Subscription based billing step-by-step with Verax Customer Care & Billing

verax systems

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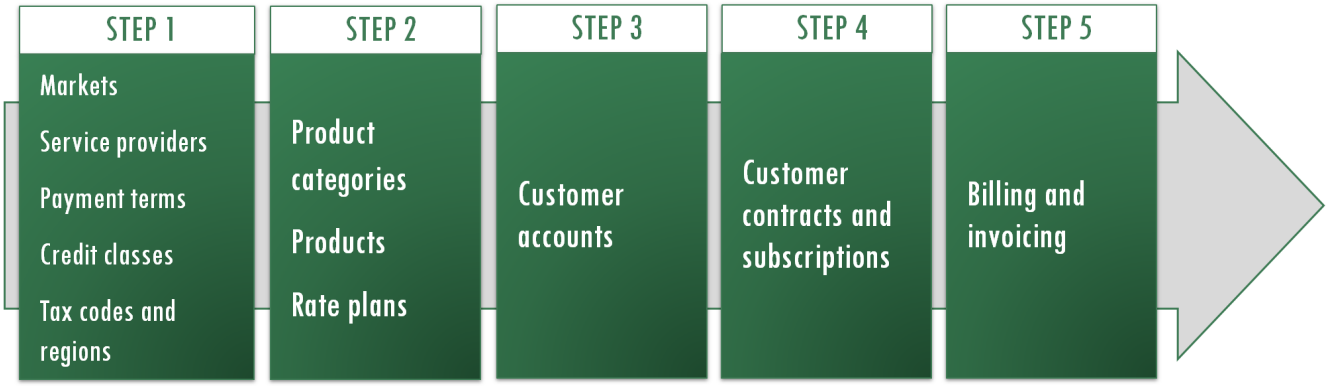
Abstract

This document provides configuration steps required to setup Verax Customer Care & Billing (CCB) for subscription-based products and services. It is assumed that the CCB has already been installed and is up and running.

The configuration process takes place in five steps as presented below. Each section of the document corresponds to one step.



Please note that this document is a high-level guide only. Verax Customer Care & Billing on-line help should be used to obtain detailed information, if required.

1. Configuring markets, service providers, taxes and other global settings

Verax Customer Care & billing configuration process starts with global settings: markets, service providers, languages & currencies, credit classes and tax codes. All global settings are located in the **Settings** view.

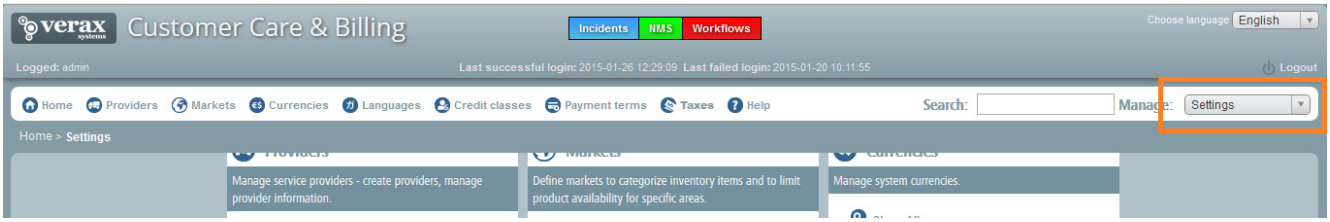


Figure 1: Selecting Settings as the working view.

Please note that the order of items in the menu reflects the order of configuration steps (start from the leftmost item and continue to the right).

1.1. Markets

Customer accounts, products, rate plans, customer equipment and service addresses are defined on a per-market basis. Markets are used to control:

- Product-market availability (e.g. a product for business customers only).
- Customer equipment types available for a market.

- Service addresses associated with a market.

Markets are defined as a hierarchical, tree structure (e.g. *North America/United States/Texas/Collin County/Plano*). By default, Verax Customer Care & Billing comes with predefined, geographically segmented markets.

In order to manage markets, navigate to the ***Settings*** view and choose ***Markets***.

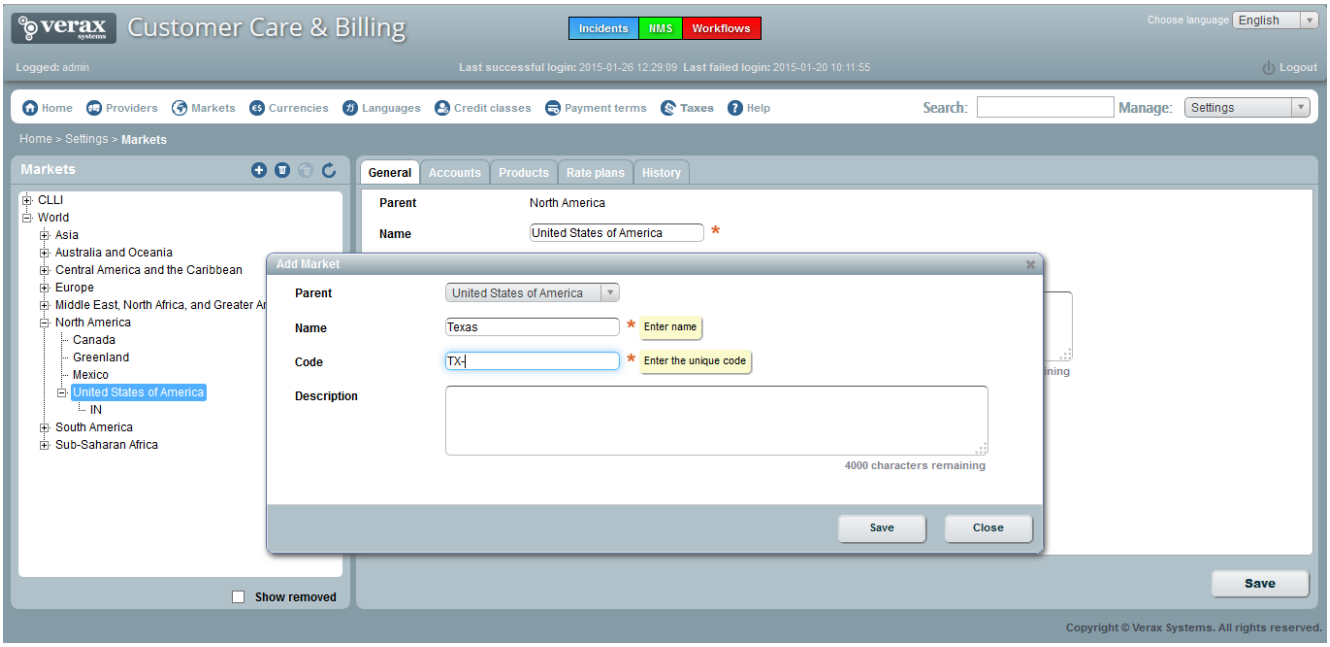


Figure 2: Adding a new market.

1.2. Service providers

Verax Customer Care & Billing enables creating products based on third party service provider offerings. A number of predefined provider types is available after the installation, the key ones being:

- **Access Network Provider** – provides infrastructure required to connect customers to the network at a specified location (or a range of locations).
- **Service Provider** – provides a specific service such as IP telephony.
- **Content Provider** – similar to a service provider, but providing content rather than service, e.g. VOD.

In order to manage service providers, navigate to the ***Settings*** view and choose ***Providers***.

