

A person's hands are shown holding a glowing tablet. Above the tablet, a collection of colorful digital icons floats in a semi-circle, including a microphone, location pin, Wi-Fi symbol, headphones, smartphone, globe, document, padlock, envelope, laptop, shopping cart, lightbulb, magnifying glass, and a classical building. The background is dark with bokeh light effects.

Detecon Study: Digital Customer Journey Aftersales

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Introduction



The consequent alignment of all processes and systems towards the customers' needs is key to success in the digital age.



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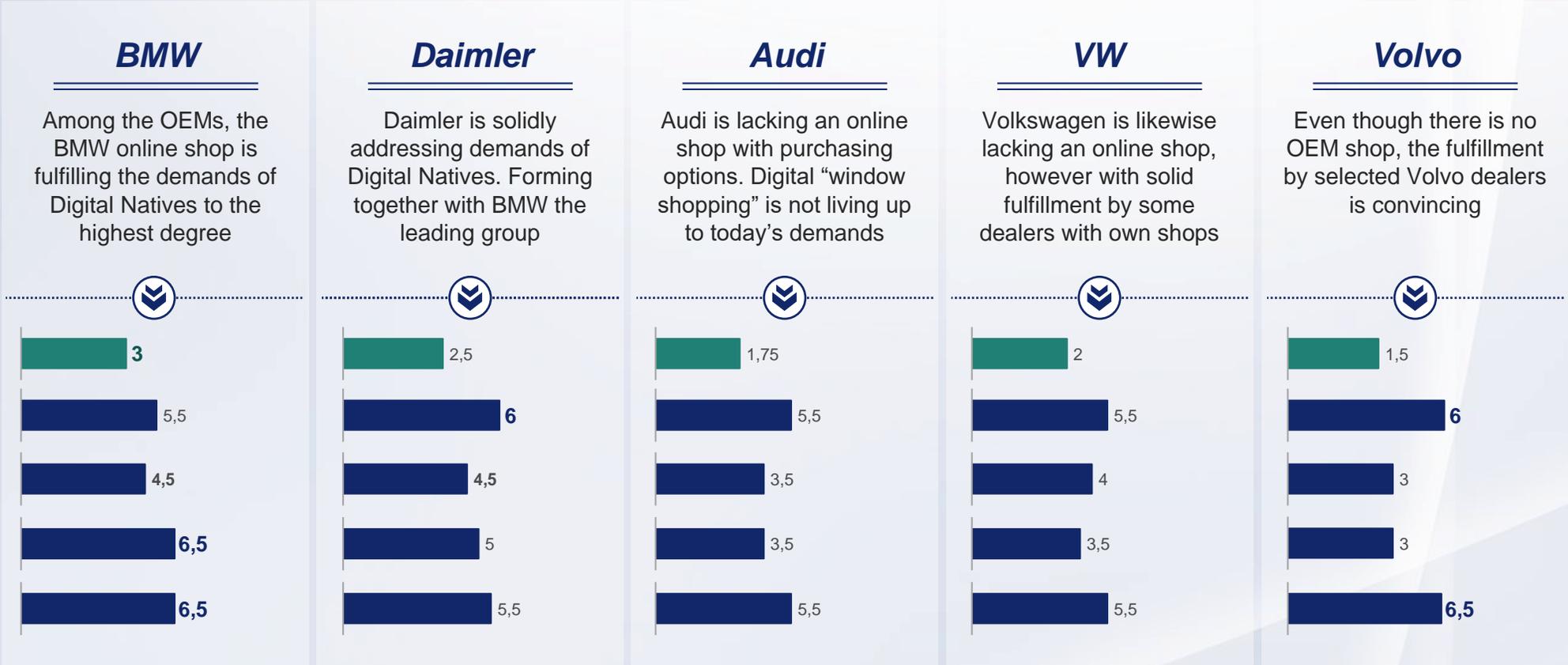
How well are the Digital Natives' needs for an integrated customer journey addressed within automotive aftersales?

After the purchase is before the purchase – for the buyer, the journey isn't over after the vehicle purchase itself. Whether for workshop visits or the purchase of spare parts or accessories, the customer is confronted with an often opaque world of services and touchpoints. Not only that there are a lot of new offerings and services introduced to the market that are "originally" digital, many "traditional" touchpoints have been digitized. Primarily young car owners have very high expectations towards a digital experience and wish for a coherent and seamless integration, simple handling and a pleasing user interface experience.

Our study explores the question whether to what degree needs of a Digital Native are being addressed within an automotive aftersales customer journey by automotive manufacturers and their dealership network. Within a first iteration* customer experiences in the German market were evaluated for five brands: Audi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen and Volvo.

