

Culture:

From children's birthday to head of Group
Teddy's secret past

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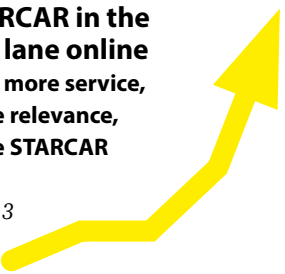
THE

REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Business:

STARCAR in the fast lane online
With more service, more relevance, more STARCAR

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Annual report 2024



Conclusion: Group integration is paying off



Despite a market environment characterised by uncertainty, cost pressure and structural changes, STARCAR EUROPA SERVICE GROUP AG can look back on a successful financial year 2024. "Despite all the challenges, we were not only able to maintain our position, but also expand it in a targeted manner," says Jens E. Hilgerloh, CEO of the Group. "The consistent integration of our various Group divisions since the merger in 2019 has been pivotal to our success. This strategic integration is now definitely paying off and putting us in a strong position."

Structured growth

With the opening of its 100th location in Flensburg in December 2024, the Group reached an important milestone in the expansion of its station network. Also particularly noteworthy are the two new

airport stations in Cologne/Bonn and Hamburg, which now enable the STARCAR EUROPA SERVICE GROUP to target high-frequency locations and tap into additional target groups. At the same time, the "Remote" strategy was additionally driven forward, as a total of 30 digital rental stations supplement the existing network of branches and strengthen the Group's presence at mobility hubs.

Digitalisation is driving factor

Overall, the Group made some far-reaching decisions in 2024. The integration of the AirPlus payment solution, the relaunch of the company website and the complete switch to cashless payment are some key examples of the digital strategy. All these measures are part of a broader plan to make things simpler and faster while maintaining close ties with our customers. And that

is having an impact. E-commerce bookings rose by more than 20 per cent year-on-year thanks to new, user-friendly booking channels and the enhanced availability of our mobility products. "We are investing specifically in digital solutions that create added value, not only for our customers, but also for our internal processes," Hilgerloh continues. "We are remaining true to our DNA, which means we are personally available to our customers whenever it is critical." Moreover, the 2024 financial year was rounded off by numerous internal improvements that are not directly visible to customers. These led to significant cost optimisations, which helped to provide the necessary stability during turbulent times.

Strong figures, solid basis

STARCAR EUROPA SERVICE GROUP AG generated

revenue of €510,648,427 in the 2024 financial year, with EBITDA amounting to €26,273,077. The balance sheet total amounted to €412,649,768, with a stable return on equity of 20 per cent. These figures affirm the Group's economic strength and the effectiveness of its strategic focus.

"We are not growing at any price, but with a well-defined strategy and an integrative approach that involves all areas of the business. In a challenging market, this is not a foregone conclusion. The result is therefore all the more impressive: We remain firmly on course," summarises Jens E. Hilgerloh.

STARCAR Group remains steadily on track

100 locations and a teddy bear to fall in love with

What do Flensburg, the Cologne/Bonn airport and a cuddly bear have in common? That's right, they all played a leading role in the STARCAR 2024 financial year. And while the rest of the industry can only dream of growth in these times of crisis and conflict, STARCAR keeps delivering – location after location. And they do it with heart, strategy and an extremely photogenic mascot.

Flensburg, December 2024. While others celebrated the end of the year with mulled wine, STARCAR casually opened its 100th location, thus making a clear statement after a challenging financial year. With the new station, the mobility service provider has not only further expanded its coverage in Germany, but also achieved a symbolic goal, as this far north you have practically reached the top.

The new station in Flensburg is therefore more than just a geographical step forward, and the hundred is much more than just a number. Both mark an important point on a journey that has been achieved through ambitious planning, strategic location selection and a distinctive brand identity – the epitome of a company that is growing consistently without losing touch with reality.



The road to one hundred

The past year saw some remarkable milestones for the mobility company. Right from the outset, on 4 January, the starting signal was given for a new category of rental stations: STARCAR at the Cologne/Bonn airport. This was followed in August by the second major airport coup at Hamburg Airport. Two high-frequency hotspots, traditionally reserved for the major players in the sector, are now glowing in STARCAR yellow – including a specially tailored fleet for tourists, frequent flyers and business travellers.

The two locations are not only very well situated, they also have an outstanding concept, with a lounge instead of a queue and a pleasant customer experience instead of a cash desk. Moreover, every customer who rents a car at Hamburg Airport gets more than just a vehicle – they receive a great deal of attention from the new star employee of the Group.

The real highlight of the Hamburg Airport station in the home territory of the Group does not wear a name badge, but a soft, furry smile – the life-sized STARCAR teddy.

Originally no more than a gimmick, the teddy has quickly become a favourite among our customers. If you're lucky, you'll meet him live, and anyone who has taken a selfie with him is unlikely to forget the experience in a hurry. Whether in photos with children or with a reassuring wink for stressed business people, the teddy bear works wonders. And it symbolises something that should not be allowed to get lost amid all the expansion: closeness, personal contact and the STARCAR spirit.

Growth with humour and warmth

The striking thing is that STARCAR continues to grow, undeterred by the generally sluggish economy. And despite a new logo, a more modern brand identity and increasingly digitalised processes, STARCAR remains above all a people-oriented company that manages to combine expansion and digitalisation with engaging personality. STARCAR shows no trace of corporate insensitivity or chatbot service, but instead a sense of equality, humour and an extremely likeable brand character.

Whereas many companies emphasise automation, STARCAR offers a combination of technology and teamwork. This shows that size and customer proximity do not have to be opposites. Growth works when digitalisation frees up new resources in the right places to make room for even more personal service. STARCAR proves that you can become bigger without acting bigger. And that you can still achieve good results when you treat your customers as equals.

