



### Business challenge

How could BSH cut administration time and enable its field service engineers to spend it with customers and potentially boost sales?

### Transformation

BSH transformed its customer service processes with three custom iPad apps, enabling customer service professionals to go beyond fixing appliances and actively generate new business opportunities.

#### Business benefits:

**20% more**  
sales revenues  
generated by customer  
service technicians

**7% higher**  
productivity helps customer  
service teams complete  
more jobs every day

**Up to 22%**  
increase in Net Promoter  
Score, strengthening  
relationships and  
brand loyalty

## BSH Hausgeräte Enhances the customer support experience with innovative iPad apps from IBM

BSH Hausgeräte GmbH is the largest home appliance manufacturer in Europe. Headquartered in Munich, Germany, the company is part of the Bosch Group. BSH aspires to improve the quality of life for people with its exceptional brands including Bosch, Siemens, Gaggenau, Neff, Balay, Pitsos and Thermador, delivering high-class products and superior solutions. With 61,000 employees across a network of companies in 50 countries around the world, BSH achieves sales revenues of EUR 13.4 billion.

*“Our customer service teams that use the new iPad apps now generate 20 percent higher sales revenues on the job.”*

Martina Krenn

Head of Business Solutions Customer Service

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## Identifying room for improvement

BSH manufactures, sells and services almost every kind of domestic appliance, including refrigerators, freezers, washing machines and food processors. With a strong focus on customer service, the company continues to evolve its product offerings, with new smart home appliances and digital services.

What distinguishes BSH from other manufacturers is its professional customer field-service workforce, assisting consumers in 46 countries. Some 5,300 technicians complete around 12 million service jobs every year.

A typical service takes about 30 minutes, and issuing guarantees and receipts might add another 15 minutes to the job. Technicians also manage their own work schedule, adding to their administration time, which cannot then be devoted to customer service.

Martina Krenn, Head of Business Solutions Customer Service at BSH says, “Talking to customer service managers in different countries, we realized that existing workflows and tools did not always meet our high expectations, and satisfaction was low.

“Our goal is to enable our customer service professionals to spend less time on repetitive tasks and more time advising customers, fixing faults and providing value-added services for our customers. But how could we achieve this goal?”



## Redefining the support experience

BSH understood that a radically different approach was needed to overcome its challenges. The company wanted to apply a consumer-centric approach to its internal processes.

Martina Krenn explains, “We used to map out processes and solutions at headquarters and then hand the specification over to our service engineers for implementation. After years of hard work, we would roll out a new process that was based on our initial requirements.

“We wanted to flip this approach on its head—we would start by looking at the processes from the eyes of the service professionals, the ones out in the field actually executing the processes, day in and day out. We wanted to involve staff at all levels early in the project, integrate their feedback and then give them something that makes their lives easier.”

In addition to improving operational efficiency, BSH also identified new business opportunities it could unlock with better tools for its customer service professionals. Martina Krenn notes, “We wanted to use the service touchpoint to strengthen our relationship with customers and foster brand loyalty.

Our vision was that better tools would help us to use this time with the customer not only fix faults, but also to advise them more effectively on how they could make even better use of their appliance, combined with special offers, warranty extensions and if necessary, even replacement sales on the spot.

“How could we go beyond basic digital transformation of our processes and reinvent our customer service to move from one-off fixing jobs to a full-service customer experience?”

## Finding the right partner

BSH looked for partners that could take its customer service to the next level. The unique collaboration between Apple and IBM quickly convinced the team.

Martina Krenn remembers, “We wanted to move away from the traditional waterfall software development model for this project. When we met the IBM iX team, we could see how they combined expertise with the right mindset to facilitate this wide-ranging change towards agile development practices.”

BSH also had high expectations about working with Apple and IBM on user-centric visual prototyping sessions instead of long, tedious lists of requirements. By embracing IBM’s agile, design-thinking approach, the company aimed to keep all teams in the project sharply focused on the user experience.

Martina Krenn adds, “Nailing the user experience was the first and foremost objective. In design-thinking workshops and interviews with field staff, the team guided us through the design process. Within hours, we had a sketch of what we wanted, and after just three days, we had a functional iPad app prototype.

“IBM’s commitment to agile development and design-thinking guided us through the process, and we were deeply impressed to see tangible results so quickly. The whole team was excited to experience the look and feel of a modern, user-friendly app for our internal customer service processes. This first milestone helped to motivate the team and secure buy-in from all staff involved. For us, this innovative partnership between Apple and IBM worked perfectly.”