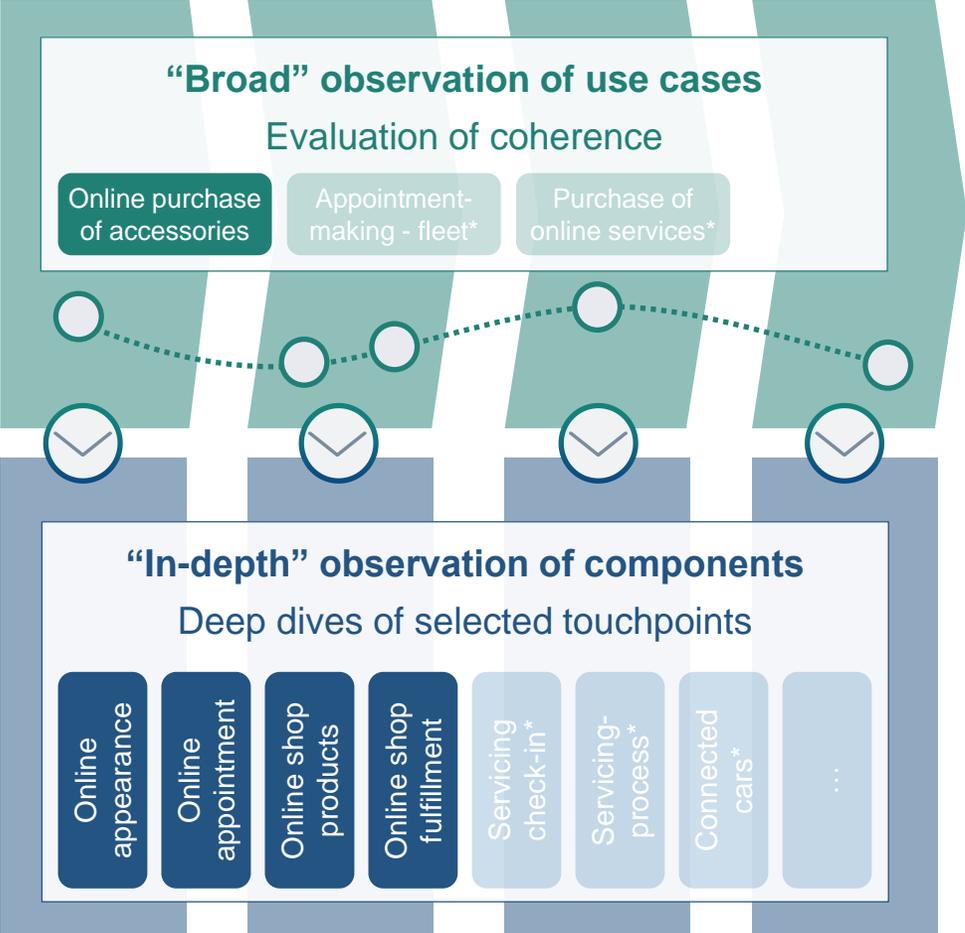


Management Summary for iteration #1 *



* For the first iteration of this study, the (digital) customer journeys of the brands Audi, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen and Volvo were evaluated on the German market. First, the overall experience of the journey regarding the online purchase of an accessory product was evaluated, before the components Online appearance, Online appointment, Online shop products and Online shop fulfillment were analyzed more deeply. The fulfillment of demands of a Digital Native regarding the customer journey and the components were each assessed in multiple dimensions on a scale from 0 to 10.

Methodology of the study



Use cases as coherent customer experiences

Use cases in the context of this study are defined as the interaction between different components and touchpoints along a user’s overall activity. A use case can be understood as an overarching bracket for a part of the customer journey. The individual use case was tested regarding simplicity, price, online communication, involvement and seamless integration through repeated mystery shopping and then evaluated on a scale from 0 (not existing) to 10 (completely fulfilled).



Components of the digital customer journey

Components in the context of this study are defined as specific parts of a customer journey. Components were evaluated individually on a quantitative basis by means of a multi-level use-value analysis on a scale from 0 (not existing) to 10 (completely fulfilled). To do this, weighted evaluation categories and sub categories were formed, tested and assessed. These evaluation categories were selected with regards to visual appeal, interactivity, intuitiveness and further component specifics. Depending on the component, real tests, internet research and interviews were utilized to conduct the evaluation.

* Evaluation is done in successive iterations



Use case #1

Online Purchase of Accessories



Online Purchase of Accessories

Key facts & highlights



In general, products are rarely promoted via all channels, with no individualization of advertisements on the basis of browsing and consumption behavior.



Audi and Volvo OEM online shops don't offer product purchases – OEM online shops of BMW and Daimler offer full purchase capabilities. Volkswagen currently doesn't offer an OEM online shop.



OEM online shops often are structured better than Retail online shops – However this is not the case for BMW. Here, OEM and Retail shops are on average on the same level.



Neither the online shops of BMW or Daimler use the opportunity for cross-selling, to ask for feedback or to take part in customer retention. Here, Retail online shops are better.

Customer journey

Awareness

- Advertisement on OEM and Retail websites

Purchase

- Purchase options
- Delivery & payment options

Loyalty & expansion

- Cross-selling
- Feedback
- Retention



Consideration

- Google search
- Traceability within online shop

Post-purchase

- Condition of product and packaging
- Return options

Integration

- Central customer ID existing
- Touchpoint UX (user experience)



Online Purchase of Accessories

Evaluation criteria & weighting

1 Awareness

Are there product advertisements on the homepage, the online shop or on social media? Are the advertisements individualized by customer specific metrics gathered from the online shop?

3 Purchase

What purchasing options exist within the online shop? Which delivery options can be selected? Which payment options can be selected? How well are retailers integrated?

5 Loyalty & expansion

Is cross-selling used (e.g. winter packages)? Is feedback concerning product satisfaction collected? Are customer retention programs in place?

2 Consideration

How well is the traceability within the online shop, on the homepage or via further channels? What is the product variety in the online shop like?

4 Post-purchase

What was the condition the product was in? What was the condition / degree of professionalism of the packaging? What delivery options (also speed of delivery) were available? What return options were available?

6 Integration (central customer ID)

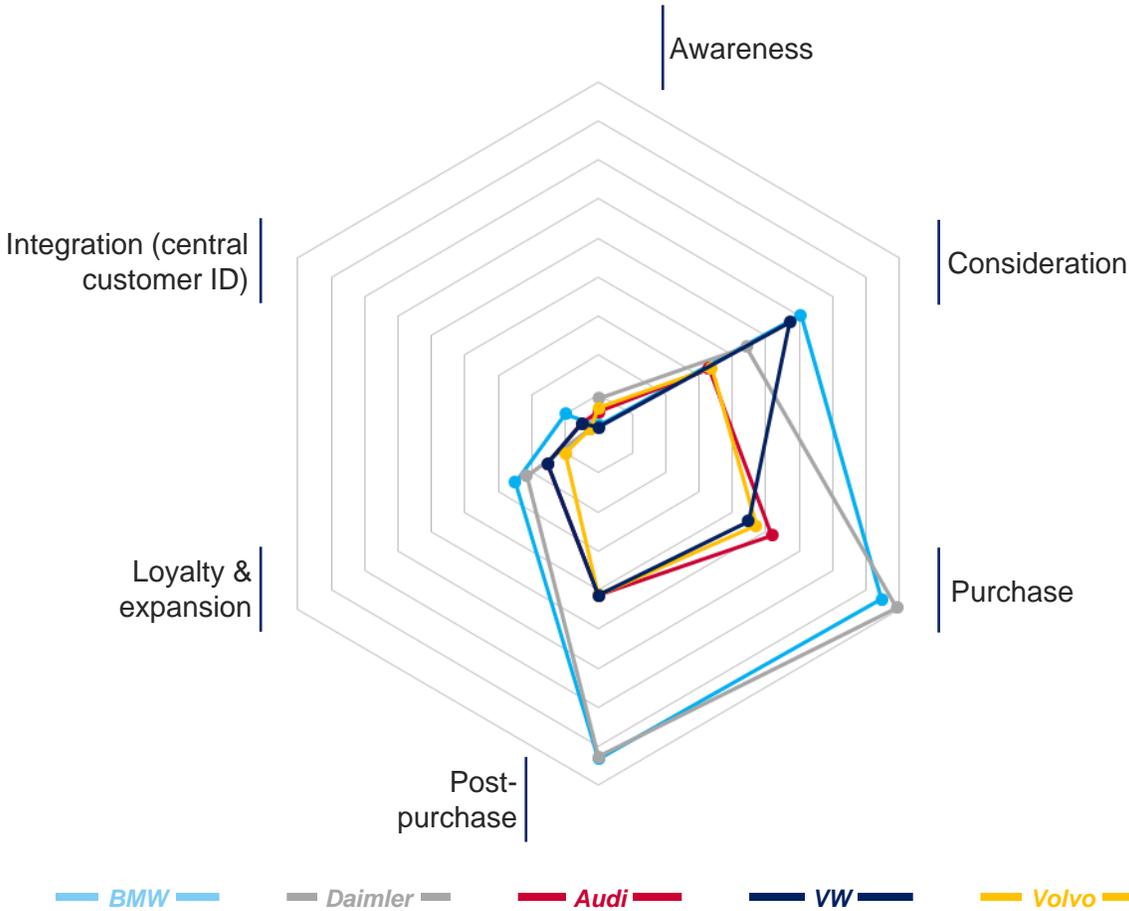
How seamless is the integration and coherence within the use case? How are the touchpoints aligned with each other? Is there a consistent touchpoint UX design? Does the option of using a central customer ID exist?