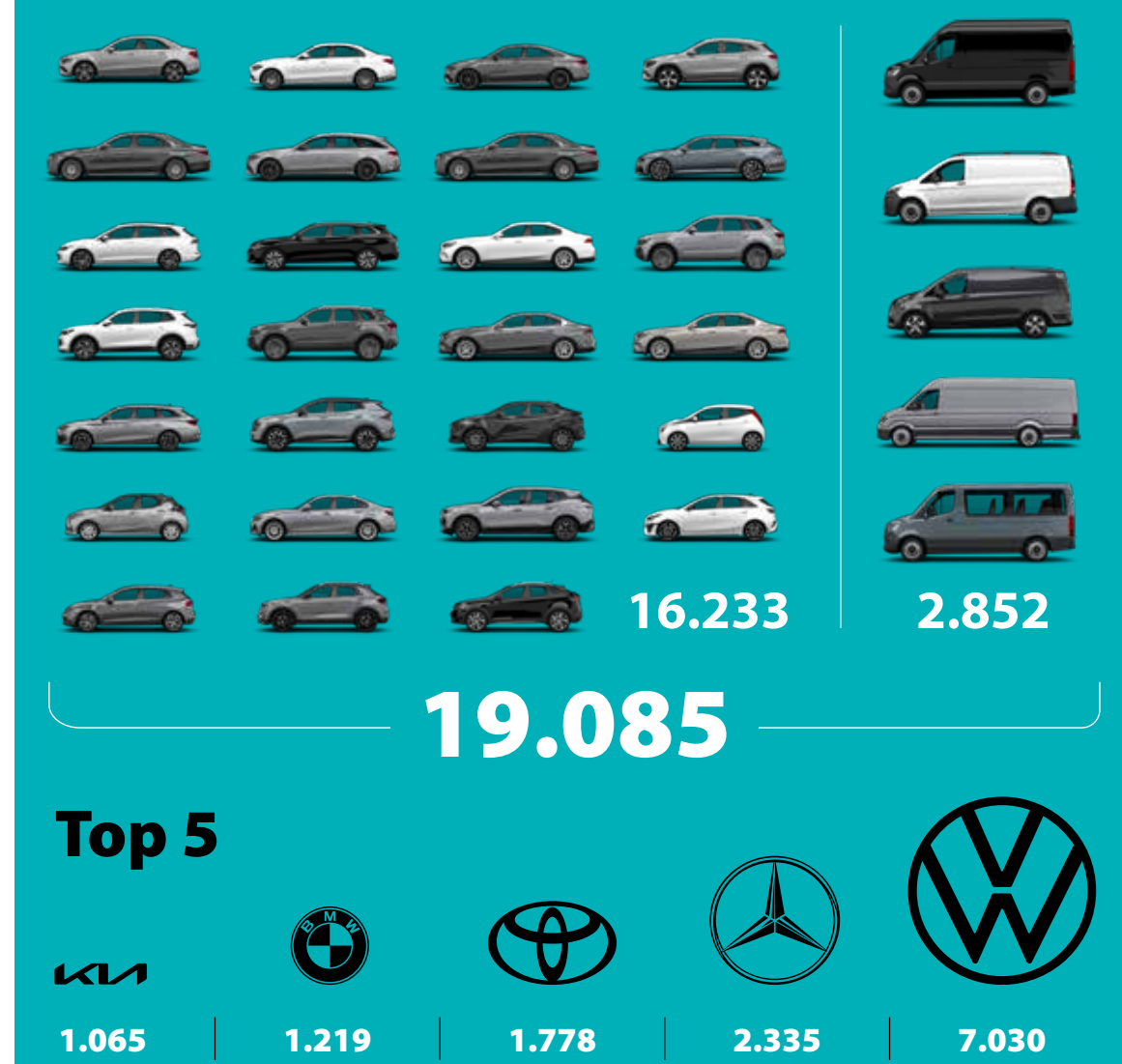
Conclusion: with over 100 stations now, STARCAR is well on its way to becoming one of Germany's leading mobility brands. And perhaps the only one that puts a smile on your face before you even get in the car. The "Rear-view Mirror" editorial team congratulates STARCAR on an excellent year – here's to the next 100!



Business

Vehicle figures 2024

SCES Group



Renting without queuing:

When you get the concierge free on top

They don't have a counter, but plenty of options: the remote branches, STARCAR's digital rental stations, are suddenly opening up numerous attractive locations at travel hubs. Instead of conventional branches with staff and counters, in 2024 STARCAR focused for the first time on digital locations, for example at mobility hotspots.

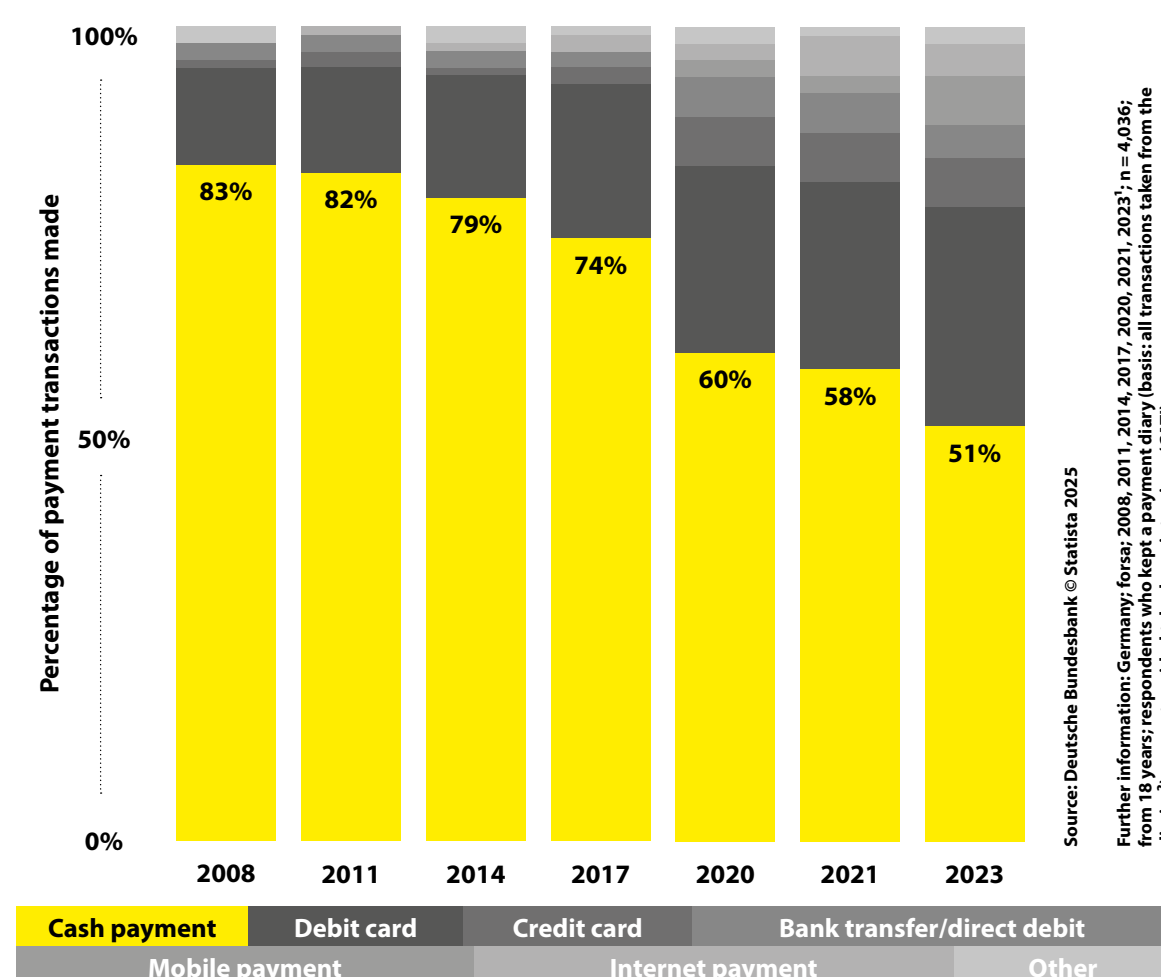
The idea was that customers book online and the cars are either provided or the travellers are conveniently brought to their vehicles. The locations are managed by the team from the nearest

station – a service that customers do not even have to pay extra for, making it even easier for them to integrate STARCAR into their travel plans. Overall, 30 of these remote branches were opened last year. Not only do they offer greater visibility in highly frequented locations, they also serve as a test case for new markets to explore existing potential – a clever solution that conveniently serves customers via delivery or routing. It's like having real people in real stations, but with greater flexibility.

Less cash, more security:

Rent and roll, no coins involved

Development of the use of payment methods in Germany from 2008 to 2023



What has long been the norm in Sweden is now becoming increasingly popular in Germany: cashless payments. But while you can already pay digitally at every little chip shop in Stockholm, the transition remains slow within Germany. This is despite the fact that, according to a survey conducted by the Deutsche Bundesbank (German central bank) in April 2025, fewer and fewer people are using coins and bank notes. The fact is that card payments, contactless systems and mobile apps are on the rise: in supermarkets, at the bakery and, last but not least, in the mobility industry. One of the companies that has responded to this change is STARCAR, which completely phased out the use of cash at its German stations in 2024.