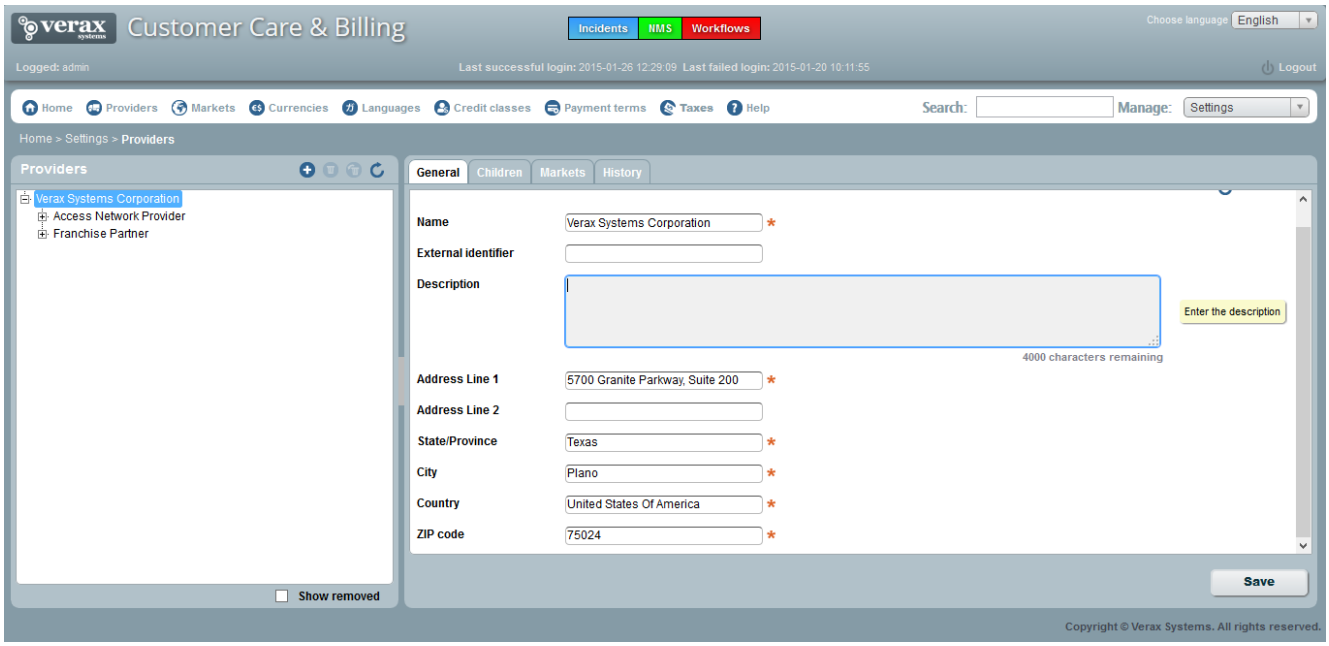


Figure 3: Managing service providers.

1.3. Languages and currencies

Verax Customer Care & Billing supports multiple languages and currencies. Each customer has his own language and currency settings. For instance, a customer may be billed in U.S. dollars, but receive invoices or access a self-care portal in Spanish. One language and one currency are set as defaults for newly created customer accounts. After the installation, the default currency is set to U.S. dollars and the default language to U.S. English.

In order to manage languages, navigate to the ***Settings*** view and choose ***Languages***, in order to manage currencies, navigate to the ***Settings*** view and choose ***Currencies***.

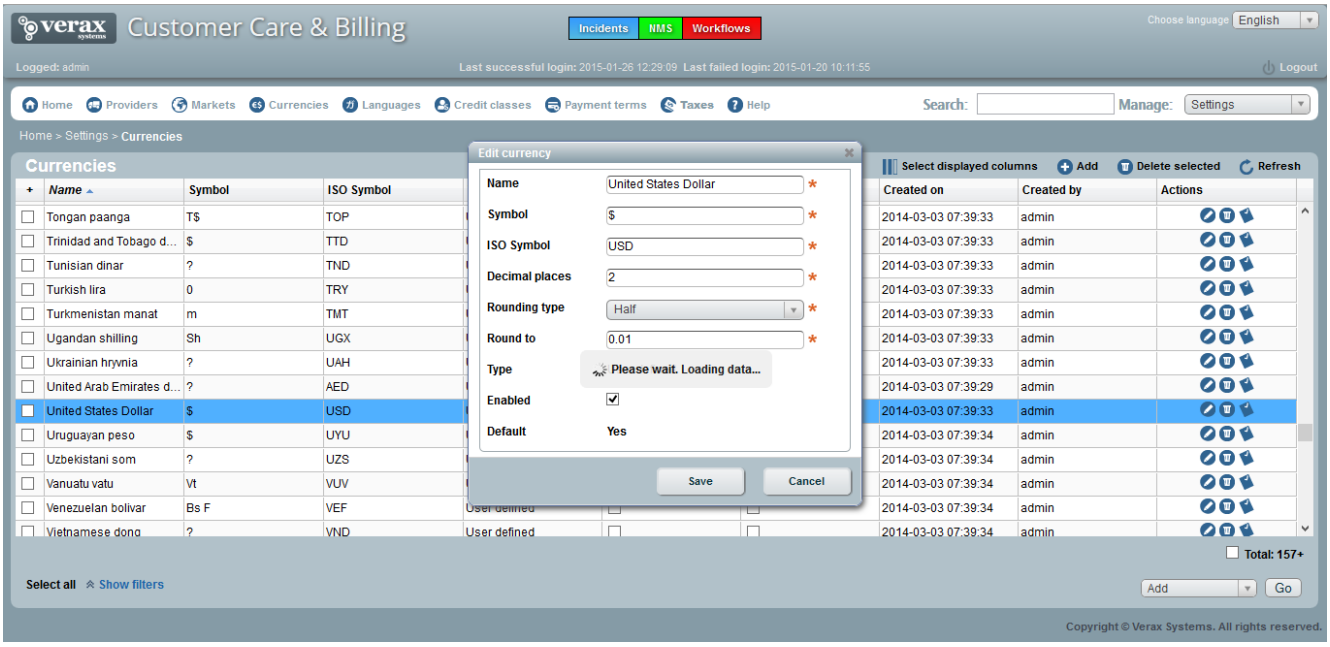


Figure 4: Setting up currencies.

IMPORTANT: While setting up currencies, make sure to specify *decimal places*, *rounding type* and *round to* parameters according to your organization's accounting policies.

1.4. Payment terms

Verax Customer Care & Billing provides predefined payment terms (e.g. Net 15, Net 30, etc.) available after the installation. The terms can be fully customized.

Each contract in Verax Customer Care & Billing has an assigned payment term (i.e. identical product orders may have different payment terms for different customers).

A payment term may also hold a global discount applied at the very end of the billing process (after any other contract or subscription discounts).

In order to manage currencies, navigate to the ***Settings*** view and choose ***Payment terms***.