Online Purchase of Accessories

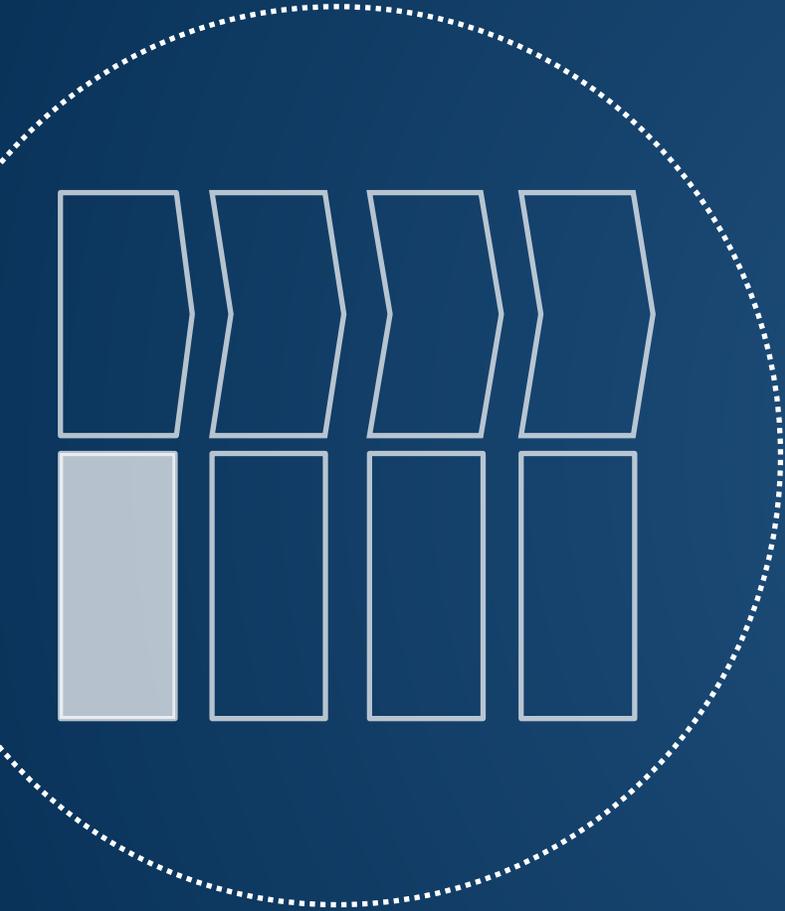
Results*



Recommended actions

1. Loyalty & expansion programs could be improved by use of e.g. discount campaigns, personal recommendations, reward programs or the possibility of feedback via e-mail.
2. The support of customers in the return process can be improved by a central overview of the return status.
3. Synchronization of displayed availability of products to avoid cancellations.
4. Higher activity on social media to target car enthusiastic Digital Natives specifically for aftersales products and services.

*The results are based on mystery shopping test purchases both on OEM and Retailer online shops.



Component #1

Online Appearance



Key facts & highlights



Aftersales content like service offerings or online shops are often “hidden” and rarely linked to on the homepage – Applies to OEM/NSC* and Retailer websites likewise.



The homepages are often designed appealing and intuitively – However, this lessens on the aftersales sites.



Only few dealers make use of templates provided by the OEM/NSC* – Quality of the websites very diverse.



All OEMs rarely make use of social media channels to promote and position their aftersales contents.

BMW



- OEM site convinces with clear design, navigation to the aftersales content is very fast and intuitive
- Templates of branches and dealers visually and functionally appealing, however deployed only by few dealers

Daimler



- Highest evaluation for placement of aftersales content in social media channels – however still room for improvement
- Dealers without OEM/NSC* template are often very disorganized and not very intuitive in their usage

Audi



- OEM online appearance with weaknesses in visual and functional appeal – navigation sometimes confusing
- Template for branches and dealers however convinces via appealing visual presentation and navigation

VW



- Among all OEMs with best evaluation for OEM online appearance (mainly through visual and functional appeal)
- Online appearance of dealers is however below average with significant gap to the OEM sites

Volvo



- No references to the aftersales services on the OEM website, dealer websites often better
- Aftersales content easily retrievable through Google search, both for the OEM and dealer sites

* NSC = National Sales Company, i.e. the markets / wholesale distribution level. Their online appearance usually constitutes the OEM online appearance, hence represents the brand in the respective market.



Evaluation criteria & weighting

1 Online appearance - OEM / NSC

How visually appealing is the online appearance? How functional is the design? Are all references to aftersales content correct, up to date and complete? Is the content easy and quick to find? Is the website's performance sufficient?

3 Online appearance - dealer (with NSC template)

How visually appealing is the online appearance? How functional is the design? Are all references to aftersales content correct, up to date and complete? Is the content easy and quick to find? Is the website's performance sufficient?

5 Traceability (Google search)

How well can the OEM / NSC website be retrieved via Google search? How often are branches being listed? How often for the dealers?

