



acrolinx case study

DAF

Content Built to Perform

How DAF Trucks Creates Consistent and Accessible After-Sales Information

Facts and Figures

Total production 2016: **56,500 trucks**

Total number of employees: **approx. 9,770**

Acrolinx users: **approx. 70**

Number of terms in Acrolinx: **8,000**

DAF



THE PROBLEM

For thousands of DAF Trucks dealers and technicians around the world, the quality of repair jobs largely depends on the quality of repair and maintenance instructions created by DAF Trucks' Technical Information, Training & Diagnostics department. In the past, it was challenging for the department's many content creators to ensure consistency of terminology and tone of voice in their writing. DAF Trucks was looking for a platform to not only address terminology issues, but also to guide writers on optimizing the grammar and style of their content.



THE SOLUTION

The Acrolinx platform has helped the Technical Information, Training & Diagnostics department at DAF Trucks create content with consistent terminology and tone of voice, reducing the ambiguity of after-sales information and making the dealers' and technicians' work more efficient. Creating high-quality content in English has also lowered translation costs as well as legal risks.

For technical content, consistent terminology is absolutely necessary. Without Acrolinx, it would be very difficult to make sure we're always using the same terminology and tone of voice. And the audience would have a hard time understanding what we're trying to communicate.



Joost Hanssen, Team Leader
Parts & Jobs, Department
Technical Information, Training
& Diagnostics, DAF Trucks

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“Transport Efficiency: Your profitability, our aim” is one of the programmatic slogans of DAF Trucks, a market leader in the heavy-duty truck segment inside and outside the EU. While keeping this brand promise relies on several factors, the company’s repair and maintenance information plays a significant role in ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, the Technical Information, Training & Diagnostics department needs to ensure that its content is as clear and easy to follow as possible.

That said, it used to be a big challenge for the department’s writers to maintain consistent terminology across the vast amount of content they created. The direct impact of the after-sales content quality on after-sales service elevated the urgency for greater consistency. If descriptions were inconsistent, dealers and technicians wouldn’t understand them correctly; which, in turn, led to complications and delays with job repairs. The risk of a bad customer experience was simply too high.

A close-up photograph of the front grille of a blue DAF truck. The image shows the upper portion of the grille, featuring a silver-colored horizontal bar with the 'DAF' logo embossed in the center. Below this bar are two rows of honeycomb mesh grilles. The truck's body is painted a vibrant blue, and the lighting highlights the metallic textures and the bold, sans-serif font of the logo.