The advantages are obvious: greater security, lower default rates and less potential for abuse. “Handling cash is very error-prone and poses a major risk to our customers and employees,” explains Nima K., board member of the Group. Furthermore, the payment process is now noticeably simpler, faster and more transparent.

Customers pay digitally, teams can focus on what matters most, and criminals search in vain for full cash registers. Nonetheless, the transition at STARCAR is not merely an end in itself, but part of a larger movement towards greater transparency, leaner processes and an understanding of payments that is geared towards people's everyday lives. The future is replacing paperwork: a change that makes a major difference without a lot of fuss.

Next level for business travellers:

STARCAR takes off with AirPlus

To make it far easier for business travellers to use their own mobility products, last year STARCAR introduced the AirPlus digital billing solution, thus positioning itself as the preferred provider in this customer segment.

What sounds like a frequent flyer programme is actually a smart payment platform that is increasingly becoming the standard in the business world: AirPlus works like a virtual credit card with a generous limit and detailed reporting. Business travellers who already use AirPlus can therefore conveniently use STARCAR's services without changing their travel processes.

A real advantage: many booking platforms – such as Amadeus, Atlantos and Onesto – require the use of AirPlus. The fact that STARCAR is now involved is no coincidence, but rather the result of strategic foresight. The goal is to achieve greater visibility among companies, longer reach on booking portals – and to provide seamless service that impresses corporate customers.

In other words, AirPlus not only makes this medium-sized company more digital, but also more attractive in the highly competitive world of business mobility. And it makes STARCAR a serious player among international car rental companies.

Business

Online in the fast lane

Hamburg. The relaunch of the STARCAR website in August 2024 not only brought a breath of fresh air to the design, but also led to a perceptible upswing in sales figures. The e-commerce team achieved growth of over 20% year-on-year: a significant success for the company's digital strategy.

However, the path to this breakthrough was anything but a coincidence. Even the launch of the new site was not done in a rush, but as part of a controlled A/B test. At first, only some of the users were able to see the new design, while others were still being directed to the previous version.

This approach enabled a precise analysis of usage behaviour – and the opportunity to make targeted adjustments where necessary. “We didn’t just want to be more visually appealing, we wanted to be better. The A/B test helped us to rely not only on our gut instinct, but on actual data,” says Henrik S., head of the E-Com team. Moreover, direct communication is very important to STARCAR, as the relaunch was also intended to bring about some noticeable improvements for customers. For this reason, users can still provide their personal feedback on the website with just two clicks.

The strategy enabled us to supplement our analysis data with valuable information gained from users. It's a great collaboration, and our customers feel

heard and taken seriously.” A completely redesigned, state-of-the-art back end, straightforward user guidance, mobile optimisation and a noticeably faster search function are injecting new life into STARCAR's e-commerce motor. Supplemented by a new information base that enables more targeted decision-making and additional features such as a corporate customer area and an in-house blog, the website has become the central digital hub for prospective customers. A resounding success across the board, with more service, more relevance, more STARCAR.



Simply one-way or completely free of charge:

Digital fine-tuning and an ingenious free offer

People who travel don't necessarily return the same way they came – and rental customers want a fast, flexible, straightforward experience. This is where STARCAR comes in. Two smart solutions demonstrate how to elegantly combine benefits for customers and the company's interests: through simplified one-way bookings and an offer that sounds almost too good to be true: free rental.

One-way travel reinvented: book directly, return flexibly

One-way rentals are actually nothing new at STARCAR – but they were given a fresh new look in 2024. Until this point, it was possible to book a vehicle with a different return location, but this had to be done via a separate product area of the booking portal. However, with the relaunch of the website, exactly this point was modified. Since then, a different return location can be easily specified via the normal booking process – directly,

seamlessly and without any detours. The impact was immediate: the number of one-way bookings shot up by over 200% – an impressive bonus that demonstrates how strongly digital usability can influence the volume of bookings – and how well STARCAR understands the needs of its users.

Free rental: a win-win par excellence

Another idea that STARCAR introduced around 10 years ago as the first car rental company ever: car rental free of charge. With STARCAR, you can also drive completely free of charge – no subscription, no hidden fees, no small print. An absolute highlight in the mobility service provider's range that many people (still!) don't know about.

The principle is both simple and brilliant: STARCAR regularly has vehicles that need to be moved from A to B for logistical reasons – from



nimble compact cars to premium SUVs and spacious vans. Instead of transporting these vehicles itself at great expense, STARCAR simply offers them for booking by the public – free of charge. Sometimes you might even get a free tank of fuel on top. The only condition is that the route and the delivery time are fixed – but if you're flexible you can really save yourself some money.

Conclusion: Whether completely free of charge or flexibly from A to B – with these two offers, STARCAR shows how customers and companies can both benefit. The former enjoy the convenience and savings, the latter the efficiency and simplicity. And everyone benefits from mobility that simply makes sense.

The key financial figures for 2024 vs. 2023



Revenue

20 %

Balance sheet total

Return on equity

EBITDA

From children’s birthday to head of Group

Teddy’s secret past – and why he never talks about Austria

It’s hard to believe, but before the STARCAR teddy bear posed for photos at German airports with frequent flyers, holidaying families and influencers, he had a completely different life. In fact, his fluffy career began as “Brummi the Bear” in an amusement park south of Vienna where he entertained children at birthday parties, sang half-baked sing-along songs and was part of a trio of mascots called “Die Drei von der Jausenstation” (The Three from the Snack Bar) – together with a hot dog and an oversized cola. The breakthrough never came, the park went bankrupt, and Brummi disappeared from the scene. Rumours about a stint as a party entertainer in Mallorca were never confirmed, but an explosive

mobile phone video (“Teddy twerks on the bar”) is still circulating in dubious Facebook groups to this day. An attempt to relaunch his career as a pop star also ended in disaster. His former producer Tim Peters cancelled the planned release of the single “Bärig am Berg: Wenn die Jodel-Hütte brummt” shortly before it was due to come out. Tim Peters’ reason: “Charisma? Top! The voice? A complete catastrophe.”

After that, he was never the same again, according to a former neighbour. “He hardly spoke and in the end didn’t even say hello.” Wild speculation became increasingly rife, such as his connection to the bear scene in Sölden. However, according to management, this was “purely of a private nature”.

A fresh start at STARCAR

The real turnaround came in autumn 2023. After initially being miscast as a promotional bear – too large for the planned competition – the fate-stricken bear turned up at the warehouse in Hamburg. The rest is history. He was tested internally under the code name “Teddy Beta” as a cuddly factor on cold handover days and an emotional counterbalance to the company’s expansion and digitalisation strategy. His breakthrough came with the first airport station in Cologne/Bonn, when he accidentally appeared on the local news. A customer had latched onto him because he thought Teddy was the prototype of a new transport service. The clip went viral. STARCAR decided: “If we’ve already got a teddy, then let’s do it right.”



Between fame, hype and euphoria

- But fame also brought with it some darker sides.
- A storm of criticism over allegedly disparaging looks directed at a child wearing a VfB Stuttgart football shirt (the case was dismissed).
 - An intervention due to excessive consumption of free coffee at the station – according to eyewitnesses, “up to 12 cups a day”.
 - And finally, the public escalation at the STARCAR summer party in 2024, when Teddy pushed the company DJ off the podium because “he was only playing electro and not good old Italo pop”.

And now?

Teddy has been rehabilitated. He does yoga, only wears linen (even if it still smells like polyester underneath) and he talks to the little fans again – unless they ask for Brummi. His management says: “He has arrived. In the STARCAR family, in the hearts of our customers – and sometimes even in the boot – if he wants to come along.” Teddy has just one thing to say about that: “Quite honestly? I was never gone.”

