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"With artificial intelligence, we know which customers we can trust."

Tailor-made products, simple processes, better risk profiles: Artificial intelligence has the potential to revolutionize the insurance industry. But the use of intelligent, self-learning algorithms is still in its infancy in many areas. Marius Blaesing, CTO and co-founder of Getsafe, explains in an interview why this is so and how Getsafe differs from its competitors.

Marius, how would you describe Getsafe in one sentence?

We help our customers protect what matters most to them in life with digital insurance that harnesses the power of artificial intelligence (AI). With your offering, every step of the customer journey will be digital.

Artificial intelligence and bots play a large role in this transformation. What do you expect from digital assistants?

Technological helpers like our chatbot Carla are very important for us, that's where we see the future. Carla supports our customers 24 hours a day, answering questions and enabling customers to extend or cancel their insurance coverage in real time. She also helps update personal details, payment details, or report damages conveniently via a smartphone.

Will we only be using robots one day?

The technology can do a lot here, and the algorithms are getting better and better with increasing amounts of data. In the long term, intelligent systems will often be able to detect insurance fraud more accurately than experienced experts. We have been seeing these developments for some time in medicine, process manufacturing and many other areas. Digitalization will also turn the insurance industry upside down. But of course people remain extremely important in customer service, because not everything can be solved via AI. In my opinion, chatbots and language assistants will empower employees, rather than replace them.

How digital is the insurance industry so far?

There is still a lot of room for improvement. The backlog of modernization, especially among traditional insurers, is extremely high.

Why do many insurers find it so difficult to deal with artificial intelligence?

This is mainly due to outdated IT systems. After all, artificial intelligence is an attempt to develop algorithms that learn from "experience" and can thus solve problems and make decisions independently to a certain extent. So there is much more at stake here than just computing capacity. The prerequisite for this is an infrastructure that allows such data to be collected and evaluated. This is still a distant future scenario for all established insurers that I know of.

With a market value of over 100 billion euros, Allianz is one of the five most valuable companies in Germany. Getsafe is not even in the black. How can it be that a young start-up is ahead of such a large company with 140,000 employees in terms of digitization?

We have lean structures and can implement ideas much faster. Above all, however, we think about insurance differently from the ground up. We see ourselves as a tech company that develops insurance - not the other way around. So Getsafe uses data and AI to create a new product instead of making existing products a little more digital.

So you see yourself as Amazon for the insurance world?

Yes and no. Companies like Audible, Amazon or Spotify have one thing in common: they use data to make traditional products available in new ways - be it films and series, audio books, goods or music. That's what we do. But we go even further. Because at Spotify or Amazon, the products themselves remain the same. These companies have revolutionized distribution. We, on the other hand, want to redesign the insurance product itself, the actuarial model. This opens up completely new perspectives in the context of AI.

With the help of your chatbot, you can make the conclusion of a contract and the notification of loss significantly faster and more cost-efficient. But this is not yet a real AI...

That's right. But we are already using self-learning systems that are able to automatically detect insurance fraudsters, minimize risks or adjust prices. We will soon be rolling out these promising algorithms for new applications.

AI makes your processes more efficient. That's good for you. But what does the customer get out of it?
The customer initially benefits from a much better insurance experience. They can report claims directly and change data in real time - that's much more convenient. But that's just the beginning. With the help of the data, we can better detect insurance fraud. Honest customers could benefit from lower premiums or faster claims processing. AI helps prevent damage, for example with sensors that report water leaks in the home. Telematics tariffs in motor vehicle insurance are already leading in this direction by promoting a prudent driving style. With AI, it is also possible to develop products that fit customer needs much better - away from standardized and inflexible products. Artificial intelligence will therefore make insurance products fairer for the community.

In what way?
We have a system in mind that will determine an individual risk profile, put together the best insurance coverage for customers, and offer a personalised product bundle. So you would only have one insurance partner to cover all risks. True to the motto: "Carla, insure me". This system could automatically adjust the insurance cover if the customer's circumstances change - for example, in the event of a marriage or the birth of a child. Nowadays, however, customers quickly end up in a risk category on the basis of their profession or a certain place of residence that does not correspond to their actual profile. By learning from all customers' histories and behavior, the insurance process becomes objective again. We're synthesizing trust by combining the judgement-based decision-making of humans with the objective data analysis of intelligent algorithms.

But machines also make mistakes. There are even studies that show that AI can discriminate against some people...
That is true - unfortunately. The machines are fed with data, and if these data discriminate, then the system takes over these prejudices. It is therefore important to provide sufficiently classified training data and to determine indicators that measure as accurately as possible the risk profile of any given customer.

What are your plans for the coming years?
Our goal is to win 500,000 customers by 2020 and expand into six European countries. We also want to more than double our team and expand our product portfolio to include digital life insurance and other non-life insurance products.

About Getsafe

Getsafe is reinventing insurance. The insurtech startup from Heidelberg is using digital solutions and artificial intelligence to help people identify, organize and protect what they care most about in life: With just a few clicks, customers can learn about, buy, and manage insurance conveniently on their smartphone - simple, transparent, and fair. Accordingly, Getsafe sees itself as a technology company that is active in the insurance sector - not the other way around. Together with renowned partners such as Munich Re and leading venture capital investors, Getsafe is simplifying insurance - and thus bringing the concept of multi-line insurance into the digital age.

Learn more about Getsafe on our website or in our social networks on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Über Getsafe

Getsafe denkt und entwickelt Versicherungen komplett neu. Dazu setzt das InsurTech Startup aus Heidelberg auf digitale Lösungen und künstliche Intelligenz: Mit nur wenigen Klicks können die Kunden eine Versicherung bequem auf dem Smartphone abschließen, diese anpassen oder einen Schaden melden. Unkompliziert, transparent, fair. Denn Getsafe versteht sich selbst als ein Technologieunternehmen, das im Versicherungsbereich aktiv ist - nicht umgekehrt. Gemeinsam mit namhaften Partnern wie der Munich Re und führenden Venture Capital Investoren bringt Getsafe das Konzept der Allsparten-Versicherung in das digitale Zeitalter und hilft Menschen, das zu schützen, was ihnen im Leben am wichtigsten ist.

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