## Targeting a future-facing approach

Following the initial design phase, the IBM iX® team continued to work closely with BSH to implement all the fine details, even joining a BSH customer service technician for at least one job.

The project delivery was divided into three-week sprints. After each sprint, results were presented and discussed with BSH managers and customer service professionals to ensure the iPad apps remained aligned with business and user needs. Throughout the project, IBM combined local teams in Germany with near-shore teams in Romania

and off-shore developers in India to provide a cost-efficient and smooth implementation experience.

Martina Krenn says, “We can clearly see that the iPad apps encapsulate knowledge from our field staff like never before. The short cycle times and constant feedback really helped to keep the project on track and deliver the features our customer service teams actually need for their day-to-day tasks.”

“To make this project a success, we also needed to adapt internal IT teams to a new mindset focused on mobile apps. To achieve this, IBM advised our in-house software development teams to help us

integrate the iPad apps with our existing business applications. Together with IBM, we created future-proof, flexible APIs to connect the iPad apps with our existing data sources and internal systems.”

## iPad apps for enhanced customer service

In close collaboration with Apple and IBM, BSH has developed three iPad apps for its crucial customer service technicians: bFixing (core customer service processes), bInforming (accessories and replacement sales), and bTooling

(logistics and materials). Martina Krenn summarizes, “Thanks to Apple and IBM, our customer service teams now have the most advanced and easy-to-use tools for their daily tasks. By replacing laptops, printers, and other specialized equipment with just a light and highly portable iPad and powerful apps, we have started to realize our vision of more personalized customer service.”

## Embracing new business opportunities

BSH has successfully changed the job profiles of many customer service professionals, extending responsibilities from reactive problem-solving to include proactive advice, consulting and sales. Using the new iPad apps, customer service professionals at BSH can maximize business opportunities during on-site maintenance jobs.

The new processes are 100 percent paperless. Customer service technicians can manage jobs, plan routes, and generate cost estimates and email invoices right within the new iPad apps. Furthermore, the field staff can present comprehensive product information to customers that was simply not immediately available before. The iPad apps also support more dynamic and accurate inventory management across the fleet of customer service vans, allowing BSH to optimize distribution and supply of spare parts across its entire customer service network.

*“Thanks to Apple and IBM, our customer service teams now have the most advanced and easy-to-use tools for their daily tasks. We have started to realize our vision of more personalized customer service.”*

Martina Krenn, Head of Business Solutions Customer Service, BSH

Additionally, by replacing several single-purpose devices with iPad, the company reduced the number of devices by 80 percent—and cut the weight from around 10 kg to less than 1 kg, reducing physical strain and stress, and contributing to a healthier work environment.

Martina Krenn highlights, “Our customer service teams that use the new iPad apps now generate 20 percent higher sales revenues on the job. Crucially,

our customer service technicians can complete half a job more per day on average—delivering a more responsive service that helps lift our Net Promoter Score by up to 22 percent.”

## Preparing for a global rollout

Building on the success, this digital transformation project with IBM iX has an impact far beyond the initial scope. The customer service teams at BSH have changed their mindset and approach to future IT projects. An agile way of thinking now revolutionizes decision-making across the company and puts more emphasis on usability.

A stronger focus on internal as well as external users is at the heart of how the company designs new processes and

tools. As a next step, BSH plans to create a new bAdvancing app which will deliver dashboards featuring key performance indicators, with gamification of results to boost motivation.

BSH also wants to leverage machine learning and artificial intelligence technology from Apple and IBM, such as **IBM Watson® Services for Core ML**. With support from IBM, the company seeks to equip its customer service professionals with customized product recommendations for every customer service job. By using contextual information such as location and time of the year, BSH hopes to make customers even more attractive offerings and further increase sales revenues.

By 2020, BSH plans to roll the apps out to 30 countries. Martina Krenn confirms, “The rollout has been a big success, and deployment to new countries is driven

by country managers actively asking to onboard their teams as soon as possible. This is a strong indicator of high user acceptance of the new iPad apps.”

Martina Krenn concludes, “We have come a long way together with Apple and IBM. We took a significant risk when redesigning so many processes, but supported by IBM, the strategy has paid off.

“Our learning from this implementation is that we will use this agile mindset as default approach for future projects, and we look forward to our journey with IBM to become a Cognitive Enterprise.”

### Solution components

- iPad and iOS apps
- IBM® Services (IBM iX®)

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