

Delight case study: Mercedes-Benz

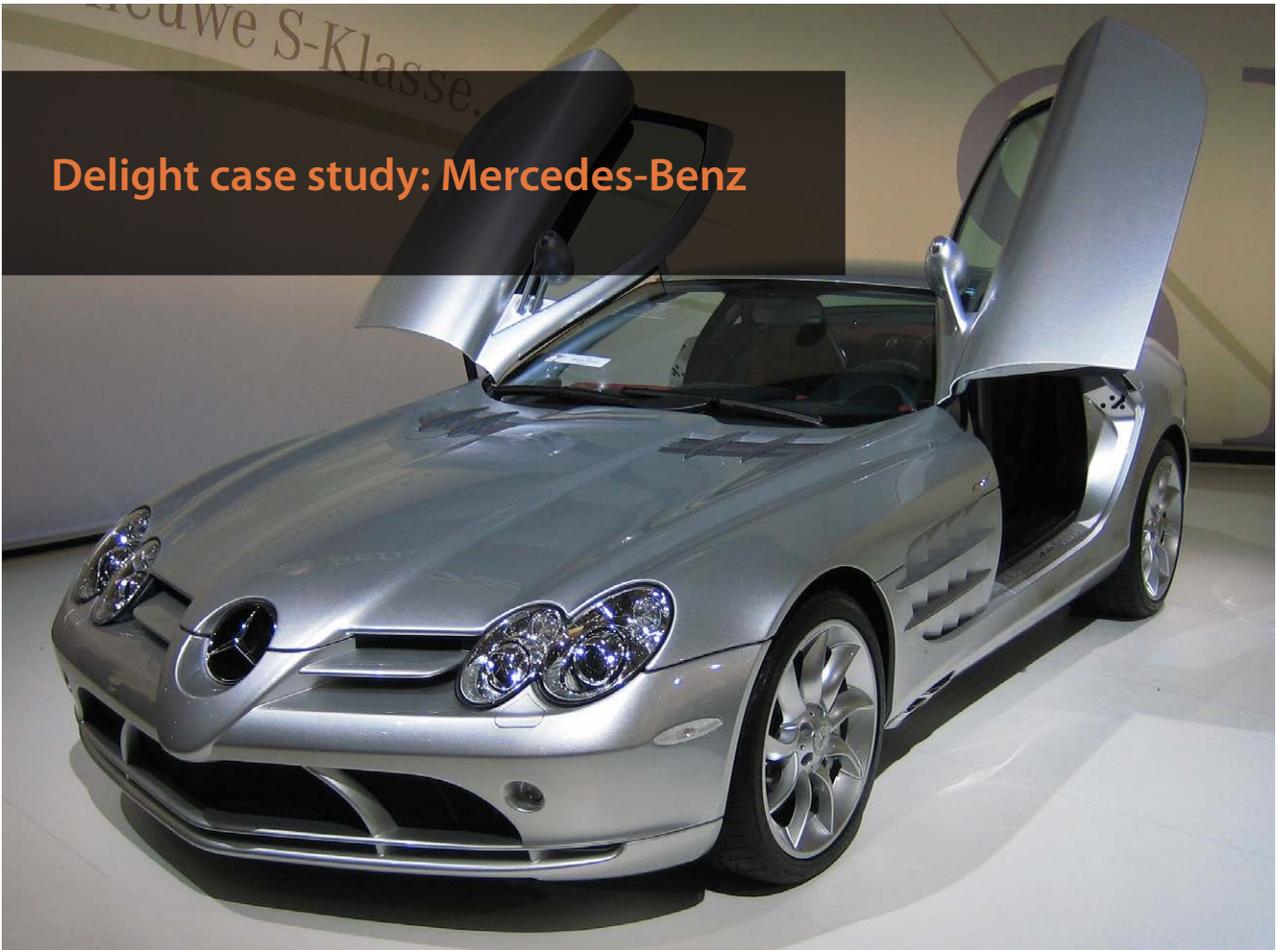


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A brief history of Mercedes-Benz

In 1885, townsfolk in Cannstatt, Germany, were shocked to see Paul Daimler, son of Gottlieb Daimler, driving around town on a wooden-spoked two-wheeler powered by a four-cycle internal combustion engine. The belt-driven motorcycle was the forerunner of the modern automobile. Daimler's motorcycle was the first recognised internal combustion vehicle to incorporate a practical transmission system. Soon after Daimler applied for his combustion motor patent, Carl Benz of Mannheim, Germany was granted a patent for the three-wheel motor car he constructed in 1844. Carl Benz had already founded his motor company, Benz & Cie by October 1883, and in November 1890, Gottlieb Daimler founded Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft (DMG). The creation of the two companies laid the foundations for the motorization of road transport.

At the start, the inventors used their own names, Benz and Daimler. They hoped the use of their family names would reflect the origin and quality of the engines and vehicles. The beginning of the new century, however, saw a new brand name for products from Daimler-Motoren-Gesellschaft (DMG) in Cannstatt: Mercedes. Why this name? In 1894, a wealthy banker named Emil Jellinek attended a race in which the three winning cars were all powered by Daimler engines. Jellinek was so impressed that he purchased controlling stock interest in the company and put unlimited funds at the disposal of Gottlieb's sons, Paul and Adolph. In 1900, the A4-cylinder Daimler was completed and named in honor of Jellinek's beautiful daughter, Mercedes.

