



Mercedes-Benz

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Let's talk Mercedes - Episode 4: The S-Class a car that really listens - the new MBUX: human-centred innovation

Abstract: Sarah Elsser meets Maxi Ulrike Vogel, UI Portfolio Management, Research & Development Mercedes-Benz AG, and Christian Mirea, Senior Manager User Experience Design

The first of three special episodes all about the new S-Class will give you deep dive behind the scenes into the development of the new MBUX. This means new, intuitive functions that turn the S-Class into the ultimate digital car with access to a personal "data highway". In the latest episode on the new S-Class at Let's Talk Mercedes, show host Sarah Elsser speaks with two Mercedes-Benz experts: Maxi Ulrike Vogel, UI Portfolio Management, Research & Development Mercedes-Benz AG, and Christian Mirea, Senior Manager User Experience Design. Together, they discuss the development history of MBUX, the collaboration between two different development teams and the advantages of MBUX. For example, all seats of the S-Class now have all the functionalities and control options of MBUX; this is no longer limited to the driver. The new MBUX relieves the driver with intuitive control and, at the same time, it supports the passengers with connections to all senses and saves them time. This makes the S-Class a luxurious digital space for all occupants.

The following contains some of the talk's key takeaways, which have been edited for readability:

- Christian Mirea on the collaboration between design and technology divisions during the development of the new MBUX: "I think we've gotten much closer in the last three or four years. Before, you had a kind of concept team and the designer and this changed dramatically in the last years. I think we have a very close teamwork there with the guys from concept, with the guys from software, and the guys who are buying the hardware. So, it's a very complex topic to build a modern, intelligent MBUX."
- Christian Mirea about the major challenges and changes in the new MBUX: "We improved our system very well. The voice recognition is much better, the system is more intelligent. But we still had the feedback from the market that the instrument cluster is still too complicated to deal with. Therefore, we decided to change it; we decided to have a lower complexity there. You just have to swipe left and right to get everything you want. You can just jump from navigation to services, to assistance screens, so it's much easier to interact with that. And this natural interaction is the key of our success. And it's also personalized."

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* The figures are provided in accordance with the German regulation 'PKW-EnVKV' and apply to the German market only. Further information on official fuel consumption figures and the official specific CO₂ emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the EU guide 'Information on the fuel consumption, CO₂ emissions and energy consumption of new cars', which is available free of charge at all sales dealerships, from DAT Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH and at www.dat.de.

- Christian Mirea about the role of entertainment onboard: “Gamification is a big topic for our company because if you have to spend more time in the car and you're just staying in a traffic jam, or you'll have different levels of autonomous driving, then you have the possibility to play around with your screens. This is a big topic that drives us, and we are already working on a solution for that, so that the people get a very luxurious experience in their cars. More than about just driving or listening to music, it's all about the luxury experience. Part of them could be this gamification topic and real games on the rear seat maybe, or collaborative games between the people sitting in the rear and in the front together.”
- Maxi Ulrike Vogel on the new S-Class and human-centred innovation: “I think we didn't make any compromises. We thought of the fullest on every level. Everyone had to have in mind: the customer first – not just develop a feature no one needs. We always came from the customer – that is in the middle of all our development thoughts. And I think not just our departments, but the whole company really changed the mind about how our cars have to be developed.”
- Maxi Ulrike Vogel on customer wishes and simplicity in design as key factors in development: “You need to code a system to understand and maybe also to anticipate what the user really needs. So we started with a natural understanding that you don't really have to say specific lines, which was still not as natural as we wanted it to be. And right now, we really are there (...) to have a system that you can talk to as an assistant. You don't have to start with ‘First of all,’ you can say, ‘Hey, Mercedes,’ and then you get the interaction started. And you can say more than one thing to control the car because the system waits for you; maybe you want to do something more – the system learns things.”
- Maxi Ulrike Vogel on MBUX and personalization in the car: “This is also a big, new step that we took – that customers anticipated – because you know this already from your computer. You have your profile and you get everything that you set before, so why not in the car? So, we really looked into our daily life – what are cool things that we want to have and why couldn't we take it in the car? And so, we created MBUX to really get to know you without setting everything: your favourite temperature, your seat adjustments, your favourite radio stations, and we put it into profiles. The difficult thing is how you get to your profile. We found very cool solutions for that as well – this was the face recognition, voice recognition, and even the fingerprint so that you don't have to use the PIN anymore.”

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Mercedes-Benz AG at a glance

Mercedes-Benz AG is responsible for the global business of Mercedes-Benz Cars and Mercedes-Benz Vans with over 173,000 employees worldwide. Ola Källenius is Chairman of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz AG. The company focuses on the development, production and sales of passenger cars, vans and services. Furthermore, the company aspires to be leading in the fields of connectivity, automated driving and alternative drives with its forward-looking innovations. The product portfolio comprises the Mercedes-Benz brand with the sub-brands Mercedes-AMG, Mercedes-Maybach and Mercedes me – as well as the smart brand, and the EQ product and technology brand for electric mobility. Mercedes-Benz AG is one of the largest manufacturers of premium passenger cars. In 2019 it sold nearly 2.4 million cars and more than 438,000 vans. In its two business divisions, Mercedes-Benz AG is continually expanding its worldwide production network with over 40 production sites on four continents, while aligning itself to meet the requirements of electric mobility. At the same time, the company is developing its global battery production network on three continents. Sustainable actions play a decisive role in both business divisions. To the company, sustainability means creating value for all stakeholders on a lasting basis: customers, employees, investors, business partners and the society as a whole. The basis for this is the sustainable business strategy of Daimler in which the company takes responsibility for the economic, ecological and social effects of its business activities and looks at the entire value chain.