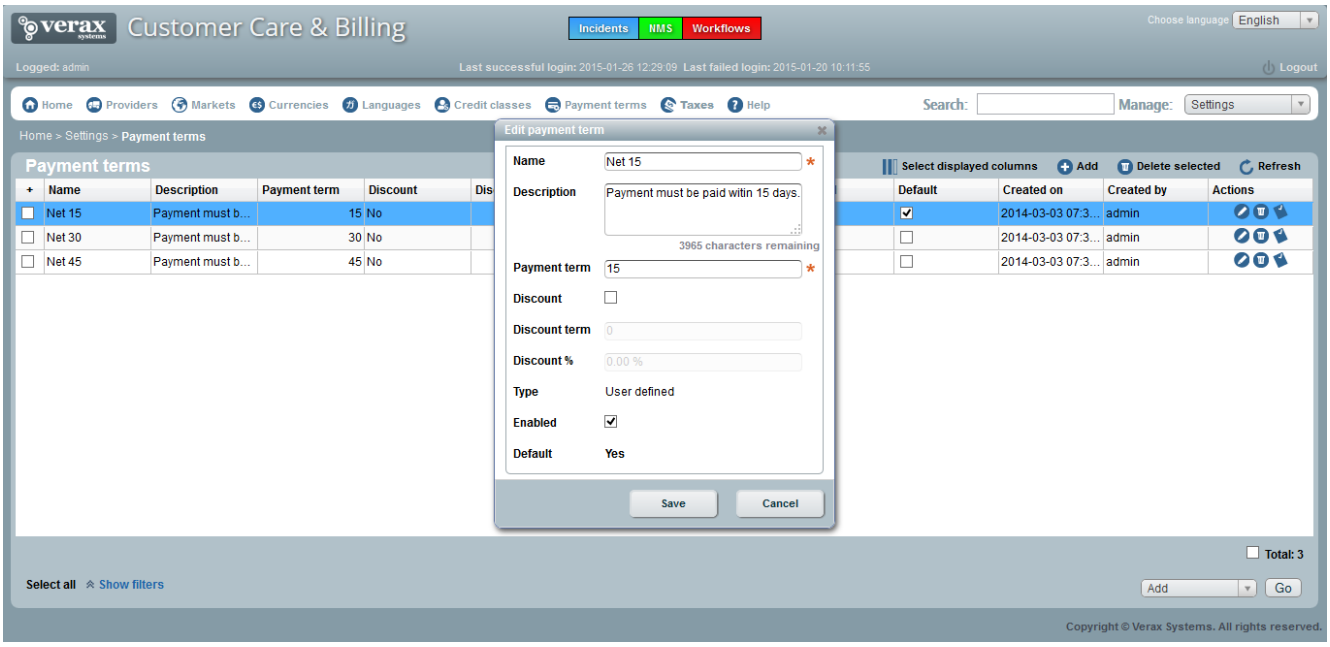


Figure 5: Managing payment terms.

1.5. Credit classes

Credit classes categorize customers based on their risk of revenue (e.g. VIP, General Public, Deposit Required, etc.). Each customer must have an assigned credit class.

Verax Customer Care & Billing provides predefined credit classes available after the installation, which can be fully customized.

In order to manage Credit classes navigate to ***Settings*** view and choose ***Credit classes***.

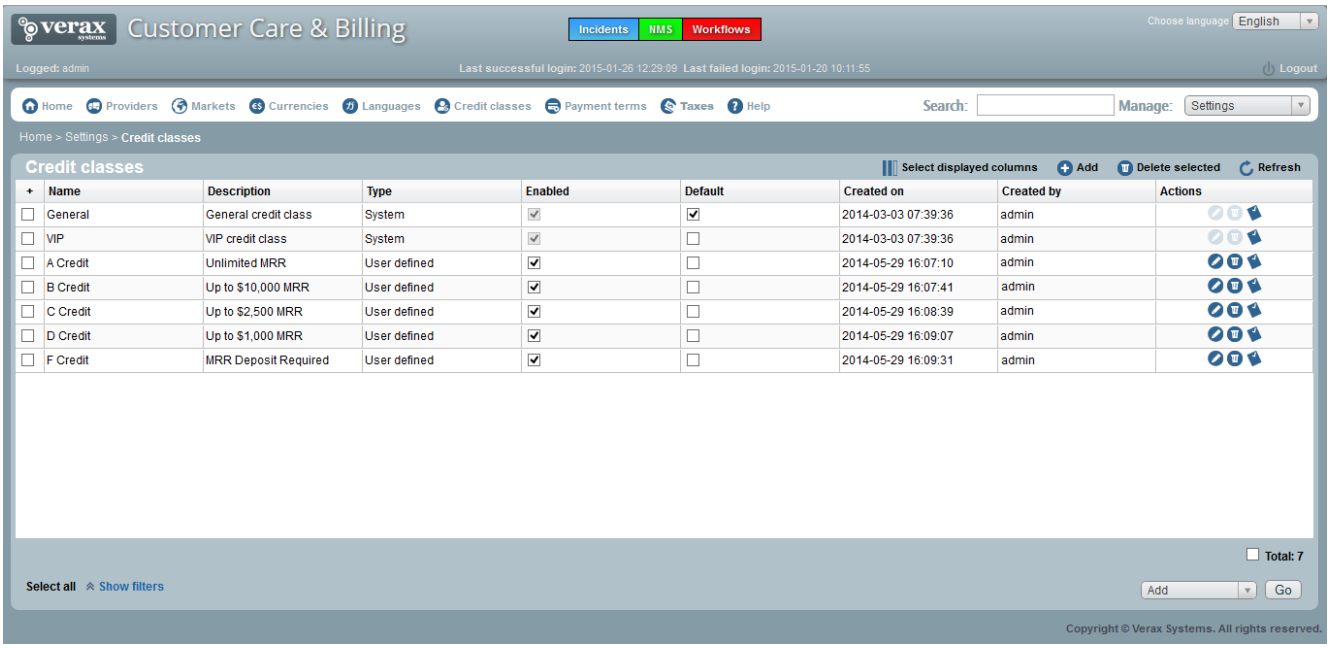


Figure 6: Managing credit classes.

1.6. Tax codes and regions

Tax codes are general classifiers defining how products and services are taxed. Every subscription has a rate plan (defining product charges) and each charge has an associated tax code. Tax codes contain location (e.g. country, state, county, city, zip) and tax information for the location: indication if the product is taxed, applicable rate, exempts, etc.

In order to manage tax codes and tax regions navigate to ***Settings*** view and choose ***Taxes***.

2. Defining products

Product Catalog part of the Verax Customer Care & Billing contains information about products and services, provided to the end-customers. The Product Catalog makes no distinction between products and services, they are both referred to as “products”.

In order to manage the Product Catalog, navigate to the **Product Catalog** view:

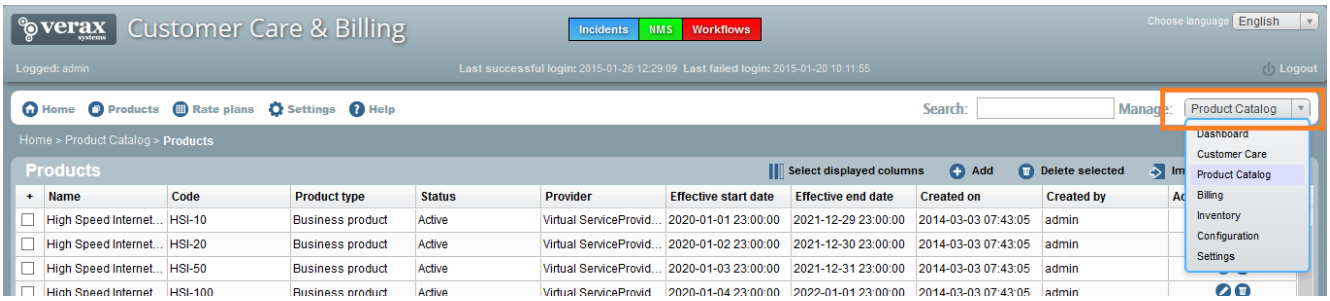


Figure 7: Selecting Product Catalog as the working view.

2.1. Product categories

Product categories help managing products by organizing them into a tree-like structure, resembling hard drive folders. Every product must have an assigned category, however the assignment does not affect billing in any way. Categories are mostly used for on-screen filtering (e.g. display all telephony products, VoIP, etc.).

Verax Customer Care & Billing provides a set of predefined product categories available after the installation. The predefined categories can be used when initially defining products and be updated later on, as they do not have any effect on the billing process.