And in the next edition

Teddy up close: a weekend alone in the van and the pictures no one should see

FILM REVIEW

The “Rear-view Mirror” film review:

“STARS IN CARS – by Niklas van Lipzig”

A mockumentary about hubris, hashtags – and how to go full throttle with hot air

The STARCAR campaign series from 2024 hurts – exactly there where it is supposed to. Right from the first episode you can guess: this isn’t going to be good. In the second episode you realise: it’s getting even worse. And from episode three you ask yourself just how in the world this man could have got his own series. The answer is, he made it himself.

From pitch to embarrassment

“Stars in Cars – by Niklas van Lipzig” is the centrepiece of last year’s STARCAR campaign and, at the same time, a stroke of genius in the guise of complete self-overestimation. As the new temporary creative director (aka: “marketing wrecking ball”), the self-proclaimed media star spends five episodes celebrating how he plans to turn STARCAR into a viral sensation. Spoiler: it never gets past the planning stage.

Niklas displays everything that creative leadership is not: a big mouth, pseudo-visions and an inner urge to express every single opinion in meetings – even if he doesn’t have any. Whether at press conferences (“Every car ... is a beautiful car.”), internal presentations (“We are now calling exhaust fumes stardust”) or in one-on-one interviews with the camera: Niklas gives everything. Unfortunately.

Comedy with loss of control

The series is staged as a mockumentary in the style of “The Office” and “The Store”, but with a unique touch: Niklas isn’t just overwhelmed, he himself is the pitch. As he struggles through team meetings, brainstorming sessions and outdoor shoots,

he vacillates between delusions of grandeur, a complete lack of ideas and the firm conviction that “the content” will somehow work out if you just shout loud enough.

The best part is that STARCAR is on board with everything. And how. Instead of maintaining control, the company allows the embarrassment to happen and exploits it. The landing page of the campaign explains: “We wanted to have a radically honest view of our marketing. Now we have Niklas.” Rarely has there been a more beautiful capitulation to reality.

Backstage, episode 4:

The thing with the car was not planned.

There was a minor incident behind the scenes of episode 4: while Niklas sits in the driver’s seat talking big about “the mobility of tomorrow”, the vehicle rolls backwards out of the picture: the handbrake wasn’t on. Off camera, someone shouts, “Action!” and Niklas nods smugly. No one wants to destroy the illusion. In post-production, the whole thing was interpreted as a “symbolic move”. The headline in the treatment: “The brand is moving, even if the steering wheel is in the wrong hands.”

Marketing the hard way

The five episodes feature real STARCAR employees, real locations – and a very real cringe factor. Niklas performs his way through everyday life as if it were a TED Talk in free fall. And instead of smooth corporate communications, what we get here is an authentic crash with an advance warning. A high-gloss belly flop with class. Because amid all the awkwardness, something remains that has become rare in the world of advertising: courage. And the ability not to take yourself too seriously.

Has Niklas really had an impact at STARCAR? Hard to say. But the series proves that you can put yourself in the spotlight and wonderfully dismantle your own image. And that’s more than many genuine creative directors can claim for themselves.

Conclusion: “Stars in Cars” is a lesson in self-irony, content expertise and a calculated loss of control. STARCAR proves that even for a growing company, modern brand communication does not have to be polished to perfection. Sometimes a guy like Niklas is all you need.

4.5 out of 5 stars

(The half a star is missing because Niklas forgot it on the mood board.)

In the shadow of Niklas L.:

The man in green

He has no name. No speaking part. No face. And nonetheless a presence with an impact. In one episode, the “green guy”, as the crew calls him, is supposed to hold the iPad. That’s all. But Niklas celebrates him like a revelation: “He’s got it. Minimalism. Presence. Attitude.” While intern Emil struggles to hold back his tears, the “green guy” gets all the props – and immediately lands a booking for van Lipzig’s next project, “Same, same or the same thing in green.” The result: the man in the green suit now has a comp card, while Emil continues to lug props around.

Intern Emil:

Failed on equal terms

He believes in advertising, in creative visions, and above all in Niklas. Emil, the intern with the mandala colouring book and the loyal, naive look, is the embodiment of idealism in the first few episodes. He nods when Niklas talks bullshit. He writes when Niklas is silent. And he laughs, even when he doesn’t know whether it was a joke. However, the fragile working relationship finally breaks down after episode 3: when van Lipzig insists on “seeing eye to eye”, Emil does not interpret this as a sign of respect, but rather as a request to stand on a chair. An insensitive, humourless remark by Niklas (“Can someone get a stool for Emil!?”) finishes off the mild-mannered trainee. Emil leaves the set. Without any drama, but with attitude. In episode 4, his seat remains empty. Niklas’ only comment: “Well, weakness is a choice.” The camera briefly pans to the empty flipchart that Emil would have been holding. There is a yellow Post-it note stuck at the bottom right: “Good luck, Niklas. Grow up.”

Signed: E.

A S T A R C A R O R I G I N A L

NIKLAS
VAN LIPZIG

ALEXANDER
GAIDA

JENS E.
HILGERLOH

NIMA
KALANTARI

MELANIE
REICHARDT

ANNE
SCHLEUSNER

STARS IN CARS



DIRECTOR
STAR
MENSCH

A DOERING MEDIA PRODUCTION

DREHBUCH **JANNIS DÖRING** REGIE **JANNIS DÖRING** HERSTELLUNGSLEITUNG & BERATUNG **JANA GÖTZE**
REGIEASSISTENZ **ROBERT SUMMERFIELD** KAMERA **ROBERT WINTER** SCHNITT **JAN LAGOWSKI** **JANNIS DÖRING** DIRECTOR MARKETING **MELANIE REICHARDT**
PRODUCER **BENJAMIN KOCH** PRODUKTIONSASSISTENZ **CAROLIN REITZ** FILMTONMEISTER **ANDRÉ KLAR** BOOM-OP **KONRAD DEISSNER** SET DESIGN **STEFANIE GANSCHOW**
STYLING **ANNOULA PETRIDES** HAIR & MAKE UP **ELLEN GRABANDT & NINA ISABELLA LUCKAT** KAMERA OPERATOR A-CAM **LEON BRANDT**
KAMERA OPERATOR B-CAM **DAVID BOCHMANN** KAMERA OPERATOR C-CAM **CLARA B. ZIMMER** KAMERA OPERATOR E-CAM **ALEXANDER STÖSSLEIN**
1ST AC A-CAM **JOACHIM 'JOKO' NEUMANN** 1ST AC B-CAM **SVEA ROSE** 1ST AC C-CAM **SEBASTIAN HEINRICHS** 2ND AC A-CAM **TONY PRATSCH**
2ND AC B/C-CAM **MELISSA GUIDI** KAMERA PRAKTIKANT **USAMA HAJ YAHYA** DATA WRANGLER **HANNES WINKEL** VIDEO OPERATOR **TOBIAS BEIDERMÜHLE**
GRIP **CHRISTOFFER SCHULZ** GRIP ASSISTENT **TILL DOSE** OBERBELEUCHTER **NICO NITSCHKE** BEST BOY LICHT **PHILIP BRAUN** BOARD OPERATOR **YANNIS SCHMID**
BELEUCHTER **TOM HERFURTH** **RUBEN FLEISCHER** **MARC VAN HOORN** **KONRAD VON WITTICH**

