, he is part of FRILO's four-member management team as head of the software development department.