The first Mercedes-Benz brand name vehicles were produced in 1926, following the merger of Karl Benz's and Gottlieb Daimler's companies into the Daimler-Benz company. Both men converted their factories to cater for Army demands during WWI. The two rivals were brought together by the uncertain economic climate and the impossibility of self-support. Today, Mercedes-Benz is known for its many technological and safety innovations which are now common in other vehicles. The company is one of the most famous and established automotive brands in the world, and is also the world's oldest automotive brand.

The love of inventing never dies. - Carl Benz

The best or nothing. - Gottlieb Daimler

Team-Building

Mercedes-Benz values the role of team-building as a way of increasing inter-office trust, cooperation and morale within the organisation. They hold team-building sessions for their own employees and even host team-building sessions for groups from other companies. Employees take part in exercises such as driving a Mercedes-Benz blindfolded around a track, while another employee guides them using only their voice. The company values are reflected strongly within the exercises – trust and good communication between employees is a must when working for any Mercedes-Benz branch around the world. The events are also a lot of fun; a break from the day-to-day office grind. Employees have the opportunity to socialise on a casual level, and once they get back into the office, they are able to communicate messages and instructions more effectively.

Mercedes-Benz Malaysia's After-Sales team noted that after a day of team-building activities, such as a fun packed Sea Island Treasure hunt and a series of challenging games, the staff satisfaction survey carried out afterwards saw a staggering 93% saying that the activities brought the team much closer. This achievement is a tangible reflection of the Mercedes-Benz team-building tagline – One For All & All For One.

Mercedes-Benz uses team-building activities as a way of getting their employees to socialise, communicate and develop inter-office trust, cooperation and morale.

Use team-building exercises to increase employee morale and boost inter-employee communication, cooperation and trust.

What team-building activities can you do with your staff to increase their morale and boost inter-employee communication, cooperation and trust?

There are always gatherings and opportunities to interact with your colleagues. In Engineering Services, for example, we have "Iron-Chef" competitions. There are also many interdepartmental, friendly competitions that educate us on various aspects of the business and help achieve a balance between work and play. - Shaun Roopnarine, employed since 2008

Flexible working arrangements

Mercedes-Benz USA (MBUSA) allows its employees to get to work at a time that suits them and their home situation. MBUSA understands that their employees' work/life balance is important when it comes to productivity and efficiency in the workplace. So if a new mom can only get in to work around ten in the morning, that's okay with MBUSA. Some employees prefer to get to work early and leave early, with the rest of the day to enjoy. If an employee is not able to make it in to work, they can relay instructions via Skype or on the phone. MBUSA also boasts "Summer Hours" for all employees, from Memorial Day through Labor Day, where employees work for only four hours on a Friday. Flexible working arrangements are based on the individual needs of the person and the department.

*Since I'm a morning person, I love my hours of work: 6am to 2:30pm. It's the best!
- Luis Reys, employed since 2006.*

Mercedes-Benz USA employs flexible working arrangements for all employees to ensure that individuals within the company maintain a healthy work/life balance.

Employ realistic, flexible working arrangements for all employees to ensure that they maintain a healthy work/life balance.

How can you employ realistic, flexible working arrangements for all employees to ensure that they maintain a healthy work/life balance?

Employee benefits

Mercedes-Benz employees enjoy a number of benefits regardless of their position in the company. This can be said of many other companies, however, Mercedes-Benz extends their employee incentives to include life cover for spouses and children. The Mercedes-Benz Employee Assistance Programme offers information and support to staff and their families for a range of personal issues they may encounter. The company also offers an adoption plan to assist employees with the adoption process.

Mercedes-Benz offers employees a range of company benefits to help with personal and familial issues, some of which include cover for spouses and children.

Offer your employees assistance and/or support when it comes to dealing with personal or familial issues.

What methods of support could you offer to employees to help them with personal or familial issues?

Personal and professional Development

Mercedes-Benz believes that recruiting talented, hardworking people is simply not enough. Once they're through the door, employees take part in numerous training programmes. The Individual Development Programme tracks the development of each employee while aligning their goals with the Performance Management Process. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of voluntary, confidential 360-degree feedback surveys, which allow them to give constructive feedback to the company and receive constructive feedback on their progress. Employees are also given formal and informal mentoring opportunities and tuition assistance if they're working towards a qualification.

*MBUSA offers a great benefits package and opportunities for professional and personal growth. Being an international company, there are travel opportunities and a global network of contacts. MBUSA also provides a wonderful working culture.
- Shaun Roopnarine, employed since 2008*

Mercedes-Benz provides training programmes that align the goals of the individual with the Performance Management Process.

Incorporate your employees' personal and professional goals within training programmes and performance management sessions.

How can you incorporate your employees' personal and professional goals within training programmes and performance management sessions?

Mercedes-Benz allows their employees the opportunity to take part in voluntary, confidential 360-degree feedback surveys.

Create opportunities for your employees to relay constructive feedback to their managers and leaders, and receive constructive feedback on their progress.

What opportunities can you create for employees to relay constructive feedback to their managers and leaders, and receive constructive feedback on their progress?