CREATIVE DIRECTION **JANNIS DÖRING** COLORIST **ROBERT WINTER** VISUAL EFFECTS **MARC KELLERMANN** STANDFOTOGRAF & BTS **LENNART GELKE**
RUNNER **TIM KOPP** **JUSTUS HAGEMANN** **ADAM TARKÖVI**
KOMPARNEN **MAXIMILIAN RASCHKE** **MARIE VON BOSE** **SOPHIE SCHULZE** **JAN LAGOWSKI** **UMUT TUERKKOLU**
DARSTELLERIN **LEONIE FUNKE**

MASKE **MOBILESPEACE GMBH** KAMERAS & ZUBEHÖR **VANTAGE FILM GMBH** KAMERABÜHNE & LICHT **LICHTHAUS GRUPPE** CATERING **CINECAT FILMCATERING**
TON POSTPRODUKTION **SOUNDSCAPE STUDIOS** STARCAR MERCH **WHITE LABEL HAMBURG GMBH**

[STARCAR.DE/NIKLAS](https://starcar.de/niklas)

Arts and culture

Locations in the rear-view mirror

Travel reports from the most beautiful corners of the STARCAR map of Germany

Between shopping trolleys and lake views

A small STARCAR station and the big questions surrounding mobility

From our travel reporter in the passenger seat

There are places where time passes more slowly. And that's a good thing. Brandenburg an der Havel is one such place: a charming town with lots of water, even more cobblestones and a STARCAR station that is smaller than some removal boxes. A whopping 56 m², tucked away in the middle of a shopping centre. Where you only intended to pick up some bread and a few Spreewald gherkins, but end up leaving with a removal van.

Real proximity, not a deserted car park

The station in Brandenburg consists of a tiny office, a friendly colleague with a sense of humour typical of the region (just don't talk to him when he's ordering from the delivery service) and a few parking spaces just around the corner. If you book here, you won't get a lounge, a life-size STARCAR teddy bear or a merch shop. But you will get a car. Well maintained. Honest. Reliable. "People like it because it's quick," says one employee. "They come with their shopping bags and leave with the keys. Done." From the local lake to moving into a new terraced house: Brandenburg drives with STARCAR.



Think global, pick up local

What looks like a footnote on the map is actually a statement: big brands don't just belong at the airport terminal, but also there where real life happens – between the banks of the Havel, the streets of the old town and the shopping centre. STARCAR says: "Why not? Maybe someone lives here who just wants to get reliably to their destination." Brandenburg is no place for people in a rush, but more like somewhere to take a short breather. And then drive off with a crate of Lübzer beer in the boot.

Conclusion: small, but effective

The station in Brandenburg shows that reliable mobility does not need a shiny façade or 300 underground parking spaces. Sometimes all you need is a few square metres, a clean car – and someone who knows where the keys are while the checkout beeps at the supermarket next door. Brandenburg? Always worth a stopover. And if not, at least a car rental.

So happy: we've reached the bottom!

A journey to the southernmost point on the yellow star map

If you keep travelling south through Germany, you don't end up in the countryside, but right in the midst of life. Freiburg, the southernmost city in the country, is idyllically situated among vineyards, Black Forest fir trees and enthusiastic cyclists. And right in the heart of it all: the south-south-westernmost STARCAR station in the country. A station as friendly as the local dialect and as efficient as the Freiburg public transport system.

Come on, it's all easy

The station itself is pleasantly unhurried. No glass palace, no turnstiles. Instead, it is a charming, functional location that blends unobtrusively into Freiburg's nonchalant atmosphere. Here, vans can be seen parked next to small cars, and sometimes a Porsche is tucked away under a vine. That's not a contradiction, that's Freiburg.

Where the air tastes of freedom

Here, the wind blows from France, the mountains beckon from Switzerland, and rental agreements are concluded with the calm and composure typical of Baden.



Most people who rent a car here want one thing: to get away. Into the mountains. To Alsace. Or just for a quick trip down to Lake Constance. Its proximity to Switzerland and France makes Freiburg a hub for spontaneous travellers with holiday and business plans. But the people of Freiburg themselves also appreciate what is on offer. Instead of car-sharing fatigue, here you'll find well-maintained estate cars with all-weather tyres and a service team that's always on hand. Because here, they still wave goodbye personally when the car leaves the yard. And yes, maybe you'll end up with a T6 van instead of a cargo bike. But if you want to go to the mountains with three children and four hiking backpacks, you have to come to STARCAR.

Freiburg's mobility has plenty of options, some of them with air conditioning and leather seats.

And anyone who thinks that everything moves slowly in the southernmost station is mistaken: the fleet is regularly renewed, digital processes run smoothly, and even the speedometer looks forward to the winding mountain roads. At the lowest point in Germany – yet at the top in terms of service and location strategy.

STARCAR in Freiburg: small, elegant, and full of potential

You couldn't ask for more: station with a north wind

Between fjord and friendliness: a visit to Germany's northernmost STARCAR station



It's a bit like someone has taken the perfect blend of workshop charm and coastal flair and put it into a car dealership. Where others take their cars in for servicing, STARCAR Flensburg makes sure you're ready for the next road trip – right in the middle of the Emil Frey Küstengarage building.

When you rent a vehicle from STARCAR Flensburg, you get a lot more than just keys and mileage. The Baltic Sea is never far away, the scent of salt water is in the air, and the Scandinavian way of life is the norm here, as Denmark is only ten minutes away. So, when you cross the border in your rental car, you'll be greeted by the sea breeze and a touch of wanderlust.

Our colleague Frauke, a native of Flensburg and fan of fish rolls, sums it up perfectly:

"We work where others go on holiday. Once around the fjord, dip your feet in the water, and you're done." While other locations advertise their proximity to main roads, Flensburg scores points with its genuine coastal location. You start off between wrenches and demonstration vehicles – and yet in no time at all you're out on the B200 heading for the beach. It's not just where you're going that counts, but also that your mind becomes clear on the way. Typical Flensburg: Nordic, authentic, easy-going.

Arts and culture

REPORT

Digital first:

Easier said than done

Anyone who thinks digitalisation is a no-brainer should spend a day in STARCAR's IT department. No fancy tech lab, no beta glasses, no chill-out area with a ball pool, but genuine craftsmanship and real solutions to everyday problems. And, just like in real life, they are rarely sexy, but extremely important.

Somewhere between booking, handover, fleet planning and payment, a small team in the engine room is making sure that everything runs smoothly. And if not, there won't be any vans, convertibles or removal helpers in the yard – just annoyed customers at the counter.

