



BDR THERMEA GROUP

CASE STUDY

BDR Thermea reduces service visits by 60%

A future-ready IoT solution turns up the heat for customer satisfaction

There's nothing more frustrating than turning on the shower to find there's no hot water. But what if there was a way to prevent the problem, or know what the problem is, so it could be fixed more quickly? To help its customers avoid an icy reality, BDR Thermea adopted a modern technology solution that can detect early warning signs of a potential malfunction and make it easier for employees and installers to service its heating products effectively and efficiently.

Situation

New business strategy needs new insight

BDR Thermea is a global manufacturer and distributor of sustainable and smart climate and sanitary hot water solutions and services. It operates in more than 70 countries worldwide, employing around 6,700 people.

In a rapidly changing digital world where personalization equates to business survival, BDR Thermea needed a new strategy. To unlock new value and differentiate itself in a highly competitive market, it wanted to add services to its business model. One of the main pillars of its business transformation strategy was to gain insight on its new service model by adopting innovative technology that could actively respond to customer needs.

To become a future-ready organization and enable growth, it needed to connect with its customers in a more personalized way. "If you want to be fit for the future, you have to get more in contact with your end consumers," said Jan Bijsterbosch, manager of the Centre of Excellence for master data management and business intelligence at BDR Thermea. "Digitalization is the way to connect to them and to retrieve information about the end consumer."

To help with this challenge, BDR Thermea turned to Avanade. Our global presence and extensive technical experience with both the Microsoft and Sitecore ecosystems would help the company execute and seamlessly integrate an innovative solution on an enterprise-wide scale.

Solution

Integrated cloud and IoT technologies create customized service model

To drive technology and business change at BDR Thermea, Avanade is helping to design and deploy a fully integrated, connected infrastructure for the entire BDR Thermea Group. Starting with a pilot project at BAXI, one of BDR Thermea's brands in the UK, we created an Internet of Things (IoT) Connected Services platform that integrates with Microsoft Azure to capture the status of its connected devices.

The device status information is then sent via application program interfaces (APIs) to a wide variety of consuming applications, including a Sitecore Portal that Avanade previously developed for the company and various mobile applications. The Sitecore application manages the content from the customer side, warning the BDR Thermea team monitoring the connected devices of potential issues that could leave a customer in the cold. If the problem is something that a customer can fix on his own, the portal can proactively send a text or email message with photos or instructional videos on how to fix it.

BDR Thermea is also using this data to drive business value in several ways:

- **Customer service calls:** The company's call center is the first line of response for customers. So, when a customer with no hot water calls for service, a BDR Thermea employee can pull up the account and get a single view of the customer's appliance data. The employee can check for errors and help walk the caller through any troubleshooting steps or self-help scenarios that could potentially solve the problem. In many cases, this helps resolve issues on the spot and minimizes the need for service visits.
- **Service optimization:** In instances where a service visit is needed, the data available to the agent can help identify what type of service may be needed. It empowers the field service employee with the necessary knowledge, tools and parts to make the repair and potentially circumvent future issues. Moreover, it prevents multiple service visits, which are costly to the company and may leave the customer without hot water even longer.
- **Remote monitoring:** With remote monitoring, fewer product and engineering experts are needed in the field. Instead, they can work from a central location and use their visibility into product data to walk less seasoned field service agents through the appropriate repairs. This allows BDR Thermea to more evenly distribute its service expertise across its customer geographic base.

- **Preventative maintenance:** The data made available to the company through the IoT-connected platform, such as low water pressure, overheating or reset indicators, can provide the company with early warnings that an equipment is due for maintenance. "What we envision for the future is that when we have more data available, we can use historical data to start doing analysis to predict maintenance and failure modes," said Bijsterbosch. Eventually, BDR Thermea wants to link this IoT data to the field service management data collected from its customer relationship management systems (CRM) to gain better insights and make better decisions about product maintenance.
- **Knowledge-sharing:** In the long run, the product insights that BDR Thermea gains from this connectivity can be shared with installers and service companies, so they too can run their businesses more efficiently using product connectivity.

With standardized technology, BDR Thermea no longer needs to rely on a dozen smaller IoT platforms. It now has one integrated platform that can scale as the company rolls out the solution to its other brands across the globe.

Results

Remote access to product data reduces service site visits by 60%

The benefits of this platform and its future-ready capabilities had immediate impact on BAXI and its customers. The BDR Thermea brand experienced a 60% decrease in service calls with the pilot solution.

Specifically, when a customer called requesting service, information provided by the call center prevented a service visit in 58% of the cases. A defined error code in 25% of calls enabled a service engineer to fix the problem in a single visit because he knew what service was needed and what parts would fix the issue. And in 8% of the cases, the service desk staff proactively reached out to a customer because it noticed a repeated error.

"It's giving such a boost to the BDR organization in terms of customer satisfaction and cost reduction, and it's also boosting employee morale," said Jeroen Huitink, a solutions architect at Avanade.

With these new capabilities and insights, BDR Thermea also aims to reduce service operational costs by 10%. For example, data from the platform can help it optimize order and inventory costs and improve efficiencies that will help accelerate its growth path. Likewise, customers get more reliable products and faster service, ensuring they (almost) never experience that unexpected cold shower.

"We want to make life easier for our customers," noted Bijsterbosch. "What we built was really customer-driven, which was a big change in what we did in previous platforms where it was technology-driven. Even with the standard applications that we chose, we are able to provide customers with what they want. I'm really proud of that."

As BDR Thermea continues to implement its new strategic plan, it will harness the intelligence provided through this IoT-connected platform to empower its workforce, build customer loyalty and proactively steer its business toward new, more valuable opportunities.

"I really like the cooperation between my team and Avanade. It is really open. Working with the people from Avanade is like working for the same company on the same goals."

- Jan Bijsterbosch, Manager of the Centre of Excellence for Master Data Management and Business Intelligence at BDR Thermea

About BDR Thermea

BDR Thermea Group is a world leading manufacturer and distributor of sustainable and smart climate and sanitary hot water solutions and services, operating in a market worth over €16 billion of annual sales. BDR Thermea Group is the name behind many of Europe's leading heating and hot water brands. These include De Dietrich, BAXI, Remeha, Brötje, Chappée and Baymak. All of these brands have a long heritage and a unique position in the countries in which they operate.

About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. Our professionals bring bold, fresh thinking combined with technology, business and industry expertise to help make a human impact on our clients, their customers and their employees. We are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Avanade has 38,000 professionals in 25 countries, bringing clients our best thinking through a collaborative culture that honors diversity and reflects the communities in which we operate. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at www.avanade.com

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