



Autohaus Wolfsburg, represented here by IT project manager Michael Kull, is one of the partners with whom T-Systems is developing new VaudisX features.

Car Dealership 4.0: Turning customers into developers

Very little comes together at a car dealership without a dealer management system (DMS). That includes dealers of Volkswagen (VW) Group brands, who depend on software to manage their business processes. By last year, though, the software was showing its age – high time for an update! T-Systems threw itself headlong into the task with developers and customers. The result: VaudisX.

COPY — Thomas Heinen

Vaudis, a venerable dealer management system, has been experiencing a renaissance since mid-2017. Only a year ago, Vaudis was teetering on the brink, withering under the assault of competing branded systems. But many VW dealers still didn't want to do without Vaudis. "Users like the system's stability, versatility and reliability. That's a big reason why dealerships reached out to ask us to update Vaudis," reported Katrin Strobel from the Automotive Retail unit at T-Systems. By November 2017, T-Systems was ready to take the new version of VaudisX on tour. The roadshows gave VW brand dealers an opportunity to test-drive the proven DMS's new features and user interface.

VaudisX supports Autohaus Wolfsburg with every step in its service processes, from vehicle drop-off and shop scheduling to spare parts orders and order fulfillment.



NEW STANDARDS IN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Along with nine partners in the VW dealership community, T-Systems is investing in Vaudis's successor and setting new standards in product development. The development challenge is far from trivial: supporting all the processes in a sales and service organization, from customer relationship management and new and used inventory administration to service and parts/accessories all the way to warranty and courtesy repairs, time tracking, finance and accounting. "This is the first time in Deutsche Telekom's history that we've collaborated with customers in workshops to develop a new version of a DMS," said Strobel. The developers, working in concert with dealers, plan to develop VaudisX in stages and start rolling out the new version in 2018. The first module, Customer Service and Service Acceptance, should launch in the second quarter of the year. It will be followed by three additional modules, all scheduled to be successively released by the third quarter of 2019: Master Data, Inventory Management and New Vehicles. "We want to take whatever currently works and future-proof it," said Dirk Schröder, CIO of Autohaus Wolfsburg, one of Germany's largest VW dealerships with around 2,000 employees at 26 locations. "As a development partner, our job is to make sure that the finished product incorporates as many real-life operational requirements as possible," said Schröder.

LEAN CORE PLUS DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

The dealers want an end-to-end DMS with an intuitive web user interface and open interfaces. "We need a living system that gives us the ability to accommodate customers' needs

and preferences," said Schröder. "When people buy a vehicle or bring their car in for repairs, they expect their dealership to provide end-to-end service, supported by digital and mobile technology." The lean core of VaudisX can be supplemented with market- or brand-specific systems or by digitization modules from T-Systems' Customer Experience Management Automotive platform (CEM). CEM provides dealerships with a wide array of features to support sales and after-sales: a digital showroom with behavior analyses, online appointment schedulers or even a tablet-based vehicle check-in process in which a service technician documents and explains the vehicle's condition to the customer while it's on the lift.

VaudisX is designed to support the entire service process with the CEM modules – from appointment bookings to shop scheduling, vehicle check-in and service completion to billing. Interfaces to multiple manufacturer systems are possible, but the developers are first focusing on the VW Group's brands. Dealers who only use VaudisX retain full ownership and control of their data. The CEM Automotive digitization modules are hosted in Deutsche Telekom's

100%

VaudisX, when combined with CEM modules, provides 100% support for the entire service process, from appointment bookings to billing.



“You need digital and mobile technologies if you want to provide genuine end-to-end customer care.”

DIRK SCHRÖDER,
CIO, Autohaus Wolfsburg

cloud in Germany. Every dealership receives its own user account. “Partners can only access and use their own data,” said Strobel.

FINAL FEATURE SET STILL IN FLUX

The VaudisX project shows how developers and dealers can band together to bring a proven DMS into the digital age. Both sides made a deliberate choice on the product’s basic design: a lean core system that dealers can supplement with digital modules from the CEM platform as they like. Throughout the development process, team members have remained intently focused on what users need. “We’ll finalize the feature set based largely on what we and our development partners ultimately identify as useful, efficiency-enhancing features for dealers of VW Group brands,” said Strobel.

-  katrin.strobel@t-systems.com
-  www.t-systems.com/automotive/cem
- www.t-systems.com/automotive/dms
- autohaus.wolfsburg.de (German only)