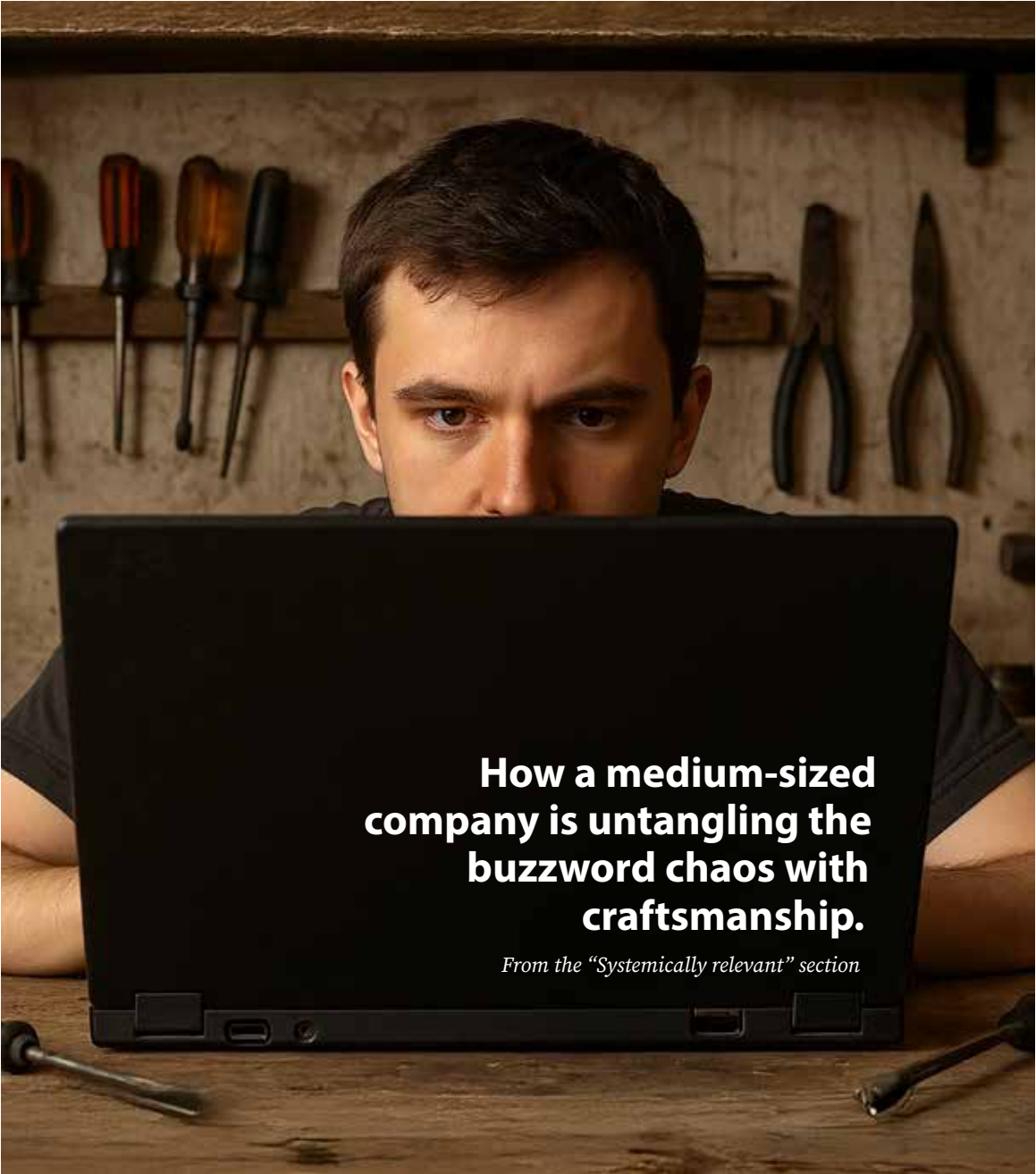
Invisible, but indispensable

IT at STARCAR isn't the next AI co-pilot or an NFT ID on your key ring, but pragmatic restructuring under difficult conditions. While others build their platforms around processes, here we need to synchronise yesterday's business model with tomorrow's technology.

In an advert on Stepstone, the job title would be: "Something for hobbyists and enthusiasts". But only for those who understand car rental down to the last detail and are true all-rounders at the same time. Because while vans, city runabouts and premium models cruise the streets outside, it is this engine room that continued to drive continuous improvement in 2024.

Screwdrivers, not superlatives

Anyone who thinks IT is just code and coffee is mistaken. At STARCAR, information technology refers to enterprise resource planning (ERP), website back end, CRM, business intelligence – and what feels like a million data triggers that keep day-to-day business running in the background. Because here,



digitalisation does not mean a new tool, but rather a completely fresh start. An example: nowadays, in-house rental software must not only offer self-service and telematics, but also support 100 stations, business customers, PayPal payments, Bosch connections and whatever else the market demands. All at the same time. All live. Or as it is known internally: open-heart surgery on the booking system.

Practically all centralised systems are being converted or renewed in parallel – with the aim of turning the variety of systems into a single source of truth, so that the stations, management and customers all tell the same story in the end – and not three different versions with uncertain outcomes.

No Steve Jobs moves

Data is, of course, also the real gold in the vault at STARCAR. And, of course, none of this sounds new. However, it makes a huge impression when a company renews everything at once out of necessity. This makes it almost impossible for many medium-sized companies in particular to completely reposition themselves within two to three years.

But STARCAR wouldn't be STARCAR if this challenge weren't tackled in the IT department at full speed and with the requisite dose of creativity.

Because what sets this company apart is not its big tech presence, but the courage to tackle the unpleasant, real digital challenges. Without a lot of fuss, but with a big impact. No buzzword bingo, no "next big thing" façade, but smoothly functioning processes, interconnected systems and customer experiences that don't feel like 1999. It doesn't really sound like Silicon Valley, but quite honestly: it works. And that's what it's all about.

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**Quite honestly?
Suits everyone.**

Local News & Miscellaneous

„INSIDE STARCAR“

In the shadow of car bodies

An undercover reporter reveals where STARCAR EUROPA SERVICE really saves money.

By Carlos Carrera, investigative journalist

They seem harmless, park inconspicuously and don't talk much. And yet they conceal a multimillion-dollar operation. And when they do say something, it's usually about tyre prices. A shadowy realm beneath the metal exterior: vehicles that are available to rent but have to be constantly moved, checked, sorted, repaired, purchased and accounted for behind the scenes.

I plunged into the world of the SCES Group Fleet department – and saw things you would only expect to find in an accounting department. I wanted to find out where exactly the money is being saved when no one is looking. And I got some answers. More than I would have liked ...

Chapter 1

The trail of the 18.7%

Hamburg, 23 May 2024, 8.17 a.m. I meet Boris T., my inside contact. He seems calm, too calm for someone who has managed to save over 18.7% per journey according to internal documentation. I want to know how. He says: “Through negotiation.” I think: That can't be the whole truth. Boris' look tells me: “We have seen Excel spreadsheets, the likes of which you can't imagine.” He answers dryly: “We renegotiated service providers, centralised tasks, introduced standardised rates across Germany. In some cases, four times cheaper than before.”

What was previously negotiated locally is now handled by a centralised steering team.

The result:
Savings of 18.7% per journey – in 2024 alone

Sounds unspectacular? But it's not. Behind the scenes, an SCES Group logistics system is being developed that operates more efficiently than many a government.

Chapter 2

Operation Workshop

I enter the Repairs department. One door. Behind it: structure, processes. With partners whose names sound like racing stables: Euromaster. Findinda. Junited AUTOGLAS. It sounds like Formula 1 for authorised repair workshops. But faster. And cheaper. Boris T. explains to me that a completely new workshop network was established here in 2024. Centrally managed. With standardised rates and measurable processes. I ask: “Why all this?” He says: “Because it used to be wild and today it's no longer the case.”

We used to rely on our gut feeling. Today it is C-Rent.

With the new repair management feature in our in-house rental software C-Rent, everything now runs via a sophisticated system tailored to the needs of the SCES Group. What needs repairing, how much will it cost, how long will it take? No more paperwork. No surprises.

Chapter 3

The warning

Day two of my research. I meet Boris T. again – and find out something disturbing. There is an enemy in the fleet: unwanted vehicle returns to manufacturers! According to the terms of the agreement, vehicles must be returned after a certain mileage or service interval – with a four-digit bill. I ask: “What happens then?” Boris just says: “Warning process.” I take out my notebook and write: “Sounds like an action film.” And in actual fact, a digital early warning system intervenes before things get expensive. Every kilometre is monitored, each service interval checked. When things get critical, the system sounds the alarm – and prevents the damage.