2 Online appearance of branches

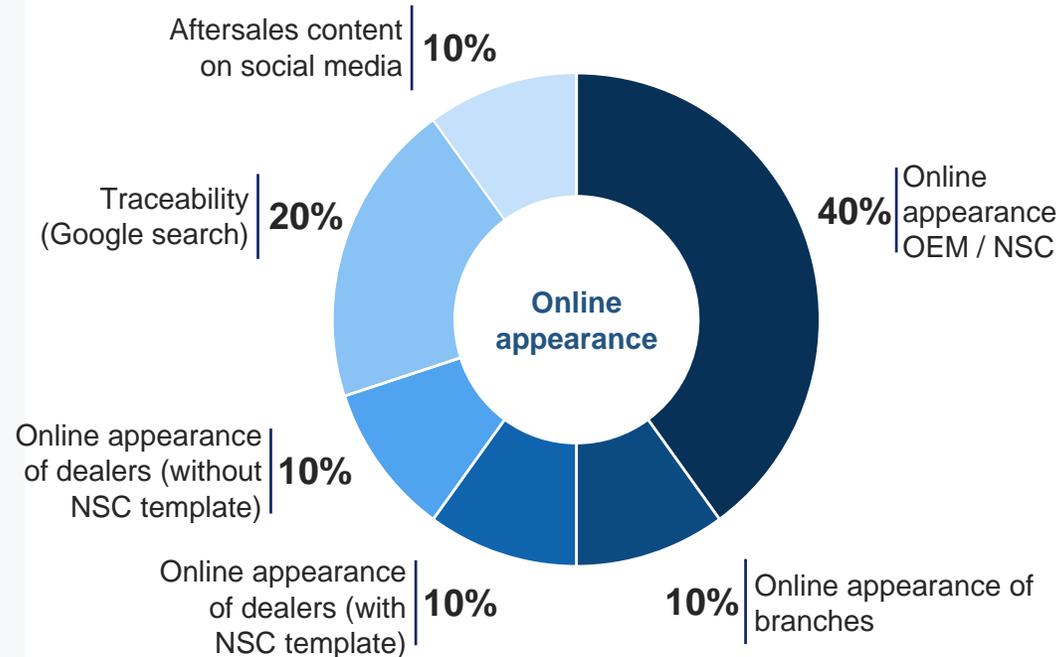
How visually appealing is the online appearance? How functional is the design? Are all references to aftersales content correct, up to date and complete? Is the content easy and quick to find? Is the website's performance sufficient?

4 Online appearance dealer (without NSC template)

How visually appealing is the online appearance? How functional is the design? Are all references to aftersales content correct, up to date and complete? Is the content easy and quick to find? Is the website's performance sufficient?

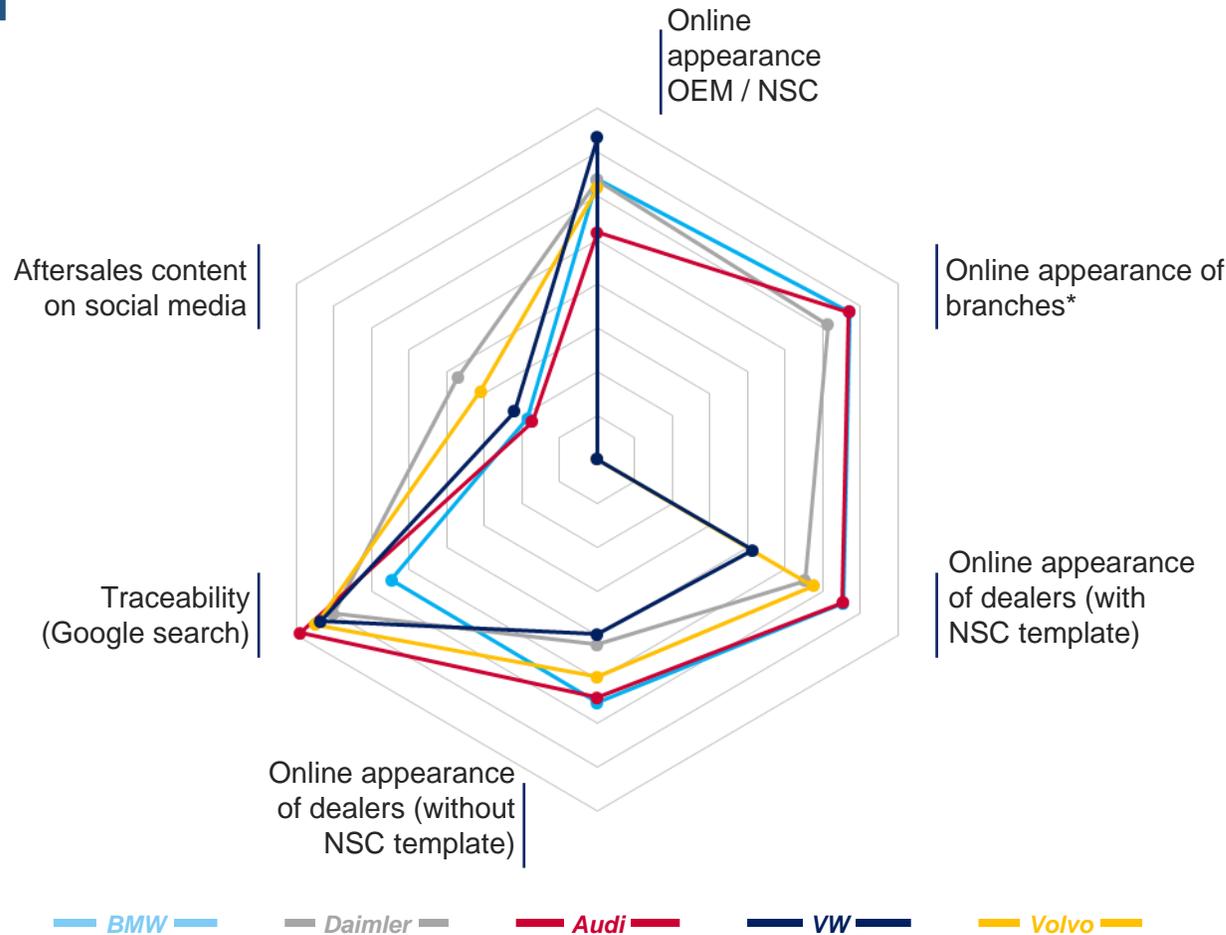
6 Aftersales content on social media

How often are aftersales content or offers posted on Facebook or Instagram? How often is YouTube used for marketing purposes? How often is aftersales content displayed on Xing/Linked?





