

Benteler Automotive

Cisco Partner Ecosystem



On the factory floors of Benteler Automotive, a new production process comes to life. Look who's making it happen.

In 2000, **Benteler Automotive** began introducing a just-in-sequence manufacturing process to its factory floors. The results were dramatic. Today, production at Benteler is fast, agile, and cost-efficient.

But that's not good enough.

In the current global economy, automotive manufacturers face changing market conditions, demanding environmental and safety regulations, and fierce global competition. So a company like Benteler has to keep evolving. To satisfy its customers and maintain its leadership, it has to be constantly looking for ways to make its factory floors even faster, more agile, and more efficient.

That's why Benteler turned to the Cisco Partner Ecosystem.

Benteler has been supplying parts to car manufacturers for 80 years. It's a German-based company that today operates 70 plants in 29 countries. Virtually every major auto maker worldwide relies on components from Benteler factories.

To supply all those customers, in all those countries, on time is an immense challenge. The pressure is always on to

increase flexibility and control costs—and competition is tight. So last year, Benteler decided to take the next big step in the evolution of its factories. It would create a next-generation production environment, that is, automated, self-running plants.

It's a big step forward, and Benteler is hardly alone in taking it. Across industries today, leading manufacturers are racing to harness the possibilities of the Internet of Everything (IoE). They know they can achieve better outcomes, faster changeovers, and tighter cost controls in factories where every tool and part is connected to the network and every step in the production process can be analyzed and controlled from the cloud.

However, making it all happen is a challenge. A transition to an IoE solution is a transformative transition, so a wide range of expertise is required to get it right. For Benteler, that's where the Cisco® Partner Ecosystem comes in. Cisco and its partners together provide the full range of IT expertise—across industries, across regions, across every stage of design and implementation—that Benteler needed to make its transition a success.

“The advantage we get from the Cisco Partner Ecosystem is seamless integration between the hardware components and the software side. To get this out of one ecosystem, that is a significant value for us as a customer.”

– Alexander Stamm, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Benteler Automotive

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Taking the lead in the project was **CANCOM DIDAS**, a Cisco Gold Certified Partner and one of Germany's leading system integrators. "Benteler was looking for a complete end-to-end solution," explains Dirk Kiefer, managing director of CANCOM DIDAS. "Everything from applications, to the platform, the middleware, and the whole IT infrastructure."

The solution would also have to be fully modular, so it could be replicated in Benteler factories around the world while being centrally managed from Germany. Putting together an end-to-end solution of this scale did not mean CANCOM DIDAS would do everything.

CANCOM DIDAS would provide the IT infrastructure and oversee the project as a whole. For elements outside its core strengths, it would rely on other Cisco partners. "We don't have the know-how to develop applications," says Kiefer. "And we don't have the ability to service everything worldwide. But we have partners in the market who do."

One key partner turned out to be Cisco Solution Partner **nemetris**, an independent software vendor that already had deep experience in automotive manufacturing. "What we bring in this partner ecosystem are the software solutions and applications," says Markus Schwarz, managing director at nemetris.

The applications developed by nemetris would connect the tools, parts, and belts in each factory to each other (through fog computing) and to a central, global management location (through the cloud).

At the center of it all is Cisco itself. "Cisco developed trend-setting architectures like ACI and product solutions like the new ruggedized or embedded router and switches," says Kiefer. "And last but not least, Cisco delivers access to a worldwide partner ecosystem with thousands of Cisco Certified Partners."

To handle the service needs of plants outside of central Europe, CANCOM DIDAS turned to Cisco Certified Partners in other countries. "So if a router goes down and it can't be handled remotely from our service center in Germany," Kiefer explains, "then we have a partner there who can handle on-site break-and-fix and IMAC."

In the Cisco Partner Ecosystem, collaborations like these are on the rise. Customers are focused on outcomes and are looking to vendors to offer complete solutions. Often, the best way to do this is by teaming up.

"We need these types of partnerships," says Werner Schwarz, **CANCOM** director of Security Network and Communications. "As a system integrator and service provider, we don't have deep vertical application know-how. So we partner with companies that do, and we build blueprint architectures together."

"For us," says Schwarz, "we are always looking forward to working with other Cisco partners who have ideas or a solution that brings business value. It is a good opportunity for us, and together we bring the best solution to the customer."

The customer agrees. "The advantage we get from the Cisco Partner Ecosystem," says Alexander Stamm, Benteler's chief information officer (CIO), "is seamless integration between the hardware components and the software side." So now, all the elements Benteler needs to build the factory of the future are coming together in one integrated, modular, end-to-end solution. "To get this out of one ecosystem," says Stamm, "that is a significant value for us as a customer."

For More Information

For more information about the Cisco Partner Ecosystem, visit www.cisco.com/go/partnerecosystem.

For more information about CANCOM DIDAS, visit www.cancom-didas.de.

For more information about nemetris, visit www.nemetris.com.

For more information about CANCOM, visit www.cancom.com.



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