DAF



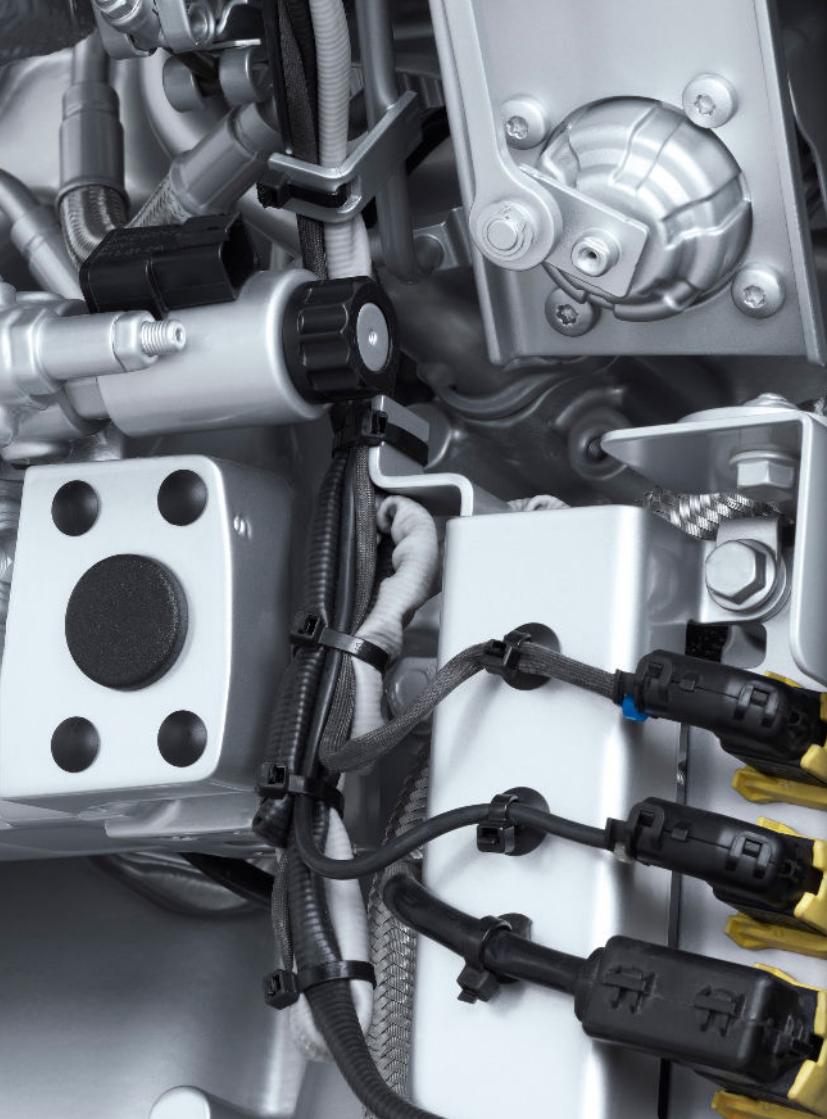
“We wanted to improve the quality of our source content as well as the quality and cost efficiency of our translations,” says Age Knossen, Head of Technical Information, Training & Diagnostics at DAF Trucks. “We have a lot of writers creating all kinds of content about the same items, but from different perspectives. Within Diagnostics, we’d call an item X, and within Parts & Jobs we’d call it Y. But it’s the same technician having access to all the information, which is very confusing. And if you do it wrong in the source language, it will be even worse in the subsequent translations. We want the end user to find a consistent brand language in all of our publications.”

In the past, the department hired staff to supervise all the content being written. “But manually checking the work of 40 or 50 people is almost impossible for one person,” explains Knossen. “So that approach didn’t work. It just meant a lot of effort and cost. Next, we had a grammar review by a translation agency, which also meant extra cost and extra effort. In the end, we decided to include this kind of review as early as possible in the process. It’s better to do it right from the start than to correct things afterwards.”

To improve the quality of the source content, the Technical Information, Training & Diagnostics department introduced the Acrolinx platform with integrations for the authoring tool XMetaL. Acrolinx is integrated seamlessly in XMetaL and provides guidance based on sophisticated linguistic analysis, directly within the authoring environment. This way, writers can optimize their content with a few clicks.

“For technical content, consistent terminology is absolutely necessary,” says Joost Hanssen, Team Leader Parts & Jobs in DAF Trucks’ Technical Information, Training & Diagnostics department. “Without Acrolinx, it would be very difficult to make sure we’re always using the same terminology and tone of voice. And the audience would have a hard time understanding what we’re trying to communicate.”





Support for writers and improved workflows

When checking content with Acrolinx, writers not only see whether a term is approved or deprecated, but they also receive specific guidance to correct grammar and style issues. In addition, Acrolinx helps writers make sure that they follow all the DAF-specific style guidelines, which are designed to make the content as clear as possible and spare technicians the trouble of having to interpret ambiguous instructions. For example, instructions always start with a verb, sentences are very precise and short, and headlines are always capitalized. “While this is helpful for everybody on the team, it also comes in handy when onboarding new hires who aren’t familiar with the DAF Trucks tone of voice yet,” explains Joost Hanssen.

