

Bulgarian Retailer Praktiker Personalizes Customer Journey with IBM Website launched in five months, nearly triples monthly sales both online and offline

ARMONK, N.Y., March 28, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) announced that Praktiker, an international retail chain offering home improvement and do-it-yourself (DIY) products, launched a completely new omnichannel commerce solution in five months in Bulgaria with IBM. The new business management and web services offers a personalized customer experience for Bulgarian shoppers looking at its 40,000 items, tripling both its in-store and online sales.

Praktiker operates nine DIY hypermarkets –two in Sofia and one in Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Ruse, Stara Zagora, Pleven and Veliko Tarnovo –and carries around 40,000 home improvement products. The retailer's prior website required a lot of the employees' time to make simple manual updates to easy fixes such as product promotions and marketing campaigns. This lack of agility made it difficult for the retailer to compete. Praktiker needed to attract more online sales and use its website to bring more consumers into the physical hypermarkets.

Praktiker teamed with [IBM Global Business Services](#) to drive its digital transformation and provide a full omnichannel commerce solution. In five months, IBM provided a complete business management and integrated web solution service to Praktiker, everything from performing the data migration to building the first online catalog for its 10,000 products. Since the solution is fully integrated with business systems such as warehousing, product picking, logistics and procurement, Praktiker can now execute simple price changes, product promotions and marketing campaigns within hours when it previously took days.

Since going live seven months ago, the new website has been visited by 750,000 unique users. The traffic has gradually tripled from around 1,500 visits a day to a new average of 5,000 a day. In the same period, Praktiker's monthly in store and online sales have almost tripled—all while increasing the average transaction values.

"Working with IBM has enabled us to digitally transform and personalize the customer experience. For example, we can create special offers for individual customers and link to in-store promotions, such as at home assembly or delivery services. This allows us to tailor each order so it precisely fits their specific needs--giving us an edge over competing retailers," said Kalin Georgiev, Chief of Electronic Data Processing Department, Praktiker Bulgaria. "These advanced e-commerce features combined with the expert advice from IBM Global Business Services differentiated our business and resulted in increased sales and profit."

The new site enables customers to access additional information from an online catalogue of over 40,000 items, and they also can learn DIY home improvement demonstrations. For example, how to build a kitchen or design a bathroom. These interactive web experiences are helping lead consumers into the physical hypermarkets to explore new DIY home upgrade and design ideas.

"The retail industry is facing unprecedented change due to global competition and evolving customer expectations. These factors require retailers and brands to transform their businesses from emphasizing transactions to focusing on customer relationships," said Laurence Haziot, Global Managing Director and General Manager, Consumer Industries, IBM. "We are happy to help Praktiker create a differentiated customer experience by leveraging data-driven insights so they can better align the needs of their customers to put them on the path for long-term success."

To support the new solutions, Praktiker uses IBM System Storage, including IBM Storwize@V3700 and V7000 storage servers, built on IBM Spectrum Virtualize™ software.

About IBM Global Business Services For more information, visit: <http://www.ibm.com/services/gbs>

About Praktiker

In 2014, Videolux Holding acquired the Bulgarian operations of the German home improvement chain Praktiker. The company operates nine DIY supermarkets—two in Sofia and one in Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Ruse, Stara Zagora, Pleven and Veliko Tarnovo—carrying around 40,000 home improvement products. Customers who visit its stores can take advantage of services such as timber cutting, bathroom designs, paint mixing, home delivery and consumer credit.

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