

## **New tool for sales**

### **On the way towards a digital sales process due to app and Augmented Reality**

**The area of sales is undergoing a transition. Although its tasks, aims and approaches stay the same, its tools change – and rapidly. Recent studies show that tablet PCs are about to capture trade fair stands and sales departments in order to replace notebooks, catalogues, and other presentation media. But tablets and apps not only replace and complement previous technologies and presentation media; they also change processes, open up new control possibilities and allow more direct workflows. And sometimes also completely new insights to products – for example by means of Augmented Reality (AR).**

ZF Friedrichshafen AG, one of the world's biggest automotive suppliers, has successfully gone through the transition process with the aid of a standard app and thus amazed customers, inspired their sales team and achieved more efficiency in the sales process.

### **Present hard facts efficiently and playfully**

Specializing in driveline technology for railway-, industry- and special applications within ZF, the business division Special Driveline Technology was looking for a user-friendly, mobile, offline catalogue solution that was supposed to pool the know-how of the different fields and make them centrally accessible. In addition, the app had to be adaptable to the ZF design and was to be available as ZF's own app for customers and sales partners via the app store. The goal was to use the solution mainly at trade fairs and in sales. Furthermore, ZF was looking for a possibility to convey innovation competence and product knowledge in a playful way – an Augmented Reality function was supposed to meet these requirements.

Concerning the implementation, ZF Friedrichshafen AG opted for a standard app by cluetec, as a white label solution adaptable for ZF and capable of presenting multimedia contents such as audio, video, 3D animations, PDFs, and so on, in addition to text and images. As a highlight, the app allows for creating and integrating AR animations yourself.

### **Digital provision process as the first step towards a digital sales process**

“Our sales team participates in up to two trade fairs per month,” Georg Ehling, Head of Marketing & Business Development Special Driveline Technology at ZF, explains. “It goes without saying that an efficient solution for the presentation of our complex products is helpful in that respect. But especially the handling of our various additional pieces of information, such as sectional drawings, constructional tables, or dimensioning has become much easier, because they are now centrally available to our employees, customers, and sales partners via the app.” ZF can maintain and expand the app's content themselves; updates are carried out via push mechanism and online synchronization, independent of the app store. ZF can also create new catalogues. ZF considers the app a lighthouse project. In a second step, in addition to the unidirectional provision of information, a bidirectional way via an integrated order possibility for customers and sales partners will be realized. This function creates advantages especially in the area of machine tool industry, because standardized products can easily be purchased via a shopping cart function. ZF also plans a connection to the internal CRM system in order to directly synchronize customer data, new contacts or meeting protocols in the future.

## **Augmented Reality creates the Wow-effect**

While the catalogue solution is already actively used and available via the app store under the name ZF XtraFair, the AR function is still undergoing a ZF-internal testing phase. Although it has already been shown on fairs in Asia, it has yet to be presented to a broad audience. The official launch will take place in mid-april at Bauma, the world's biggest trade fair for the construction industry. "The functioning and thus the inner workings of our innovative products are not supposed to be immediately obvious to everybody at trade fairs," Georg Ehling explains, "but of course we still want to show them to chosen customers and sales partners. The AR function handles this challenge perfectly."

This is how the AR function works: A gear unit is exhibited on the ZF trade fair stand. Viewers see the body; the inner workings are kept hidden from direct view. A so-called AR marker is attached to the exhibit. It is defined in the app which marker is assigned to which exhibit and in which distance and angle relative to the object the marker was placed. With the AR function, the app shows the camera image. If a marker is detected, the AR function constantly calculates the distance and angle of the tablet relative to the marker and displays virtual objects in the camera image on the basis of this information. Virtual objects might be for example arrows, speech bubbles and 3D attachment parts or 3D interior views. Thus, customers can walk around the object – with an iPad in their hands – and "en passant" see the inside of the gear unit or possible attachment parts or additional information.

"The first test runs of the AR function in Asia went really well", Georg Ehling from ZF reports. "Our Asian customers were amazed at what mobile technology is already able to do nowadays." The use of the catalogue solution is widely approved by customers and employees as well: "Our sales team is very happy with the new ZF app", Georg Ehling is pleased to note.

## **Lessons learned from the project**

All in all, the project turned out to be feasible fast and easily for ZF. After the requirements had been specified, a detailed list of specifications had been drafted and the milestones had been defined, it only took a few weeks until the solution was ready for use. "It was a big advantage for us to be able to realize our requirements with such a proven standard app", Georg Ehling confirms. "Thus, we saved time and moreover, we had experienced partners on board who could support us during the project." ZF learned from the experience with the AR function that the quality of the 3D models is decisive: "In order to be able to assess the computing capacity of the tablets, it makes sense not to try to display very animated representations of highly complex products right from the start", Georg Ehling explains. "It is just like everywhere else in life: you can't take the second step before the first. But it is only a matter of time until the second step is taken, too."

Company:	ZF Friedrichshafen AG, Business Division Special Driveline Technology
Sector:	Mechanical engineering, Automotive
Headquarters:	Friedrichshafen, Germany
Founded in:	1915
Employees:	75.000 worldwide

Turnover: approx. 17.4 billion euro in 2012

Homepage: [www.zf.com](http://www.zf.com)

Mobile solution: catalogueapp® with Augmented Reality function by cluetec GmbH on Apple iPad – AR core module based on Qualcomm vuforia

### **About cluetec GmbH**

cluetec GmbH is an IT specialist for mobile software solutions. The company based in Karlsruhe was founded in 2000 and currently has approx. 40 employees. cluetec develops and distributes mQuest®, the leading mobile survey software for market and opinion research as well as transport research. Since 2011, the product portfolio of cluetec is complemented by catalogueapp, an application for the presentation of digital product catalogues on tablet devices. In addition, the company offers customer-specific software development in the areas of mobile solutions, Java EE and web 2.0 for market research and industry. cluetec's customers include renowned companies from the automotive industry such as ZF Friedrichshafen, Peugeot and Volkswagen as well as leading market research institutes such as GfK, Ipsos and TNS Infratest.

### **About ZF Friedrichshafen AG**

ZF is one of the world's leading automotive suppliers in the fields of driveline and chassis technology with 121 production companies in 27 countries. The group has approximately 72.100 employees and achieved a turnover of around 15.5 billion euro in 2011. In the ranking of automotive suppliers, ZF is one of the world's 10 largest companies.

In the division industrial technology, the ZF group is pooling their activities concerning applications "off the road". These include the development and production of transmissions and axles for agricultural and construction machinery as well as drive technology for lift trucks, railway- and special vehicles. The division is also responsible for the global business in the areas of marine propulsion and aviation technology and the development and production of wind turbine gearboxes. The division's portfolio also includes the electronic components and switching systems as well as testing systems for all applications.

### **For further information:**

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Bildunterschriften von oben nach unten:

- 1) AR application screen: ZF gear unit with virtual attachment part

- 2) This is how the AR application works: ZF employee with tablet at the fair
- 3) ZF marker enabling the detection of the object