

Platforms are the future

Digital platforms are on everyone's lips, complete solutions are increasingly taking a back seat. If customers have access to this infrastructure, it should be high-performance and user-friendly, also or especially in the B2B area. This can learn from B2C platforms.

Interview with BusinessCode CEO Martin Schulze

Mr. Schulze, the term 'digital platforms' is read quite often and yet many people don't know what is behind it. In what areas of application do you rely on digital platforms?

Martin Schulze: When we talk about digital platforms, there are very different deployment scenarios. It depends on the business area in question. A well-known one is e-commerce and logistics. E-commerce is not possible without shipping, returns, complaints and repairs. To cope with this, many processes with large amounts of data have to be handled in the background. That is why it is important to design the platform so that the company can benefit from it.

Do the threads run together strategically in companies in customer service?

Schulze: Today, digital platforms are much more than just status symbols and information offerings. They are the strategic hub for companies both in communication and in transactions with their customers. Platforms are used to handle complex processes and comprehensive services. The advantage of platforms is that they can be used to connect many internal and external IT systems. The companies are flexible and not dependent.

What is the basic idea behind the integration of digital platforms?

Schulze: A central approach is often the identification and implementation of new business models to keep up with the competition. At the same time, however, the focus is on the customer and with him the customer experience. Digital platforms offer the same goals and opportunities as the wave of digitization: Greater customer proximity and long-term customer loyalty to the company and maintaining competitiveness through cost savings. This is where we develop concepts for our customers with which they can score points with their customers.

What are the most important criteria for digital platforms from the perspective of your customers?

Schulze: On the one hand, there must be a good performance. If the reaction to certain actions takes too much time, this costs companies time and money. Second, digital platforms should be compatible with all browsers and devices. Here, too, it is important not to strain the patience of users too much. Browser compatibility is



also a must for business applications today, as is responsive design to enable mobile working. Here we use the knowledge from B2C platforms.

How is the use of digital platforms currently changing?

Schulze: Complete solutions from one supplier are no longer up to date. They often present companies with serious problems. Unlike flexible software architectures, which are characterized by open interfaces and fast release cycles. The best-of-bread approach will become increasingly popular. Prerequisites are modern cloud technologies, service-oriented architectures and microservices, IT security and flexible interfaces.

With which platform solution did BusinessCode score last?

Schulze: We have developed a B2B e-commerce platform to support our customers in recalls, returns and repair processing. The better these processes are managed, the better the return on investment. However, recalls not only jeopardize sales, but can also damage brand and customer relationships. Therefore, the management of recall and return projects must be straightforward. The speed of reaction is just as important here as uncomplicated handling for customers.