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“Because we know what customers want, we can develop appropriate digital services and products that meet today’s needs.”

Kathleen Van Beveren, Director Parcels & Logistics Europe & Asia at bpost

bpost sees digital transformation as an opportunity

The entire country is a bpost customer: how many other Belgian companies can say that? bpost develops and implements its digital transformation on that solid foundation. “With an optimal digital experience, we prepare the company for the future and increase customer intimacy.”

The rise of new technologies and the growth of e-commerce are changing the way we consume. That is why bpost is accelerating its digital transformation. Because the company is convinced that it can continue to play a crucial economic and social role. By offering high-quality postal and public services, by innovating and diversifying and by remaining an important employer.

Why is the increasing digitization an opportunity for bpost?

Nico Cools (CIO at bpost): “For several years now our postal volume has been dropping, due to the digitization. It is an international trend that we cannot go against. What we can do is use this phenomenon as an opportunity to discover new paths. That is why I consider digitiza-

tion to be a great opportunity to shape the future of our company.”

Kathleen Van Beveren (Director of Parcels & Logistics Europe & Asia at bpost): “We are fully reaping the benefits of certain market evolutions. The distribution and delivery of parcels is one of our fastest growing business activities. The e-commerce market would not exist without digitization. By embracing digitization, and aligning our approach, our structures, our resources, and our processes, we strengthen our business.”

Does a better digital experience strengthen the relationship with the customer?

Nico Cools: “I am convinced it does. The mobile story is also becoming more

important. It is the most normal thing in the world for more and more customers to find what they are looking for in a matter of seconds on their smartphone. People also compare differently: they weigh the efficiency of customer communication and the quality of the digital experience against that of financial institutions, airlines and retail chains. We cannot afford to be left behind."

Kathleen Van Beveren: "Knowing what customers want and what keeps them busy enables us to develop mobile applications, digital services and products that meet today's needs and expectations. And all these efforts and innovations must of course also be commercially viable. In short: an optimal digital experience prepares our company for the future and increases customer intimacy."

How does smart data analysis make bpost's processes and logistics chain even more efficient?

Kathleen Van Beveren: "For example, we use artificial intelligence in our organization - in many ways. We do it in our predictive delivery model, in which we use algorithms

to estimate when a postman comes by, how long his round lasts on average, and so on. That data is adjusted in real time, depending on where and when he scans parcels during deliveries. In sorting, AI can ensure that a robot arm recognizes parcels and then performs the correct actions. And even our chatbot uses AI to answer customer questions as smartly and accurately as possible."

Do new technologies also optimize bpost's HR policy?

Nico Cools: "Certainly. Take the Mobi, the device that our postmen use to scan, among other things. By making that interface as accessible and intuitive as possible, we help our employees to deliver more qualitative work, and we ensure that they are incorporated much faster. The applications that we build today must be self-explanatory. Their ease of use increases job satisfaction. They also increase job involvement and pride: postmen can use it to report all kinds of things during their rounds. Happy and committed employees stay longer. And so technology can help to bind employees to us and grow with us in digitization. "

Which other digital services are you expecting to develop in the coming years?

Nico Cools: "We will only experiment with new technology as soon as we and our international technology partners find that they are sufficiently mature. It makes no sense to lose time and money with the impulsive embrace of every new trend. We choose solutions that have more or less proven themselves."

"But to answer your question: we are considering a service with which people can identify themselves digitally, just like they do physically with their identity card. So we can guarantee, on behalf of the State and certain companies, that someone is really the person to whom they address their communications or services."

Kathleen Van Beveren: "We can possibly integrate that into My Mail (see article on page 39, ed.). In any case, bpost still plays an important role in the Belgian society: thanks to its proximity and the trust it receives from the population. In these digital times, we also want to continue to play that role optimally."

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“I see digitization as a great opportunity to shape the future of our company.”