In order to manage product categories go to the ***Product catalog*** view and choose ***Settings/Product categories***.

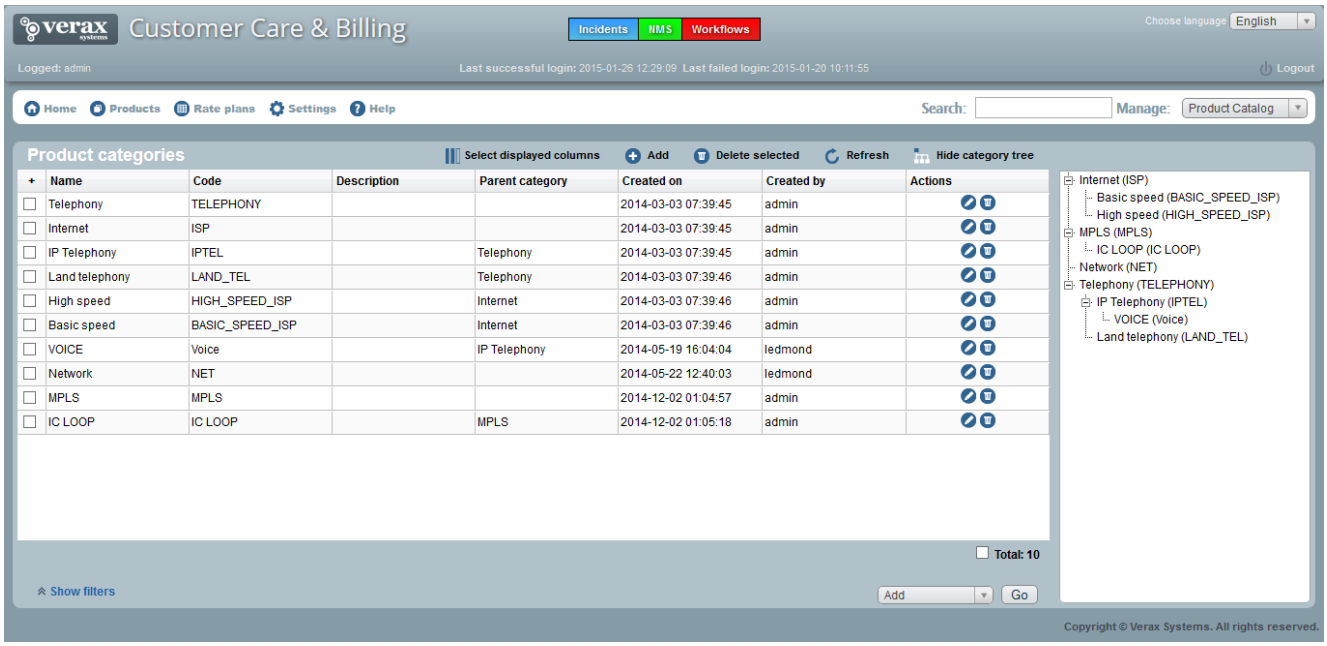


Figure 8: Managing product categories.

2.2. Other Product Catalog settings

Product Catalog settings do not have to be modified in vast majority of cases, with the exception of product categories described in the prior section. It is recommended however to take some time and review them. These settings include:

- **Product statuses**. Verax Customer Care & Billing products have a workflow, consisting of statuses (e.g. draft, active), and transitions allowed between the statuses. A product can be sold to customers (i.e. assigned to active subscriptions) only when its status is set to *Active*. The default workflow can be modified, for instance to have an additional approval or have several stages of preparation.
- **Rate plan statuses**. Similar to the product statuses described above, but applying to rate plans.
- **Units of measurement.** Units of measurement are used in the rate plan charges. The standard units can be extended with custom ones, such as "per license".

All of the above are available via **Settings** in the **Product Catalog** view.

2.3. Adding products

Product management is available via **Products** in the **Product Catalog** view. Use the *Add* action underneath the product list to create a new product:

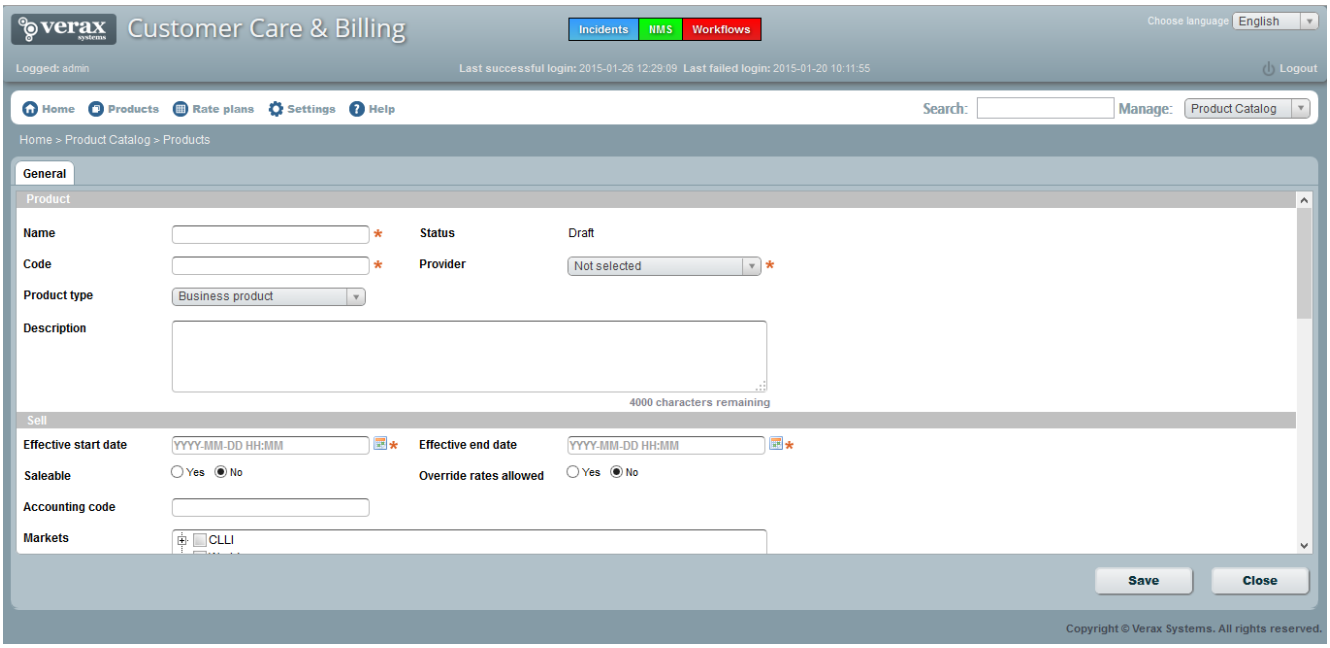


Figure 9: Adding a new product.

Once added, a new product does not have any associated rate plans. Product rate plans have to be created first (as described in the following section) and associated with the product. This association defines only rate plans that may be applied to the product in general (i.e. a product can be sold to different customers with different rate plans). The actual plan used for the end-customer is specified in his contract.

Once the product has been added, edit it to populate other product properties (not all of them are available while adding).