Chapter 4

The silent backbone

I ask about Purchasing. Boris laughs. He says: “We've now got ERP.” I nod as if I know exactly what it is. In reality, ERP (enterprise resource planning) is the new, invisible backbone of the SCES Group vehicle logistics system. All vehicle-related systems run on it. Purchasing and Sales are finally speaking the same language. Special campaigns are coordinated rather than invented. And a completely new dealer network brings security and diversity to the portfolio.

New brands. New channels. Residual value guarantees.

The result: better purchasing, greater security, lower risk. In other words: ready for further growth.

Chapter 5

Welcome to the future

Day three. No one looks at me with scepticism any more. People trust me. That's why Boris shows me the telematics pilot projects. I see: sensors. Interfaces. Bosch. Invers. He says: “We are currently testing smoke detection, geofencing, damage detection and real-time vehicle status – the complete programme.” I nod, this time out of conviction. Because what is happening here is nothing less than the digitalisation of rental vehicle monitoring. Not for control purposes, but for prevention. What is the advantage? Less damage, better planning. More quality – for vehicles and users alike. Some say that machines are stealing our jobs. Boris T. says: “Machines are only taking the boring jobs off our hands. Thanks to ERP, BI and TELEMATICS, we finally have time to focus on what really matters: vehicles, customers and coffee.”

Chapter 6

The treasure at the end of the spreadsheet

In the past, a rental car was nothing more than a vehicle with keys. Today, it is a summary of economic indicators with a CV. With the new ERP system designed for fleet and cost planning, the SCES Group can now record every item related to its vehicles, all the way from procurement to recycling. Budget planning, cost analysis, residual value forecasts – they're all included. Has this SME finally made it into the major league?

A valid TCO (total cost of ownership) for the first time – crucial for negotiations with banks and partners

Conclusion

Those who optimise quietly save the loudest

I leave the fleet office. No show. No stage. Only facts. What the SCES Group is building here is not bullshit bingo – it's a fleet that really works. Quietly. Systematically. Economically. And that's exactly why it's so impressive.

Connectivity established

Between code interfaces and coffee to go: a local report from the Sales headquarters

When the STARCAR Sales department celebrates, it's not just for trivial reasons. What appears to be simple booking optimisation from the outside is actually a quantum leap in international connectivity – the Business Travel Edition.

GDS: three letters that open doors. STARCAR is now connected to Amadeus GDS, the global distribution system used by business travel agencies to book rental cars. For STARCAR, it's like finding the key to the business class – but without the hassle of security checks and frequent

flyer cards. “This means we can now be booked directly within the business travel ecosystem for the first time,” says Frank L. from the department. This means that with the help of interfaces and visibility, there are no more blanket rejections from large company accounts.

Cytric and Concur: booking with receipt. Also new in the sales bouquet: integration with the online booking tools Cytric and Concur, which companies use to book business trips and manage their expenses. With STARCAR as a

new option, companies can now not only rent vehicles more cheaply, but also settle the entire bill in a more elegant manner. Or as they say within the department: “Finally, what belongs together is coming together: mobility and Excel peace.”

Tourism: Check24, but global. Upgrades have also been made in terms of tourism: STARCAR can now be booked via 16 global brokers, including booking.com, Expedia and AurumCars/Check24. The result is greater visibility, a longer reach and

more bookings. And more people who realise that affordable cars do not necessarily mean poor service quality.

Quiet expansion, great impact. In 2024, the Sales department did one thing above all else – it opened doors. For corporate customers, travel agencies, platforms – and for STARCAR itself. Without any loud fanfare, but with a major impact. Or as we say in-house: “Sales is the fuel that powers our rocket.”

Local News & Miscellaneous

Reader’s poem

By Gerda F., who dedicates the poem to her husband’s new car subscription and is glad to finally be rid of the Golf 2.

OF THE CAR THAT WASN’T MINE

A sincere rental car rhyme

I stepped outside, my mind still bare,
the road ahead lay smooth and fair.
No steed, no steel, no wheel was mine—
yet I refused to toe the line
while others drove to lands afar.
Then softly called, yet firm in tone,
a house of yellow, well-known,
that welcomed all who roamed and strayed,
who longed for more than rest-stop shade—
a place that gave what’s hard to gain.
A man stepped forth, his words were plain:
„If you would drive, then start today.
No trick, no scam, no need to pay
with mountains high of paper thin—
just key, a click, and you begin
to rule the roads in your domain.“
So on that borrowed throne I sat,
yet felt at home—imagine that!
The scent was new, the belt pulled tight,
the route ahead a feast of light—
my self dissolved in engine’s hum.
And while the wheels kissed worlds in flight,
I silently sped through cities bright.
For every jam that slowed my way,
I thought: how great—no one would stay
Clinging to ranks or titles old—
Just me behind the wheel to hold.
For here’s a ride with no deception,
no fine-print traps in small reception,
no clauses waiting to ensnare—
just honest words and open air.
And what moves on will not stand still.

FUN FACT OF THE YEAR

17.719
car washes



JOKE OF THE DAY

Whoever brakes loses.

A customer returns a rental car: “The brakes don’t work properly.” The rental company replies: “Yes, we noticed that too – that’s why we made the horn louder.”

Very obliging

A customer asks: “And what happens if I lose the key?” Agent: “Then there’s our premium rate: Shit Happens Deluxe.”

Lucky

The phone rings in a vehicle fleet office. An employee answers and a voice asks: “How many cars are currently available?” The employee answers: “Five vans, ten medium-sized cars and the boss’s fancy car, which he uses to show off his smart suit.” There’s silence at the other end. Then: “Do you have any idea who you’re talking to?” – “No.” – “Your fancy boss!” The employee answers: “And do you know who you’re talking to?” – “No!” – “Well, thank goodness.” Click.

Wrong turn

A car driver is stopped by the police: “You were just driving in the wrong direction.” The driver responds indignantly: “That’s not possible, you don’t even know where I’m going.”

FIND OF THE YEAR

Latex in a rental car? That’s Berlin for you.

Some finds make us smile, others leave us speechless. At our **Berlin-Eastside** station, a rental sales agent discovered something unusual in the boot of a returned vehicle: **a full-body latex suit**. Black. Skintight. Ready for whatever. Could the item be from the KitKat Club, a costume shoot or possibly a private party? No idea. And that’s exactly what makes it so exciting: **this is our car rental business. That’s Berlin for you.**

HOROSCOPE

What the stars say about your mobility



Aquarius (21 Jan.–19 Feb.) You love the unusual and only drive spontaneously. That’s why WhatsApp service and one-way rentals aren’t just features for you, they’re a way of life.



Pisces (20 Feb.–20 March) You don’t just rent for yourself, but for the entire group. Whether family, friends or spiritual weekend retreats – you do the driving. But even empathic people are sometimes allowed to say: “Quiet at the back!”



Aries (21 March–20 April) Right now, your life is like trying to move house with a Smart car. And that is likely to end in Tetris and tears. It’s time to think somewhat bigger!



Taurus (21 April–20 May) What’s the hurry? You don’t indicate, you don’t brake, and the left lane is yours. Drop down a gear every now and then, getting there is half the fun.



Gemini (21 May–21 June) At the moment you want everything at once, but even though you know five different routes, you can only take one of them in the end. Trust what your navigator is telling you.



Cancer (22 June–22 July) You’re attached to your old one because it smells of you and you know its quirks, but it’s okay to treat yourself to a new one every now and then. You’ve earned it!



Leo (23 July–23 Aug.) Is your charisma fading a little? Then it’s time for some chrome and LED daytime running lights. Less understatement and a lot of attention are exactly what your ego needs right now.



