

## **IBM Watson Helps Lufthansa Group Optimize Its Customer Service**

### **Lufthansa and IBM collaborate in the field of artificial intelligence (AI); new AI Studio leverages IBM Garage method**

ARMONK, N.Y. and EHNINGEN, Germany, Oct. 29, 2019 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) and the Lufthansa Group have joined forces to establish the Lufthansa AI Studio, a collaboration that will use artificial intelligence (AI) to help address the airline's business challenges, such as improving customer service.

Leveraging the [IBM Garage](#) method, the Lufthansa AI Studio's interdisciplinary team consists of IBM Services professionals with diverse expertise working side by side with Lufthansa employees to quickly test new AI-based business ideas and services suitability, implement them in pilot projects, and roll them out within the company.

### **Focusing on better customer service with the AI Studio**

The AI Studio is simultaneously working on more than ten different solutions for various departments within Lufthansa Group with a focus on applications for sales, customer service and operational areas.

One of the first projects of the Lufthansa AI Studio was to integrate IBM Watson solutions, including Watson Assistant and Watson Natural Language Understanding, in the Service Help Centre (SHC). The 22 employees of the SHC support 15,000 Lufthansa agents at 180 Lufthansa stations worldwide in answering service questions involving check-in and boarding processes, which can add up to more than 100,000 support calls per year. By integrating IBM Watson AI services, previously disparate data sources can now be searched for possible approaches and answers to customer queries. The SHC employees can phrase their questions in natural language, and the solution is also trained to 'understand' specialized aviation and internal company terms to enhance results. IBM Watson manages, searches through, analyzes and interprets the various relevant information sources, such as SharePoint and internal ticket systems. In addition to shorter waiting times of the customers at the check-in, the quality of the information provided as a whole was increased.

### **Follow-up projects to help address greater agility and innovation**

Following the success of these initial solutions, the AI Studio continues to process new queries and projects from departments across the airline aimed at modernizing processes and transforming workflows. Currently, IBM and Lufthansa teams are working together to develop solutions to support further help-desk use cases, including AI technology applied to the end-customer call centre. For example, the AI Studio team is developing a new use case aimed at improving the Lufthansa Customer Feedback Management coming through multiple channels. The corresponding data are analyzed by means of a combination of various IBM AI cloud services and made available to the employees in intelligently edited form using natural language processing, sentiment analysis or interaction with a chatbot. One example of this is the AI-supported sentiment analysis of social media messages on various channels of the Lufthansa Group.

By combining the right expertise, applied technology and new ways of working in one collaborative space under the motto 'Think Big - Start Small - Fail Quickly - Scale Fast,' all use cases and innovation ideas are thought through, promoted and implemented in the AI Studio according to the IBM Garage concept as part of an agile project approach.

"As airlines look to optimize operations and enhance customer experiences, we're seeing a continued progression of technology deployment to create solutions that deliver a powerful combination of data and technology. Airlines, like Lufthansa, are applying AI to sift through vast amounts of customer data to solve problems and more quickly respond to their passengers' needs," said Dee Waddell, Global Managing Director, Travel & Transportation, IBM. "Through the IBM Garage, a unique co-creation experience, IBM experts and Lufthansa employees are working together to develop AI solutions that can rapidly move from a new idea to adoption across the airline, putting data driven insights at the fingertips of employees to help better serve customers. The Lufthansa AI Studio demonstrates the airline's continued commitment to driving innovation and creating exceptional customer experiences."

"In the aviation industry, we're in a highly competitive environment," says Mirco Bharpalania, Senior Director Data, Analytics, Business Intelligence and Middleware at Lufthansa Group. "Our premium strategy and our service promise to our customers set us apart from the competition in a positive way. We're convinced that the use of modern technology allows us, for one, to even further enhance our customers' experience and, second, to put our employees in the position to always be able to make the right decisions, as they have easy access to the information they need, at the right time and in the right form. We recognised early that AI solutions give us an advantage in the continuing development of our service and business models. For that reason, we founded the Lufthansa AI Studio jointly with IBM. The success of the first AI projects shows that the very close and agile collaboration with our partner can result in true innovation that decisively assists us in our ongoing strategic development."

The contract was signed in the first quarter 2019.

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