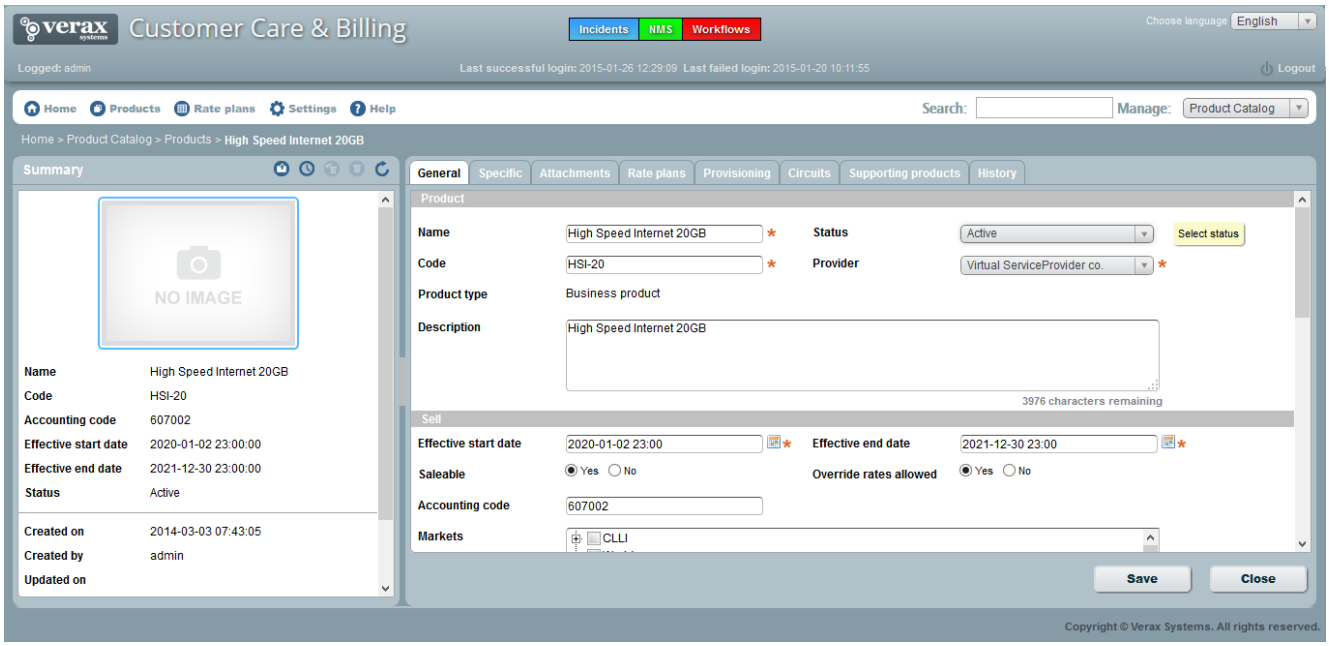


Figure 10: Editing a product.

2.4. Adding rate plans and charges

Products require rate plans in order to be billed. Rate plans (along with charges specified in the plans) define product prices for the end-users.

Rate plan management is available via **Rate plans** in the **Product Catalog** view. Use the *Add* action underneath the product list to create a new rate plan:

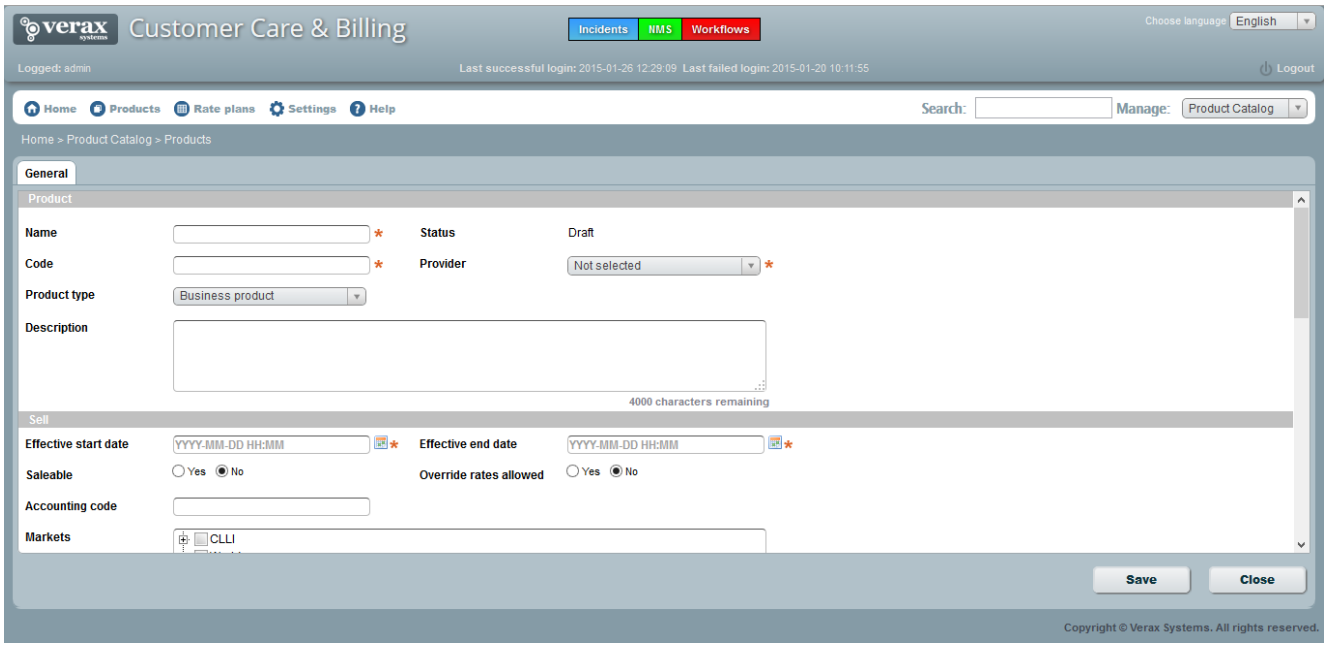


Figure 11: Adding a new rate plan.

Once the plan has been added, edit it to populate Charges, Markets and other details.

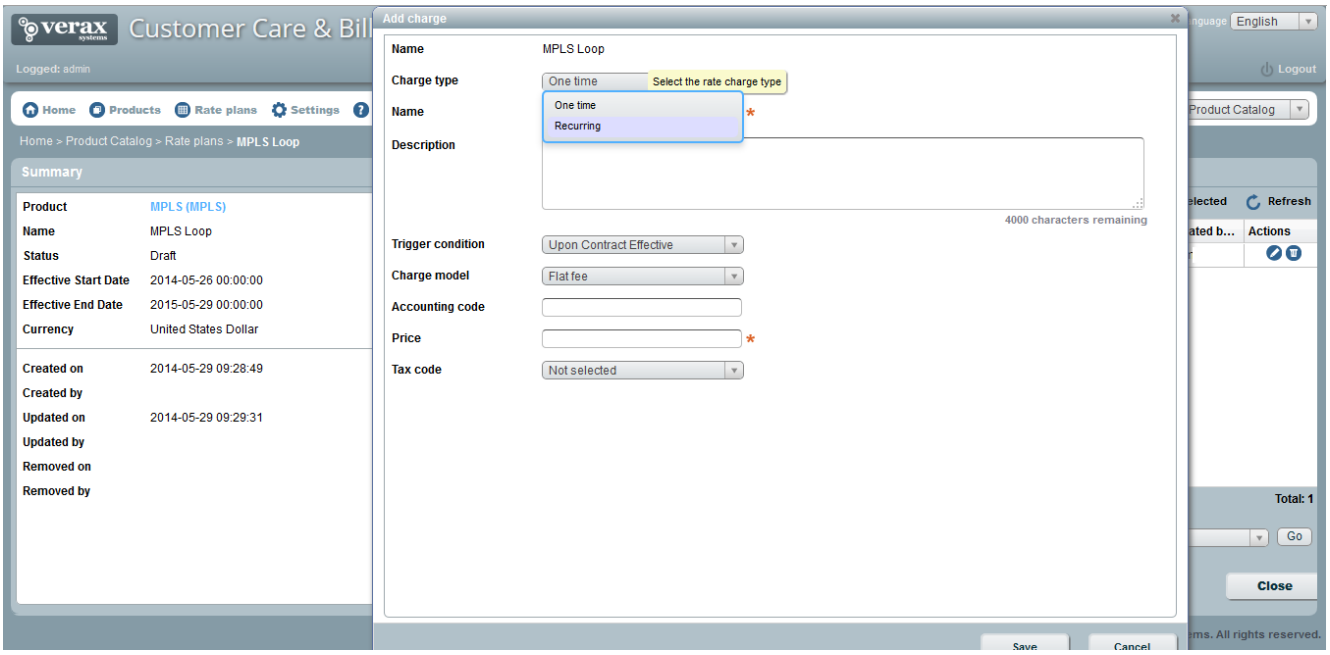


Figure 12: Adding charges to a rate plan.