Virgo (24 Aug.–23 Sept.) You read terms and conditions, keep records and find scratches that even the repair shop doesn’t see. Time to take a deep breath and rent a fully digital model. Or apply for a job with us.



Libra (24 Sept.–23 Oct.) Do you drive at a constant 90 km/h on the motorway and listen to your local radio station? Your relaxed manner is contagious. The main thing is that you bring the car back on time.



Scorpio (24 Oct.–22 Nov.) You like to be in control and leave nothing to chance. Parking position. Mileage. Return time. It’s best to book digitally – and bring your power bank with you just in case.



Sagittarius (23 Nov.–21 Dec.) You simply need to get out, whether for a short trip out or a long journey, it doesn’t matter, just somewhere near the water. The stars have never been so favourable for you; today you should go for the big one.



Capricorn (22 Dec.–20 Jan.) Discipline and order are just your thing. That’s why you book early and drive with foresight, just like in the driving school video. Why not try it without a checklist and simply trust the flow?

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High-spirited BMW 5 Series, well-built, excellently looked after

and black like my sense of humour, seeks driver with taste. You’ve got the style, I’ve got the leather. Let’s make an impression together – whether in front of the club or at mum’s place.



Medium-sized car (2023 model), reliable, digital

and well-maintained, looking for an easy-going driver with a fine sense of speed and timing. I bring the keys, you the spontaneity. One-way trips possible. No legacy issues. Just want to get started?



Van (up to 3.5 tonnes), not the youngest, but still going strong.

Whether couch, washing machine or gym bench – I have plenty of space and no questions. Get in touch before the next flat share does. 7-seater, family-friendly, snack-proof, seeks a reliable partner for joint holidays or the occasional adventure. You’ve got kids, suitcases and chaos – I’ve got space. And patience.

Local News & Miscellaneous

Crossword puzzle

- 1

Where does every lost GPS, charging cable, and half-eaten croissant end up?
- 2

In which arena does STARCAR have its own box for employees and business partners?
- 3

What did STARCAR finally get rid of in 2024?
- 4

In which city did STARCAR ceremoniously open its 100th station?
- 5

At how many airports is STARCAR represented?
- 6

With which club has STARCAR had its longest partnership for 15 years?
- 7

What is the name of the best car rental company in the world?
- 8

What do you rely on blindly until it lets you down in the middle of nowhere?
- 9

What does STARCAR Outlet Cars sell?
- 10

Which city has the largest STARCAR station in Germany?
- 11

Which animal represents STARCAR as its mascot?
- 12

In which city was STARCAR originally founded?
- 13

Which Berlin DJ performed this year on the STARCAR CSD Truck, among other places?
- 14

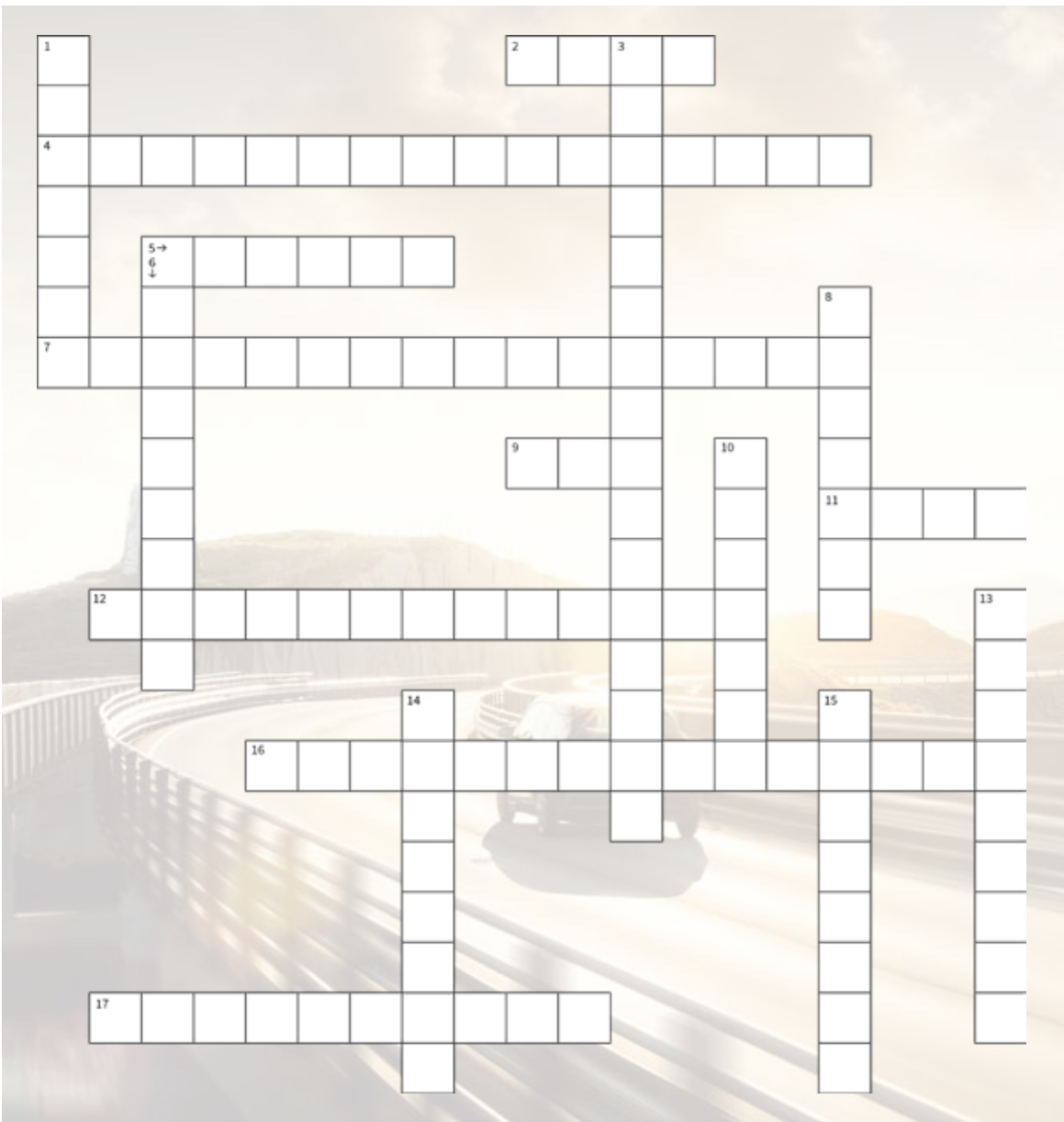
The SCES colors are yellow, turquoise, and ...?
- 15

The name "STARCAR" was inspired by which famous science-fiction film classic?
- 16

STARCAR is a 360-degree ...?
- 17

Besides short-term and long-term rentals, which flexible mobility solution does STARCAR also offer?

Put all the question marks in the correct order and get the solution!



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“The car subscription not only brought us new customers, but also an average monthly increase in revenue of 20% in the first HY 2025!”

■ 22 vehicle groups with over 50 different models!

■ 25% all-electric vehicles

■ The Toyota C-HR as bestseller



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PUBLISHER
STARCAR EUROPA SERVICE GROUP AG
Schorberger Straße 66, 42699 Solingen, Germany
Tel.: +49 (0)212 26070
www.sces-group.de
www.europa-service.de
www.starcar.de



MANAGEMENT TEAM
Chair: Jens E. Hilgerloh, Jannis Hilgerloh, Marcus Hungerkamp, Nima Kalantari, Marco Rehberg

VAT ID: DE199613212:
Court of registration:
District Court Wuppertal HRB 16207

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TO THE ONLINE VERSION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT



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