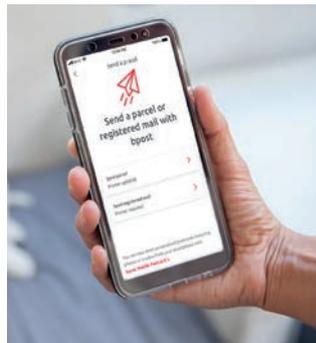
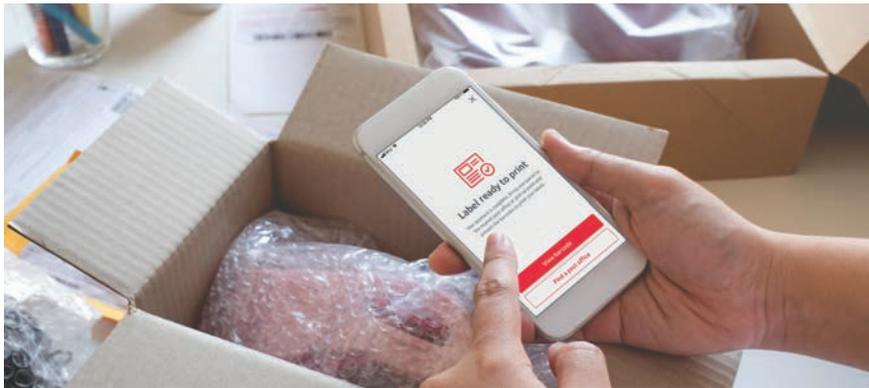
Nico Cools,
CIO at bpost



bpost invests heavily in an optimal digital customer experience

More and more customers are looking for a digital channel that can easily and optimally help them. With a new track & trace site, a chatbot, improved emails and a mobile app, bpost offers a customer experience that meets those expectations.





My bpost: facts and figures

The app is available in

3 languages: Dutch, French and English

370.000: that is the number of downloads to date

7,000 to 10,000: so many downloads are added every week

In October 2019, the **My bpost app** was the most downloaded app in the App Store

56 to 60% of downloaders are active users of the app

+/- 400,000: the number of parcels monitored via the app every month

4.2 out of 5: the user score of My bpost in the App Store (Android = 3.8/5)

“Our app offers shoppers a single channel to follow up and optimally receive all their online purchases.”

Erica Verzelen, Project Director at bpost

Companies that offer customers an optimal experience create satisfaction. And satisfied customers come back and boost the company's turnover. bpost understood that. "Through the roll-out of a strategically elaborated Digital Customer Experience (DCX) program, bpost is putting the customer first," says Erica Verzelen, Project Director at bpost.

The Customer Experience program

"We initially lagged a bit behind in digital customer experience." That is why, last year, we renewed our track & trace website which, among other things, allows end customers to track the status of their parcels online."

This site not only provides operational information about the status, the delivery date and the time slot of shipments, it also

communicates more clearly about the delivery preferences and provides an answer to the most frequently asked questions for parcels with a certain status.

An equally important pillar in the DCX program includes the development and launch of the My bpost app: a brand new application for mobile Android and Apple iOS devices. More than 370,000 Belgians have now downloaded this free app. Online shoppers can use it to track their parcels where and when they want. "The app automatically sends status updates for each shipment, if desired," explains Erica Verzelen. "Customers can also set their delivery preferences. They indicate, for example, whether they want to receive shipments at home, at the neighbours, in a safe location or at a pick-up point of their choice, all depending on their own agenda and schedule."

Track & trace all courier companies

Unique to the app: online shoppers can use it to monitor - and even return - shipments that are handled and delivered by other logistics and courier companies.

Erica Verzelen: “Our app offers shoppers a single channel they can use to follow up all their online purchases. They can also give each parcel a unique name to keep an overview. Parcels addressed to the customer are automatically added to the application, or can be entered manually based on its barcode.”

The development of the My bpost app was both internally and externally engineered by an international team of eight specialists. Thirty people are now working on this complete digital experience.

An app for postmen

bpost is also working hard on the development of Mobi: a smart mobile tool for postmen. It will be rolled out in the course of 2020 and will also have a positive impact on the digital customer experience. Erica Verzelen: “Feedback that postmen enter via Mobi’s intuitive menu structure during their rounds, such as traffic jams, a technical breakdown of a service vehicle or another incident that delays or changes the postal delivery, is passed on to the end customer.”