2.5. Activating products

Once the products and the rate plans have been added, and associated with each other they need to be activated (initially they have *Draft* status to enable modifications and prevent accidental use). In order to activate a product or a plan, edit it and set its status to *Active*.

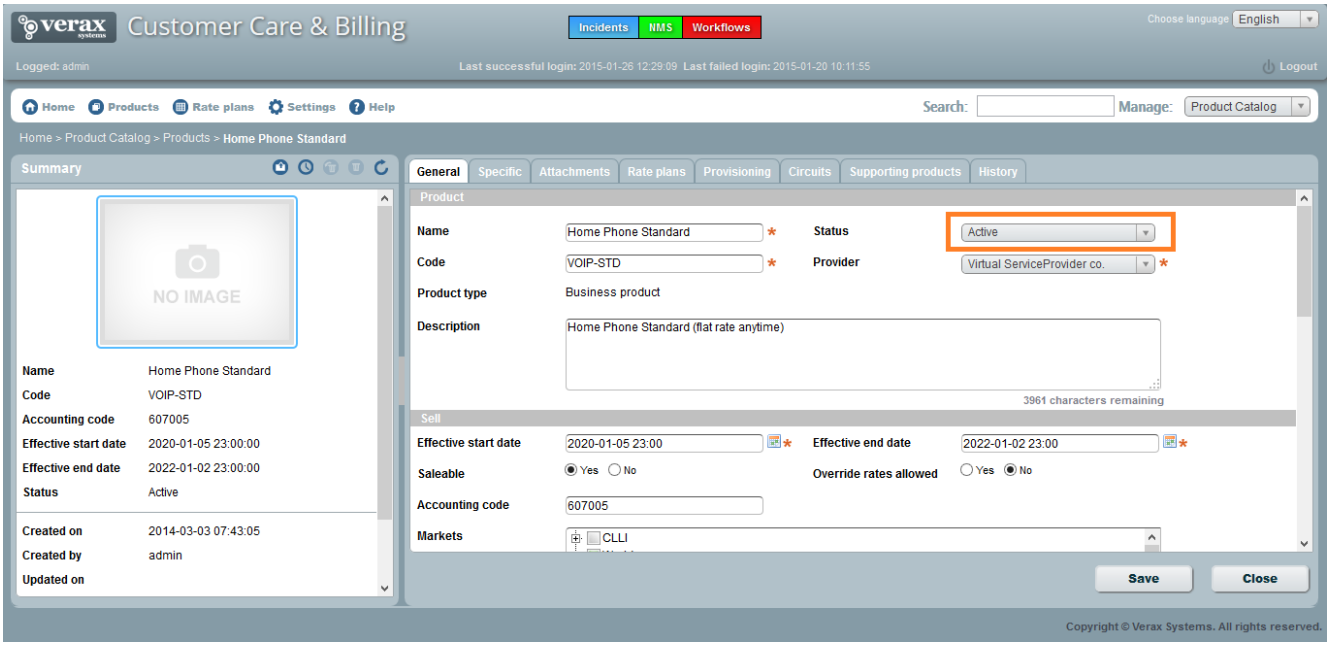


Figure 13: Changing product status.

IMPORTANT: The activation steps required are defined by the workflows described in section 2.2. By default (unless the workflows have been modified), product can be activated immediately, but rate plans require additional approval step.

Only activated products can be sold and billed.

3. Creating or importing customer accounts

In order to manage end-customers, navigate to the **Customer Care** view and click **Accounts**:

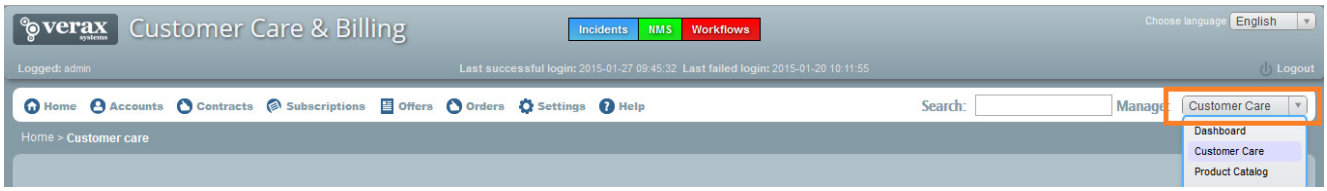


Figure 14: Selecting Customer Care as the working view.

Customer accounts can be either added manually, or imported from the CSV (Comma Separated Values) file.

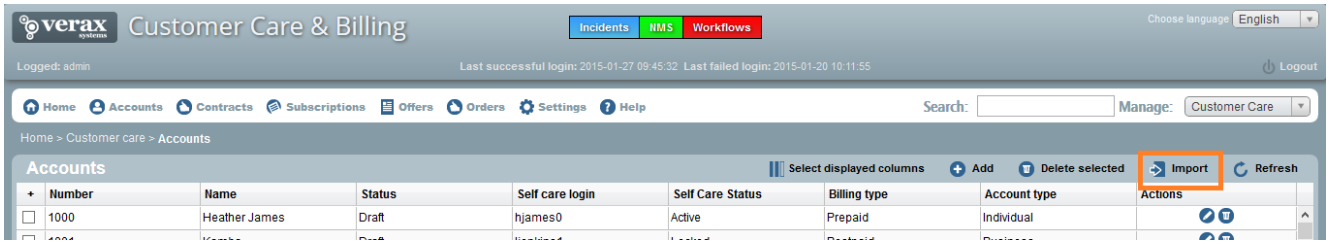


Figure 15: Importing customer accounts.

When created or imported, customer accounts are in *Draft* status (i.e. they cannot be yet assigned contracts or billed). To activate an account, edit it and set its status to *Active*.

IMPORTANT: To activate multiple customer accounts created via importing, re-import them in the update mode with status values set to ACTIVE. Once the operation has been completed, updated account statuses are set to *Active*.

4. Creating contracts

Contracts bind end-customer accounts with purchased products and services. A single contracts may contain one or more subscriptions.