Results



Recommended actions

1. Aftersales content should be integrated more strongly on the websites and should be enriched with touchpoints / interactions (e.g. shops, catalogues, etc.).
2. Aftersales websites should be enhanced regarding their visual appeal and intuitiveness and adjusted to the level of the OEM homepages and new car Retail websites.
3. Convince retail to use the NSC template for their own website in order to be able to create a unified user experience.
4. Make findability via Google search a priority, especially for general inquiries which aren't specific to any car model and often addressed by aftersales competitors.

* Volvo and VW do not have any branches. To account for this, the dealers' evaluations were weighted stronger

Component #2

Online Appointment





Key facts & highlights



All examined tools are visually appealing and offer a user-friendly interface - BMW retailers all use the same tool.



The depth of integration into the retailer's or OEM's processes is expandable - some manual work is still required after the agreement.



Cross-selling potentials in e.g. online shops are consistently not used, also social media integrations are expandable.



In three of four tools it is possible to book a binding appointment. However, binding prices are rarely shown.

BMW

- All branches / retailers use the same tool
- A replacement mobility service can be ordered in the tool
- Login via a central customer ID is not possible

Daimler

- Several tools – often third party tools – are used by retailers
- A replacement mobility service can be ordered in the tool
- The central customer ID can only be used in the Mercedes me tool

Audi

- Several tools – often third party tools – used by retailers
- No binding appointments can be booked using the my Audi tool
- Only a few retailers / Audi centers use the my Audi tool

VW

- Diverse tools are used by the dealers - VW's own VW We tool has low usage rate
- Visually and functionally appealing tools - especially the VW We tool in VW CI design and high functionality

Volvo

- Only rudimentary integration into the processes of the workshop or into the customer's touchpoints
- Only rarely an alternative mobility other than a replacement car is offered



Evaluation criteria & weighting

1 Integration with online touchpoints

How is the appointment scheduling integrated into the OEM website? How is it integrated into the Retail website? How is it integrated into the online shop? How within FoD*? How in the Connected Car? How in the social media channels?

3 Intuitiveness and appeal of the UI**

How intuitive and visually appealing are the tools structured? How is the entire range of end devices covered? Are the tools consistent among themselves?

5 Complementary services

Are offers of replacement mobility services made during the appointment process? Is a pick-up and delivery service offered? How are cross-selling potentials used?

2 Integration into retailer processes

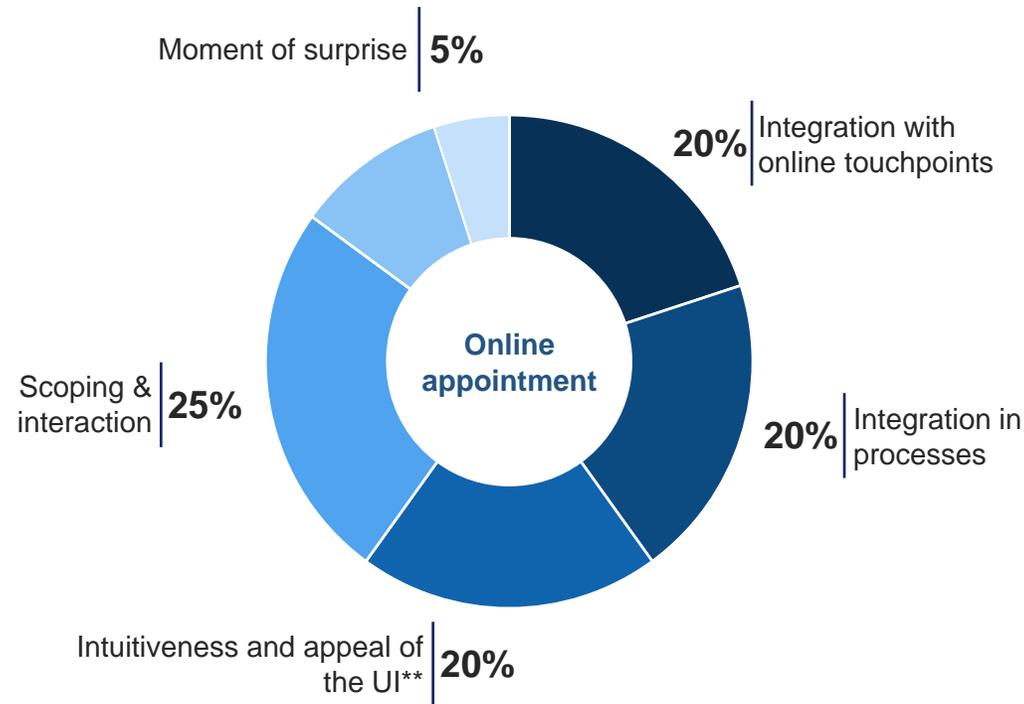
How is the appointment scheduling integrated into the events triggering the workshop stay? How does the integration with the OEM Customer ID work? How is the integration into the retail processes implemented? How into the customer world?

4 Service scoping and interaction

How is the user supported in selecting the service scope? How is pricing realized? Are there support functions? How flexible and binding is the scheduling?

