

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Hermann Hartje KG Digitalises Company Strategy and Provides a Fresh Approach with the Help of SugarCRM



Hermann Hartje is a specialist automotive and cycling wholesaler in Northern Germany, focusing on B2B sales, directly to dealers. The company sells a comprehensive range of products with more than 100,000 articles permanently in stock. This includes bicycles, bicycle spare parts and accessories, car and motorbike parts, workshop machines, devices, and equipment.

Every day thousands of orders with over 100,000 individual articles are leaving the warehouses. The company's vehicle fleet alone comprises more than 300 cars and trucks.

Industry ///

Bike / Motorbike /
Automotive

Location ///

Hoya, Germany

Website ///

www.hartje.de/en

Reimagining the Customer Experience

In 2018 Hermann Hartje KG began its journey to upgrade its customer experience, strengthen existing relationships, and improve internal processes to enable better customer care. The company wanted to re-establish itself as the go-to wholesaler in the automotive and cycling industries.

Internal discussions and workshops made it clear that the current manual processes were making any change difficult to achieve and that the company needed to undergo a complete digital transformation to meet its strategic goals. A key step in this direction was the adoption of a new CRM system that would be robust enough to support the business and its customers throughout the transformation.

The system would need to provide a greater understanding of each customer, enable transparency, both internally and externally, and be flexible enough to allow for new processes to be introduced in the future.

Procurement and Implementation

Hermann Hartje started looking for the best implementation partner and software solution that would fit the company's extensive list of requirements. These considerations included the availability of local German-speaking support on both the partner's and the software provider's part.

SugarCRM and atlantis dx were eventually selected as the winning combination and Hartje hasn't looked back since. The friendly and experienced team at atlantis dx worked with the company to get a good understanding of its operations so they could tailor the solution exactly to Hartje's needs.

Christian Hepp, Sales Leader in Digitalisation at Hermann Hartje pointed out that the team at atlantis is not only professional, but also very amiable. The two companies established a very close cooperation whereby atlantis perfectly complements Hartje's internal team. The cooperation is carried out in a relaxed atmosphere while enabling Hartje employees to focus on working towards company targets. Similarly, Hepp praised SugarCRM for great customer care. "It is important for us to know that there is somebody that can help us, and we never feel that we are not heard. Our contact at Sugar always works hard to find a solution for us and understands when we need something resolved urgently."

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Modernising, Saving Time, and Focusing on the Customer

Following the introduction of the CRM solution, Hepp focused on internal user adoption. To drive uptake, employees had the option to attend open forum sessions where they could ask any questions about the software functions and get immediate answers. They were also able to submit questions anonymously in advance which helped overcome fears of looking incompetent.


Hartje also created videos and step-by-step PDF guides that give employees clear instructions and help them understand the system. A key focus at this stage was also to highlight the benefits of using the software. Hepp explains, “We spent a lot of time on demonstrating the value it adds to our people. We showed them how they can save time, work more efficiently, and reach their individual targets faster with the help of the system. The platform is easy to use, but we just needed to make sure everyone sees that.”

Over time, Sugar has become an intrinsic part of Hermann Hartje’s sales process. Outdated ways of working that were slowing down the busy department have now been successfully replaced and this happened just in time before the Covid-19 pandemic.

For example, new orders were previously picked up in a very old-fashioned way. The salesperson in the field would drive to the dealer and prepare an order sheet there and then. To save time on travelling, Hartje rolled out a new tool where customers can access a digital product presentation and place orders. The Sugar platform identified the key customers who would benefit most from the new ordering tool, which made the rollout a much easier process. When the first national lockdown hit and sales reps couldn’t visit customers, Hartje was ready to continue its business with minimal disruption.

SugarCRM has also improved the way Hartje supports customers who make a warranty claim or report damaged products. The company didn’t have a transparent process in place, meaning customer teams didn’t have any visibility over the status of the issue. Now with Sugar’s Ticket Module, Hartje employees, as well as their customers, can see updates in real-time which significantly improves their relationship.

The same Ticket Module is also used internally for the company’s IT department. Before the system was set up, IT support relied on emails and mainly phone calls for flagging issues. Now there is an email address in place with tickets raised according to the severity of the problem. Employees can check the progress in the system, meaning the team needs to field fewer enquiries for an update. In fact, the volume of phone calls fell by more than 30%.



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Looking to the Future

As Hartje's digitalisation journey continues, the company is creating new processes and always looks to best optimise its operations. Instead of just moving analog procedures to the digital realm, the teams are designing new ways of working that take full advantage of the new CRM platform and all its capabilities.

In time, Sugar will become the central hub for all customer data, which may grow to include B2C as the business is considering opening up to monitor this activity on its website. Hartje is also planning a new Sugar-powered B2B platform with tailored content depending on the viewer.

Sugar provides a great opportunity to consolidate all future customer-related processes and data from the company's middleware software and product information management (PIM) solution into one system. This will be critical for Hartje to deliver on its customer promise and thrive in years to come.

The logo for atlantisdx, featuring the company name in a white sans-serif font on a dark purple background, with a small gear icon to the right.

SUGAR PARTNER

atlantisdx is a service provider that specializes in the development and implementation of digital solutions.

www.atlantisdx.de // info@atlantisdx.de

About SugarCRM

SugarCRM is how marketing, sales, and service teams finally get a clear picture of each customer to help businesses reach new levels of performance and predictability. Sugar is the CRM platform that makes the hard things easier.

Thousands of companies in over 120 countries rely on Sugar to achieve high-definition CX by letting the platform do the work. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, Sugar is backed by Accel-KKR.

To learn more visit www.sugarcrm.com or follow [@SugarCRM](https://twitter.com/SugarCRM).