Auto makers can boost after-sales business with cloud computing

Improving the after-sales process with advanced information sharing enabled by cloud technology

SIEMENS

Overview

The need
After-sales trade and service is an important point of direct contact between car manufacturers and their customers. Companies that find ways to improve their maintenance and repair services can improve their brand image and boost customer loyalty.

The solution
Siemens PLM Software and IBM have developed an after-sales solution based on Teamcenter software. The offering provides car manufacturers with an innovative platform for distributing maintenance information using flexible and scalable cloud technologies such as IBM® SmartCloud® Enterprise+.

The benefit
Fast access to up-to-date, service-specific information helps mechanics maintain and repair vehicles efficiently. Serviced cars can be returned to customers sooner, boosting satisfaction, loyalty and repeat business.

After-sales trade and service accounts for a significant proportion of vehicle manufacturers' revenues and profits, so it is very important for these companies to provide efficient, customer-oriented services in their auto repair shops. To boost their share of the ever-growing after-sales market, manufacturers must find a way to repair vehicles more efficiently, cut maintenance costs, and make visiting auto repair shops a pleasant experience for car owners.

Mechanics can only provide high-quality repair services if they can quickly access the spare parts and maintenance guides for thousands of different models and optional pieces of extra equipment. Siemens PLM Software recognized that its Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software could help manufacturers to manage their after-sales business more efficiently, but it needed to find a way to compile the after-sales information, convert it into a form that mechanics can use easily, and distribute it to auto repair shops based all over the world.

Optimizing after-sales operations with an innovative cloud solution

Harald Gmeiner, Manager of Business Development for the Automotive Industry at Siemens PLM Software, explains, "When we were designing the after-sales solution, we knew that we needed to find a way to make the relevant data from our Teamcenter software available all over the world. However, it was difficult to predict how widely this software would be used, so we needed a solution that could be scaled up extremely quickly at peak times – this prerequisite led us to a cloud offering."

Siemens PLM Software decided to run its Teamcenter software using IBM cloud offerings. Vehicle manufacturers can choose from a variety of deployment models (private, virtual private, and public), such as IBM SmartCloud Enterprise+. The IBM cloud offerings enable vehicle manufacturers to set up new instances of Teamcenter software extremely quickly when they are needed. Thanks to IBM's standard, globally-available cloud offerings, companies can instantly access infrastructure and platform services (IaaS and PaaS) via the cloud, and overcome challenges around scalability.

Harald Gmeiner continues, "In this case, we selected IBM as our cloud partner, because its consultants demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of the automotive industry and a clear understanding of the specific challenges that vehicle manufacturers face. In addition, IBM manages data centers based all over the world, providing excellent performance for our Teamcenter software from any location."

Teamcenter software stores comprehensive information about each individual component of all models of vehicles, and can be closely integrated with existing development and assembly systems.

Tobias Ammer, Business Development Manager at Siemens PLM Software, adds, "Teamcenter provides an integrated definition of each spare part as well as full change management functionality. Manufacturers use the data from Teamcenter to generate indexes of components with 3D guides and additional animations to help mechanics visualize the best repair methods."

Cloud solution enables global deployment

Whenever new models of vehicles are launched and more users need to access the system, the IBM cloud offering enables manufacturers to seamlessly scale up their systems to keep pace with demand. Additionally, as soon as a manufacturer finds a new way to service its vehicles even more efficiently, the Teamcenter software distributes the maintenance information to its auto repair shops and ensures that mechanics always have access to up-to-date repair instructions.

The IBM cloud solutions offer global scalability, adhere to the latest security standards, and provide manufacturers with granular control over which data is shared. Equally, the high degree of flexibility and speed in setting up new users plus the wide use of automation provides manufacturers with the agility and efficiency they need in their after-sales operations to stay one step ahead of competitors.

The solution from IBM and Siemens PLM Software enables manufacturers to avoid incorrect or ineffective repairs when servicing vehicles, making their maintenance operations faster and more efficient. Streamlined operations help auto repair shops to return serviced vehicles to customers sooner, boosting their satisfaction and loyalty.

Harald Gmeiner concludes, "Working with IBM, we have found an innovative way to help manufacturers maintain vehicles more efficiently, boost customer satisfaction and improve their brand image."

About Siemens PLM Software

Siemens PLM Software is a global leader in Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) Software. The company is headquartered in Plano, Texas (USA), employs more than 8,000 people and serves more than 71,000 customers worldwide.

For more information

To learn more about IBM cloud solutions, contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit us at:
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