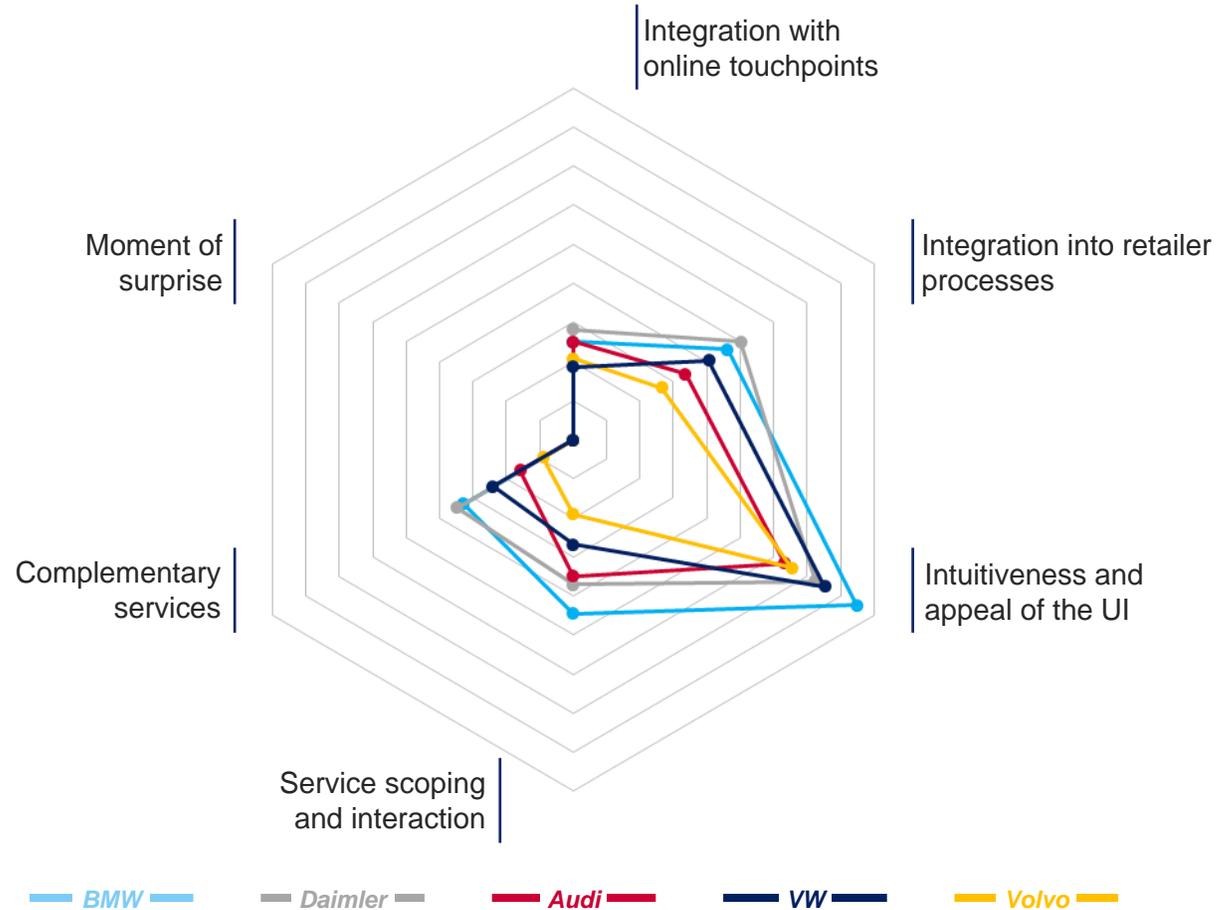
6 Moment of surprise

Are there offers, add-ons, functions, services or features that the Digital Native does not expect but that surprise him positively?





Results



Recommended actions

1. The manufacturers can hardly differentiate themselves through the user interface, but rather through the integration into internal processes.
2. Better integration of the tools into the online touchpoints (e.g. OEM app or retail website) can increase the traffic on the tools.
3. A broad penetration of a single tool across all retailers makes it easier for the customer in case of a change of workshop.
4. Utilization of cross-selling potentials with other touchpoints – e.g. offer the mounting of parts or accessories with appointment booking directly in the online shop.



Component #3

Online Shop Product Offering*

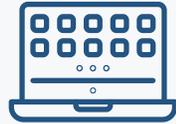
- This component is covering the online shop / the e-commerce offering up until the purchase transaction itself. The following processes such as delivery and return (if applicable) are covered by the component #4 "Online shop fulfillment".



Key facts & highlights



The visual appeal of the online shop is overall very high and the use is intuitive – even retail shops have an appealing look and intuitiveness.



The performance range of the online shops is high and a variety of products are offered – in some instances there is no online shop but only a "catalogue".



The shop experience is rarely personalized for the customer. The results can be limited by manual filtering or by entering the VIN*.



Overall good findability of the available OEM shops via Google search – Retail shops are also listed in a corresponding search.

BMW

- BMW Shop very easy to find using Google search
- Average rating for the visual appeal of the shop for original parts

Daimler

- Full purchase of original parts and accessories possible in the online shop
- Solid ratings in the area "online appearance", but in comparison bad rating of the shop for original parts

Audi

- Audi doesn't have an aftersales online shop (GP** & Services)
- Very high ratings for the original accessories shop in the dimensions "visual appeal" and "user interface"
- No product can be purchased here (merely "window shopping")

VW

- Volkswagen does not have an aftersales online shop (GP** & Services)
- VW receives solid ratings for "visual appeal" and "user interface" for the original accessories shop

Volvo

- Smallest amount of products for purchase in the shop for original accessories
- No product can be purchased directly here

Online Shop Product Offering

Evaluation criteria & weighting

1 Online appearance (original parts & accessories)

What is the visual appeal of the shop for original parts and original accessories? How is the user interface designed? How high is the degree of integration of the online shops for genuine parts and original accessories?

3 Support during the purchase process

What services are available to support the customer? To what extent is the Online product shop personalized? Are cross-selling potentials used? Are there measures for customer retention?

2 Scope of services (width & depth)

How large is the range of genuine parts and accessories (width)? What are the possibilities for online purchase of genuine parts and accessories (depth)?