In order to create a contract navigate to the **Customer Care** view and click **Contracts** (use the *Add* action underneath the contract list):

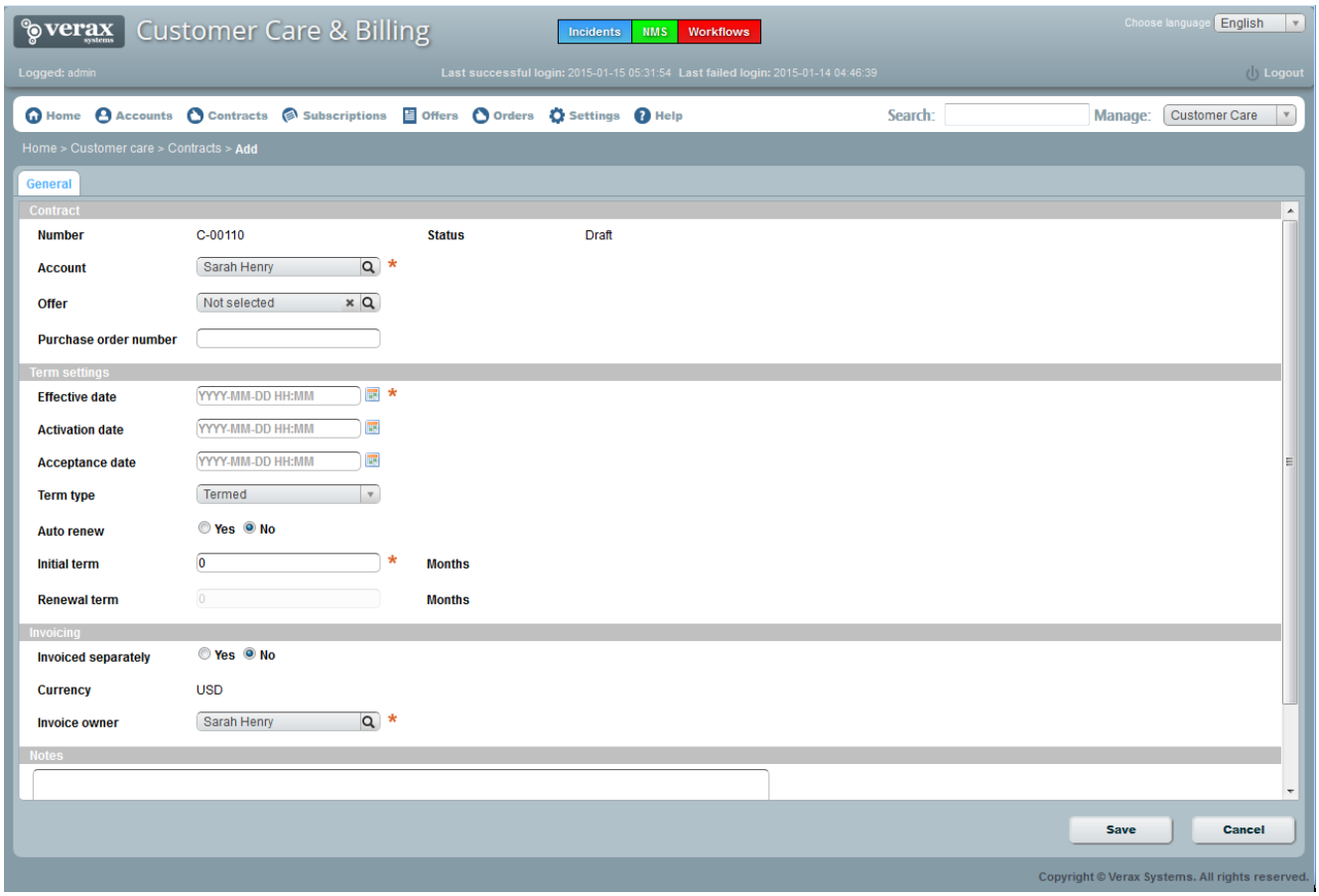


Figure 16: Creating a new contract.

Once the contract has been created, product subscriptions can be added (a subscriptions is a products along with the applicable rate plan). At this stage rate plans can be adjusted, e.g. in order to provide customer-specific discounts.

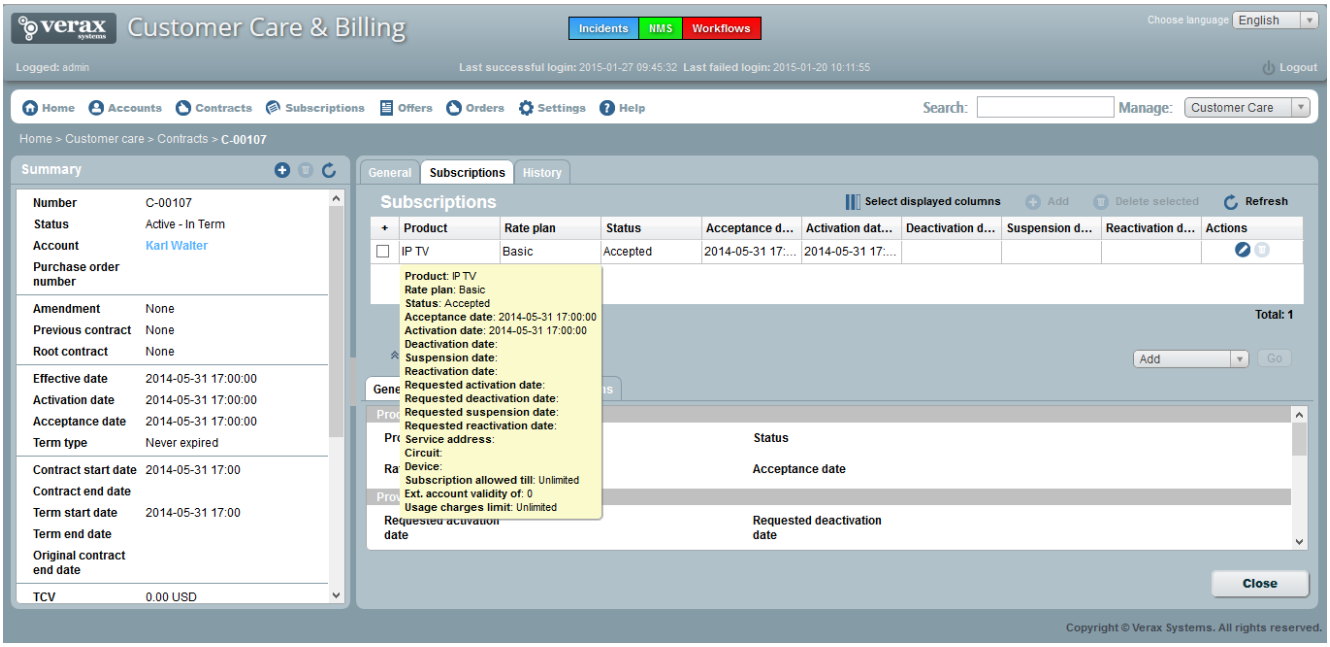


Figure 17: Subscriptions in a product.

Once subscriptions have been added, the contract should to be activated by setting its status to *Active* (only active contracts can be billed).

5. Billing and invoicing

A bill run is a process of generating invoices for a group of end-customers. Verax Customer Care & Billing supports two types of bill runs:

- **Scheduled** – ran automatically according to a pre-defined schedule.
- **Ad hoc** – ran manually by Customer Care & Billing operator.

In order to manage bill runs navigate to **Billing** view and click **Bill runs**.

