



**An insight view /** The Dresen Group distributes 10 brands at 21 locations. Together with the Christoph Kroschke AG and the consultancy TGM, the car dealer group works on the optimization of business processes.

## Being Streamlined

by Sabine Tilp  
(translated by Andrea Rigbers)

Multi-brand trade is a complex matter - new car settlement alone differs from sales organization to sales organization. While some one-brand dealer has to struggle with the complexity of the processes, this topic is in the Dresen Group to the power of nine: The 1874 established family company with headquarters in Neuss, which is led since 1975 in the fourth generation by Beata and Peter Dahmann as managing partners, has currently about 21 locations where in different combinations vehicles of the brands Opel, Ford, Citroen, Chevrolet, Honda, Kia, VW, Audi as well as Honda motorcycles are distributed. In 2006 Dresen sold about 7600 new cars and 4800 used cars in total. In such a corporate structure the question of possible synergy potentials and the resulting cost reductions is of course at the top. CEO Cornelius Otten: "We achieve synergy effects primarily by centralizing purchasing, dispatching, accounting as well as EDP and personnel departments." In addition, there is also in terms of business processes on all aspects of sales some optimization potential, Otten is convinced. To have the costs under control is crucial in times of declining margins in sales and aftersales.

### Specialist team for the pilot project

To get on the track of possible potentials and to save both time and costs in the future through greater efficiency, the Christoph Kroschke Group initiated a pilot project and invited the Dresen Group as a practice partner. With the consultancy TGM Abel & Berger GmbH an external specialist has brought on board additionally. In this joint project, starting in August 2007, the parties analysed the sales process. Concretely, the registration and transfer process has been examined carefully. Knut Nolte, chairman of the Christoph Kroschke AG explains: "We are convinced that we can support car dealers in the optimization of their business processes through our wide range of services offered. The consultation in processes is a new additional element we offer car dealers. That benefits primarily the dealer, because lean processes reduce costs. But also the Christoph Kroschke AG benefits - joint projects like these with the Dresen Group allow us an even deeper insight into the processes in a car dealership. This puts us in the situation to reconcile our products and services even closer with the needs of the automotive trade. The cooperation with external partners such as the TGM ensures that we look beyond our own horizon."

Multi-brand trade in pure culture. The Dresen Group distributes nine brands at 21 locations. Photographs: Headquarters in Neuss

### From analysis to solution

The process optimization goes step by step: First, an analysis of the actual state of the registration and delivery process takes place. Based on the knowledge gained, it will be searched selectively for optimization potentials to optimally shorten the delivery process. Dresen CEO Cornelius Otten: "While our processes in the private customers' sector are largely effective, we found out, that we still do not work optimally in the key account and corporate/fleet customers' sector."

This includes, among other issues, that the time between the staging notification of the automobile manufacturer respectively the invoicing for the purchase of the new car and delivery is often too long, that implicates unnecessary interest charges in purchase financing. Our aim was to deliver the vehicles possibly within the interest-free time."



### Networked Thinking

Sounds easy - but it's not. This also confirms Dr. Klaus Herbert, process specialist of TGM, who carried out the analysis for Dresen: "The sales and delivery process is highly complex by various internal and external parties and parallel actions. In companies such as the Dresen Group this issue exponentiates by the large number of brands and locations. Another point is, that in the commercial respectively the fleet sector often large quantities have to be delivered simultaneously to the customer."

Initial concern, says Herbert, was to make the individual steps of the sale, registration and transfer process visible, to identify dependencies and demonstrate simultaneously how the processes should be embedded in a total system. The principle: Away from sequential step-by-step thinking and instead to the networked thinking. In a second step, the results were fine-tuned and surveyed in detail.



Which employees communicate when what information and which computer systems are used, that was the question. Athanasios Giannakenas, sales manager for the brand Opel at Dresen: "Within the sales and registration process are many media breaks, which means, that some data is partially collected in several different computer systems. This is a cause for non-seamless processes: Apart from the fact that each multiple-collection of data costs time and is an error source, we have no possibility to represent the entire process within one system." In this area is need for action, says Giannakenas. Ideally there should be a portal to which all parties have access, where you can get an overview of the current status of a process at any time without any unnecessary phone calls and demands.

### Parallel processes

TGM CEO Joachim Berger and Knut Nolte, chairman of the Christoph Kroschke AG are in agreement: "A crucial point to shorten the delivery time is to run individual process steps not successively, but parallelly. While a vehicle is still on the transport for the forwarding, the registration documents for completeness and possibly missing procured. Already at this stage at the latest it is to consider whether accessories to be retrofitted are in stock. The workshop capacities for delivery inspection and possible retrofitting must be planned and a delivery date has to be agreed with the customer. This parallelism will be organized, particularly when large quantities as in the Dresen Group are moved." The key to this is, that the information has to be passed on completely and in a centralized system - from the seller to dispatching, wholesale distribution, workshop, forwarding to external manufacturers and vehicle registration services.



Business process analysis as a joint project of car dealer, service provider and consultancy. From the left: Knut Nolte (Christoph Kroschke AG), Ulrich Ameln (Kroschke Car Logistic GmbH), Cornelius Otten (Dresen-Gruppe), Dr. Klaus Herbert (TGM), Joachim Berger (TGM), Athanasios Giannakenas (Dresen-Gruppe)

Knut Nolte: "In the course of our other consulting projects was also clear that the redundant data acquisition in the automotive trade is widespread. We are able to offer in these cases by a web portal an IT solution, that already applies in the fleet and leasing area, which is exactly on this point and allows to involve the individual parties. To define workflows. In addition, we are currently working on additional solutions, which specifically follow the requirements of car dealerships and automobile sales." Indeed, the web portal for Dresen has not yet been used, but Cornelius Otten is open to it: "The jointly analysis with the Christoph Kroschke AG and TGM has confirmed where are our potentials to work more efficiently, especially in the wholesale sector. Of course, at first the specified processes within the project have to be adjusted. An electronic interface would provide valuable support to our aim, to shorten the delivery time of vehicles." ■

### Click to the web:

Further informations of the named companies  
 → [www.kroschke.de](http://www.kroschke.de) → [www.tgm.de](http://www.tgm.de) → [www.dresen.de](http://www.dresen.de)