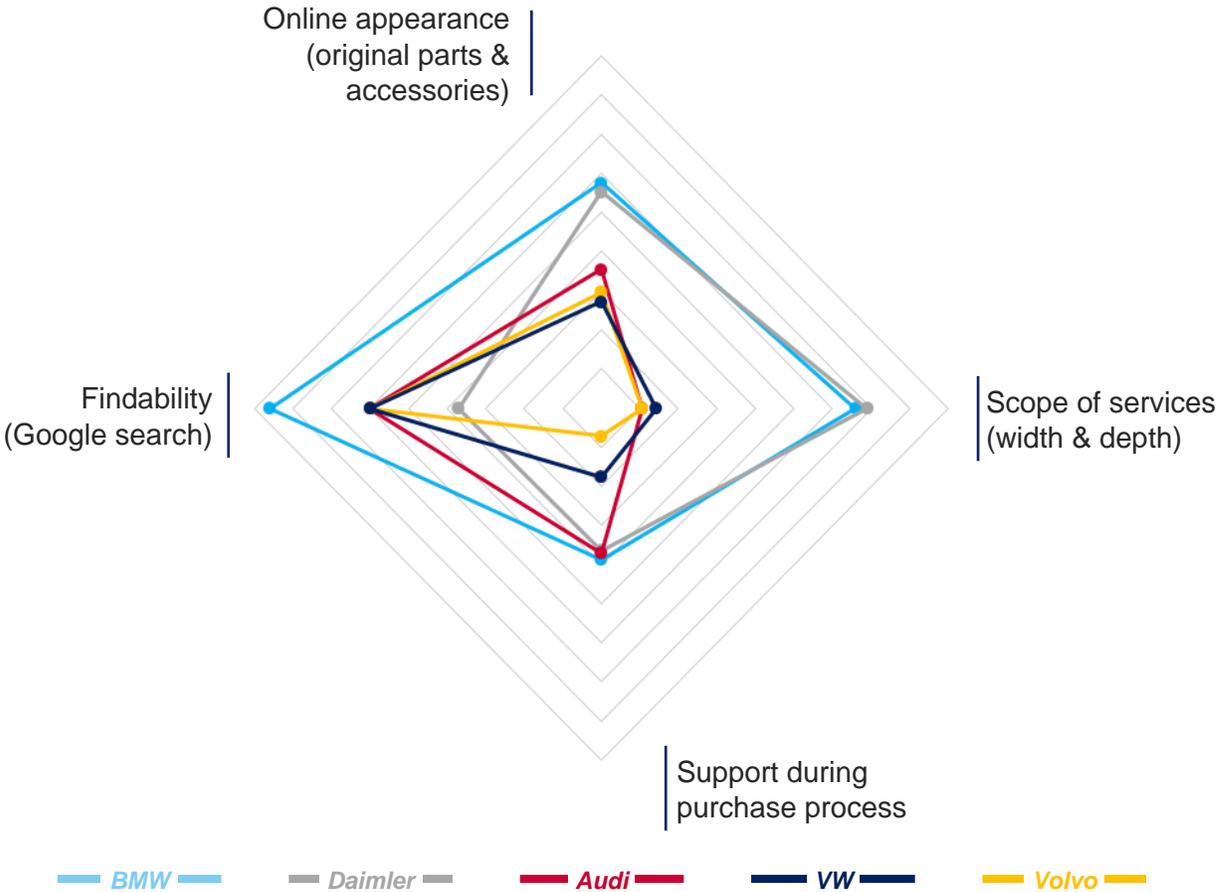
4 Findability (Google search)

How easy can the online shops for genuine parts and accessories be found in the Google search?



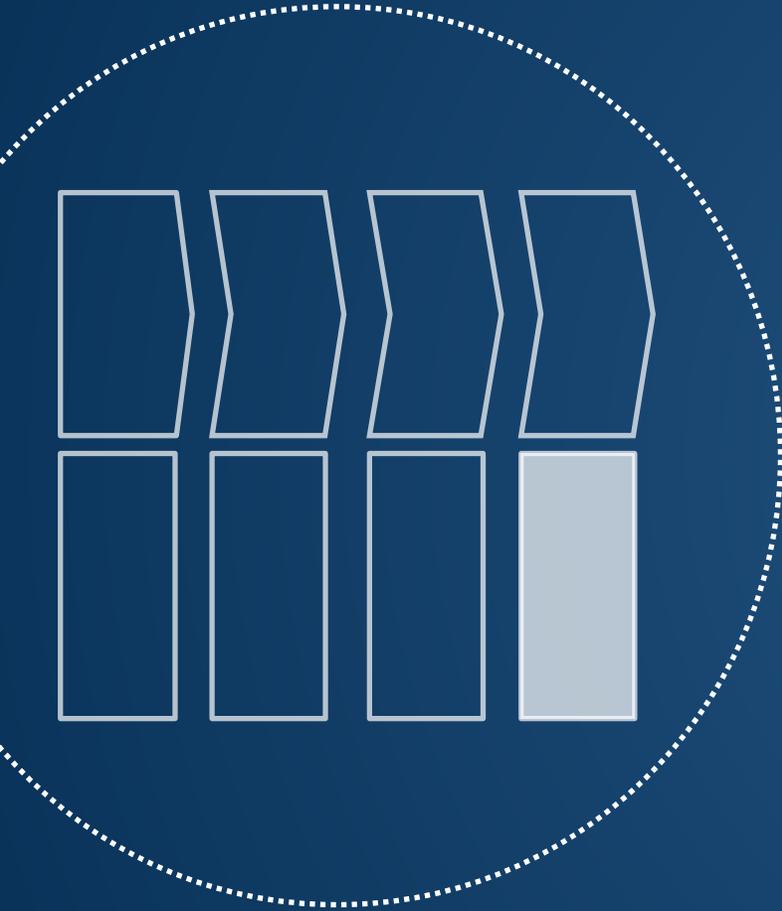
Online Shop Product Offering

Results



Recommended actions

1. Sometimes it is not possible to order products online, although it is possible to view them in a virtual shop/ catalogue. This needs to be changed so as to address the Digital Native.
2. The products could be distributed and promoted even better, e.g. through videos or instructions available for download.
3. Simplification of the shop experience for users through comprehensive filter options (e.g. VIN, keywords, model range, etc.)
4. Increasing the flexibility of delivery options (e.g. collection from a workshop, delivery to home, to another location, etc.)



Component #4

Online Shop Fulfillment*

* This component covers the processes which occur after the actual purchase transaction, e.g. shipment, retour etc.
See also component #3 "Online shop products"



Key facts & highlights



Generally, it was possible to collect the products from the shipping dealer – nevertheless, often there are only a few shipping options available.



The support was always friendly, helpful and competent across all shops – in case of questions regarding products or services support was provided.



The available service channels are mostly limited to telephone and E-mail – The availability of the telephone service after 6 pm could be improved.



The majority of deliveries were delivered within the specified period – products are delivered in an undamaged condition.

BMW



- BMW with convincing performance in the quality of fulfillment and other support services
- The partially available service chat function and the enclosed return slip were noted positively

Daimler



- Quality of the fulfillment is convincing due to fast shipping, short delivery time and friendly support service
- Sometimes no confirmation of dispatch was sent by e-mail

Audi



- Audi scored particularly well in the accessibility of the support service and in complaint management
- There is potential for improvement regarding their delivery services

VW



- VW was able to convince with the speed of the fulfillment
- The available support channels were not convincing – only phone and E-mail are available

Volvo



- Volvo managed to convince due to delivery time within the specified time window
- Accessibility of the support service needs to be improved – poor availability by phone and long response times



Evaluation criteria & weighting

1 Fulfillment speed

What delivery speeds are offered? What is the delivery reliability for the selected delivery speed?