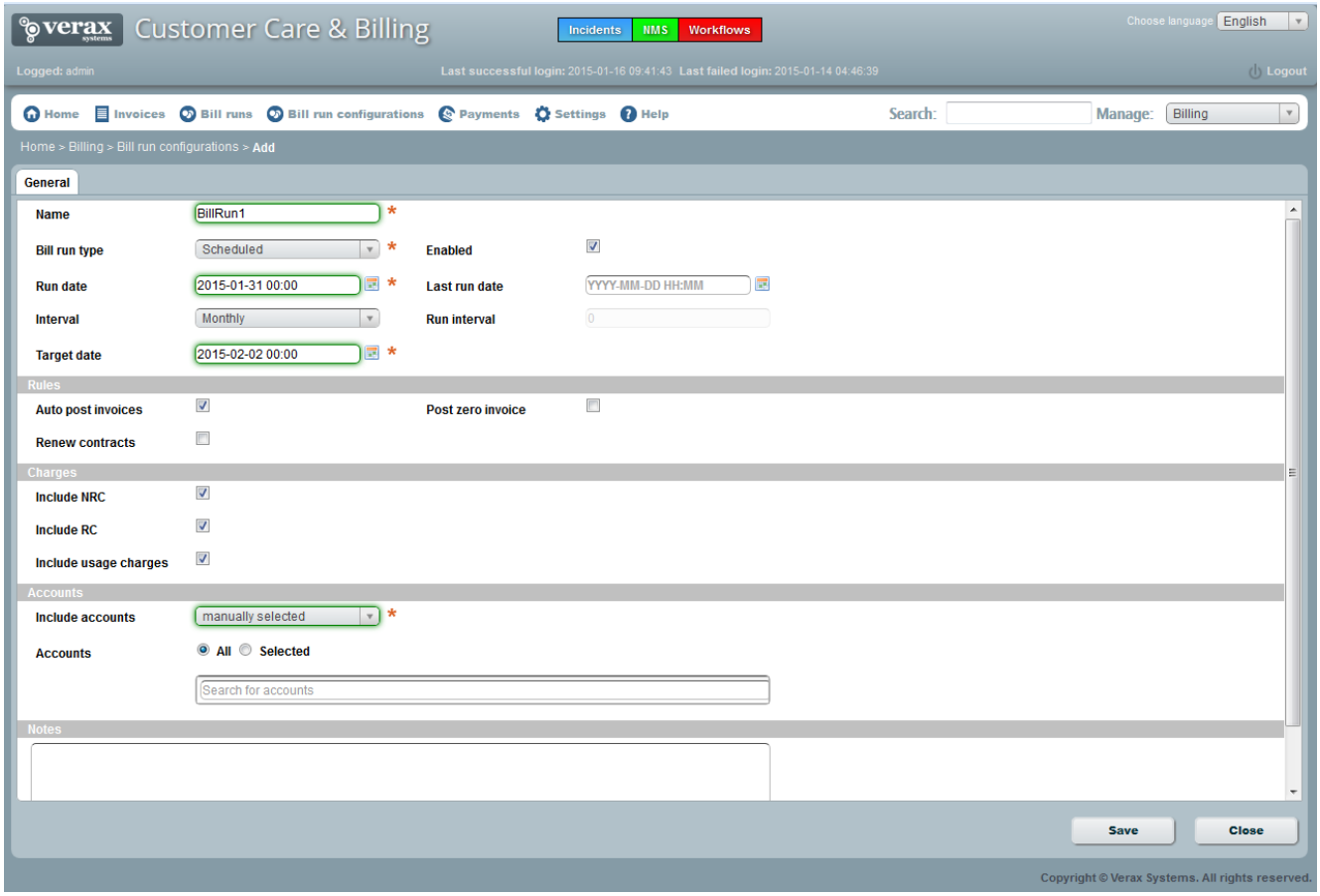
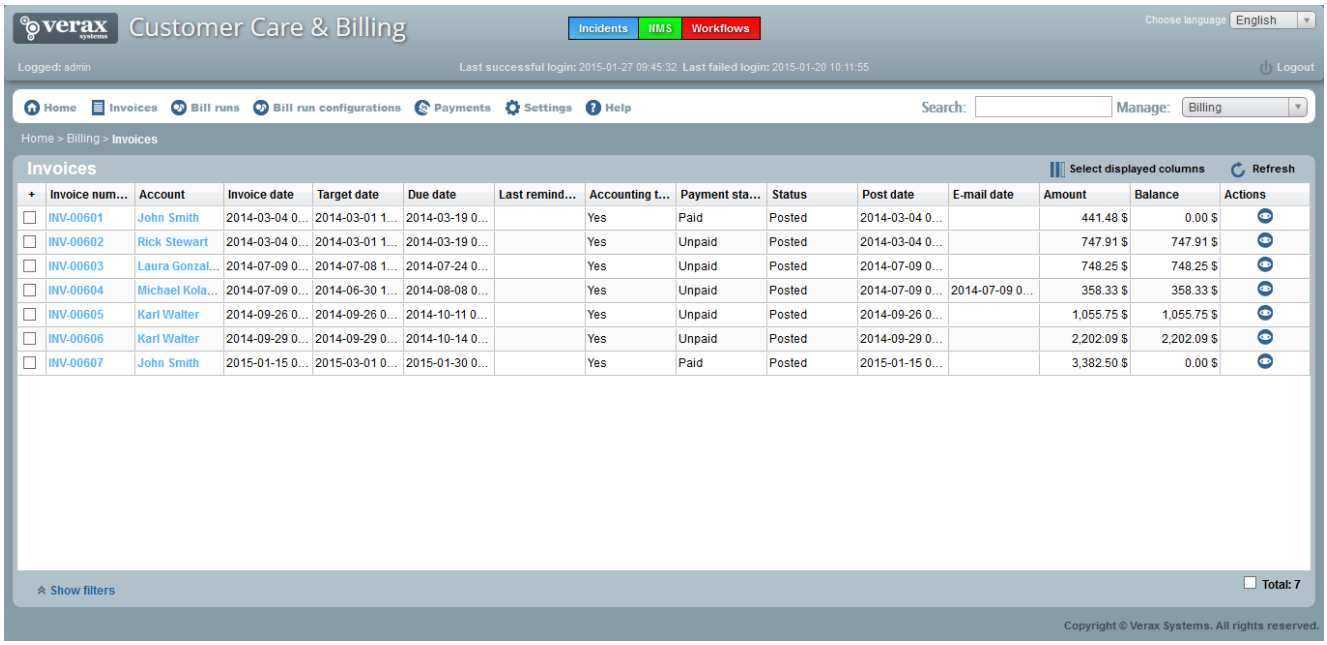


Figure 18: Creating a new bill run configuration.

The invoices generated by a bill run are shown in the bill run details. All invoices from all bill runs are available under **Invoices**:



+	Invoice num...	Account	Invoice date	Target date	Due date	Last remind...	Accounting t...	Payment sta...	Status	Post date	E-mail date	Amount	Balance	Actions
☐	INV-00601	John Smith	2014-03-04 0...	2014-03-01 1...	2014-03-19 0...		Yes	Paid	Posted	2014-03-04 0...		441.48 $	0.00 $	
☐	INV-00602	Rick Stewart	2014-03-04 0...	2014-03-01 1...	2014-03-19 0...		Yes	Unpaid	Posted	2014-03-04 0...		747.91 $	747.91 $	
☐	INV-00603	Laura Gonzal...	2014-07-09 0...	2014-07-08 1...	2014-07-24 0...		Yes	Unpaid	Posted	2014-07-09 0...		748.25 $	748.25 $	
☐	INV-00604	Michael Kola...	2014-07-09 0...	2014-06-30 1...	2014-08-08 0...		Yes	Unpaid	Posted	2014-07-09 0...	2014-07-09 0...	358.33 $	358.33 $	
☐	INV-00605	Karl Walter	2014-09-26 0...	2014-09-26 0...	2014-10-11 0...		Yes	Unpaid	Posted	2014-09-26 0...		1,055.75 $	1,055.75 $	
☐	INV-00606	Karl Walter	2014-09-29 0...	2014-09-29 0...	2014-10-14 0...		Yes	Unpaid	Posted	2014-09-29 0...		2,202.09 $	2,202.09 $	
☐	INV-00607	John Smith	2015-01-15 0...	2015-03-01 0...	2015-01-30 0...		Yes	Paid	Posted	2015-01-15 0...		3,382.50 $	0.00 $	

Figure 19: Invoices view.