That way, customers stay even better informed about the status of their shipment. And, thanks to the interaction between Mobi and bpost’s digital customer channels, they can also find out when and why a parcel was sent back to the sender. Mobi also offers customers the option to digitally pay shipments at their front door using a Payconiq/Bancontact QR code.

Artificial intelligence and the future

bpost believes in artificial intelligence for improving the digital customer experience. Last year, the company integrated a chatbot on its track & trace website, which will also appear in the My bpost app in 2020. “We are gradually developing that chatbot, with additional functions constantly being added,” says Erica Verzelen. “For example, our automatic dialogue assistant can explain to the customers how they can be helped when they received a damaged parcel, or when they were not at home when the parcel was presented, etc.”

The chatbot guides the customer through the various scenarios towards the best possible solution. Here too, the end goal is the same, concludes Erica Verzelen.

“With all these initiatives we strive for a better customer experience, as it creates a win-win situation for everyone. The end customers feel faster and better supported, some of our employees’ duties are lightened, leaving them time to perform other tasks, and bpost strengthens its position as a logistics player in the distribution market.”



Which will be the app’s extensions in 2020?

- Additional digital customer support via chatbot
- Improved tracing (faster updates, better delivery time window)
- A photo of the specified “safe place” when the recipient is not at home
- Better notifications based on events (not just statuses)
- Integrated functions to send parcels (create a label)

Smart innovations make bpost's digital ambitions tangible

bpost is increasing its focus on quality and customer satisfaction through new digital innovations, such as My Mail and subsidiary DynaGroup's dynamic track & trace function. This opens up new commercial opportunities and offers an even better service to the consumer.

Physical mail in a digital jacket



My Mail is a brand new feature in the My bpost app.

Finke Jacobs, Product & Solutions Development at bpost

My Mail offers users a digital look at the mail items that they can expect to receive in their physical mailbox that same day. "With My Mail we build a bridge between our offline products and the digital world."

My Mail is a brand new feature in the My bpost app. If the user has physical mail, he receives a push notification on his smartphone in the morning. A photo of every shipment addressed to the user is added, explains Finke Jacobs, Product & Solutions Development at bpost. "They can then save, share or delete the shipment, or report an error."

For some mail items, the user can also click through to the sender's website for more information, or digitally browse through a folder. "My Mail has two clear advantages: on the one hand users never miss out on important mail, on the other hand it is an extra digital channel for senders to obtain greater reach, more flexibility and interesting data."

My Mail builds a bridge between offline products and the digital world, says Finke Jacobs. "My Mail is one of the agile pilot projects in the Digital Factory, an innovation hub in the head office where digital services are developed. Thanks to our agile way of working, we were able to launch the service to a test audience after three months. And with success: 84 percent of users think My Mail is relevant or very relevant. The plans for 2020? We would like to offer this service to all users of the My bpost app and add a lot of new features."

DynaGroup innovates with new track & trace technology

Last year, DynaGroup - a bpost subsidiary since 2017 - developed and launched new smart track & trace software. It combines GPS data and smaller delivery windows for a dynamic arrival time.

Dynalogic is supply chain specialist DynaGroup's department specialized in delivery, installation, assembly and return of valuable products such as computers and TV sets at the time desired by the customer. In December the company launched a new version of its real-time track & trace functionality MyDynalogic.

"Our latest innovation is a dynamic expected arrival time," says Stephan van Mulken, CEO at DynaGroup. "That time is updated every ten minutes and gives the consumer a time window that predicts the expected delivery time more accurately. As soon as we think we will arrive earlier or later, we adjust the expected arrival time and send a text message to the recipient."

With this new feature, Dynalogic introduces a unique tool for the modern consumer who wants to be constantly informed. "What's more, you don't have to wait for hours at home for a parcel to be delivered," continues Stephan. This way we prevent second delivery attempts and therefore unnecessary CO2 emissions. Staying ahead in the increasingly digitalizing market, is of course important. But sustainability also plays a key role for us."