3 Delivery services (services around the delivery)

Is a tracking number for the delivery provided? What options are offered for returns? What delivery and collection options are offered?

2 Quality of the fulfillment

Does the product arrive intact? In what condition was the packaging? How professional was the packaging?

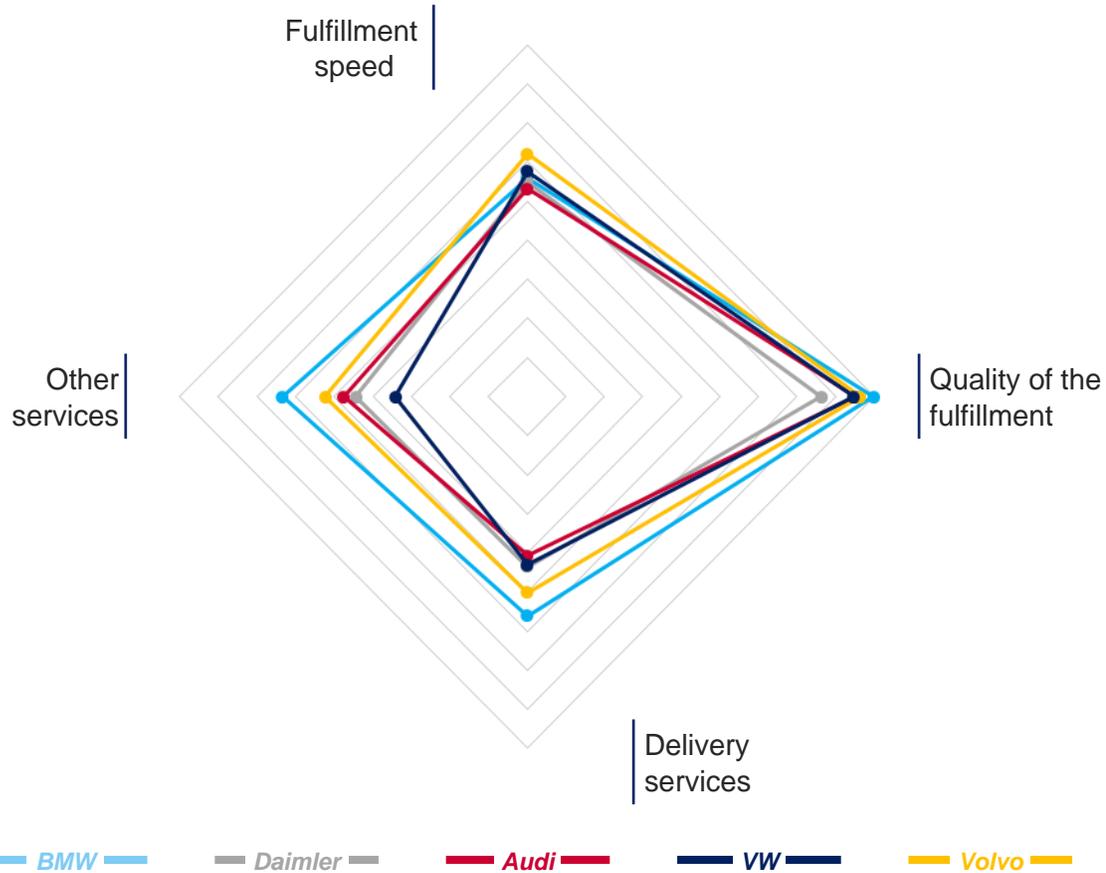
4 Support services

What kind of support is available around the fulfillment? What is the quality of the support service? What is the availability of the support service? What number of possible service channels is offered?





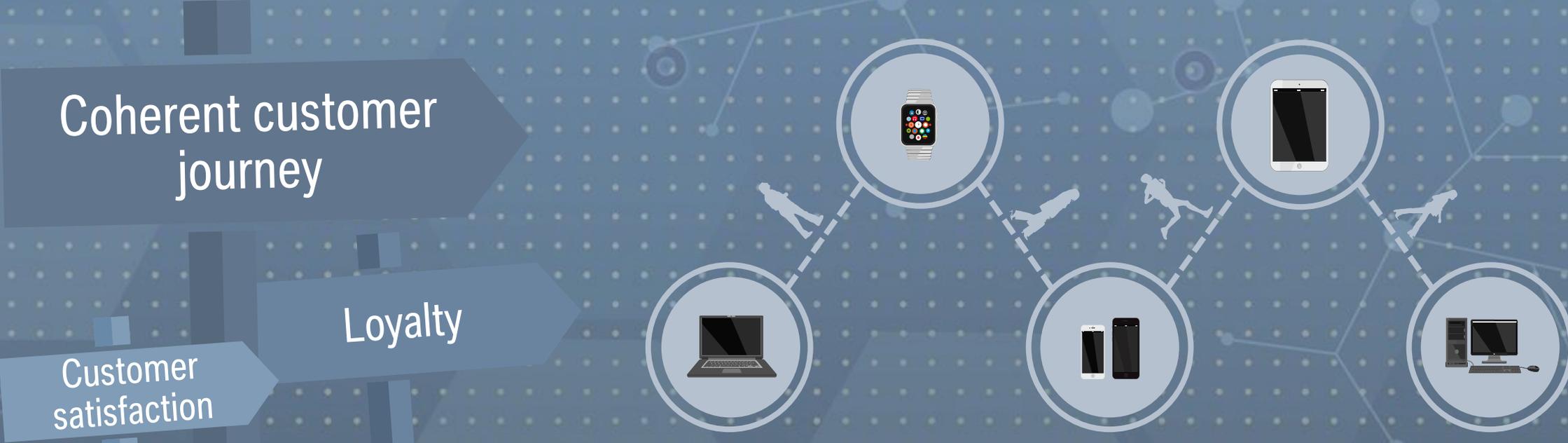
Results



Recommended actions

1. The delivery options must be adapted to the expectations of Digital Natives – there is clearly a need for action here. Amazon, for example, can be used as a best practice.
2. In future, more emphasis should be placed on sustainable packaging material and unnecessary packaging material should be avoided.
3. The availability of the support service should be improved, in particular the telephone availability can be greatly expanded – in order to meet the expectations of being premium for the examined OEMs.
4. Innovative channels for contacting the support service, such as chat functions and messengers, have a great potential to increase the accessibility of the service.

A seamless and coherent customer journey increases customer satisfaction and loyalty.



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