The system's ease of use further adds to the value of the Acrolinx platform. "Our writers are very happy with Acrolinx," Hanssen continues. "Since none of our writers are native English speakers, checking content with Acrolinx really supports them in terms of spelling and grammar."

The Acrolinx Score – an index reflecting content quality based on terminology, grammar, style, and tone of voice – also allows team leaders to identify areas where they can offer tailored writing skill development, tuned to the needs of individual writers. To manage the DAF Trucks terminology, the department has established a terminology group with regular meetings to propose and discuss new terms. After each meeting, the company's terminologist feeds the new terms into the Acrolinx Terminology Manager so that writers always receive the most up-to-date words and phrases when checking their content with Acrolinx. At this point, the terminology database contains 8,000 terms. Via the Acrolinx Term Browser, the terms are accessible to the whole DAF Trucks organization.

Quality improvements result in cost savings

Checking the English source content with Acrolinx has also had a big impact on the cost and quality of translations. As soon as the content is final, it's sent to a translation agency to be translated into up to 24 languages. When comparing cost before and after the use of Acrolinx, the increased consistency of the source content is clearly paying off.

Most important, however, is that the improved workflow has helped DAF Trucks make sure that technicians can easily read and understand the instructions and deliver first-class service to their customers.

To make the work of technicians as easy as possible, content is created solely in Simplified Technical English (STE). The Acrolinx platform is supporting the department's efforts with specific guidelines for this controlled subset of the English language.

The clearer the text is for a technician, the better he can understand what he has to do. Thus, he can do it faster and get things right from the beginning. If a technician fails to repair a truck properly the first time, the customer won't buy another truck. On the other hand, if a technician knows exactly what to do, the costs for the customer will be lower.



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Positive effects across the DAF Trucks organization

Acrolinx also makes sure that DAF Trucks' technical content is compliant with legal requirements, such as the consistent use of warnings. "If someone misinterprets a driver's manual and translates it incorrectly, it could lead to precarious situations," says Knossen. "Therefore, we need to ensure that everything in that manual is 100 percent correct from the start."

The positive effects of consistent content are visible in other teams as well; for example, at the Help Desk. If a complaint comes in, the technician now automatically uses the correct terminology, which in the end is another positive result of using Acrolinx. This helps the support team resolve issues much faster and more efficiently.

While content quality can't always be quantified, it does end up being a competitive advantage. "The clearer the text is for a technician, the better he can understand what he has to do," Knossen explains. "Thus, he can do it faster and get things right from the beginning. If a technician fails to repair a truck properly the first time, the customer won't buy another truck. On the other hand, if a technician knows exactly what to do, the costs for the customer will be lower."

Looking into the future

While technical content creators manage to maintain a consistent brand language within their own department, the company is aiming even higher. "The next challenges we need to overcome are inconsistencies between Sales and After-Sales," Hanssen explains. "When you read a piece of content, you shouldn't be able to tell which department it comes from."

"These kinds of inconsistencies can be very confusing," Hanssen continues. "Not only to technicians, but also to customers. If they buy a truck after reading a Sales brochure, and then open the user manual, they might think they got the wrong truck. That's not a good customer experience."

Hanssen and his team have been working on creating greater awareness of their work within other departments, advocating the importance of consistent terminology through presentations and articles. "We really have to be consistent throughout DAF Trucks," Knossen emphasizes. "Even though terminology is born in our department, it has to be spread to other departments as well."

The Company

DAF Trucks N.V. is a technology company and the premier commercial vehicle manufacturer in Europe. DAF Trucks is a wholly owned subsidiary of PACCAR Inc., the worldwide quality leader in the design and manufacturing of premium light, medium, and heavy-duty commercial vehicles. PACCAR also designs and manufactures advanced diesel engines, provides financial services and information technology, and distributes truck parts related to its principal business.

DAF Trucks manufactures industry-leading trucks in world-class facilities in Eindhoven (the Netherlands), Westerlo (Belgium), Leyland (the United Kingdom), and Ponta Grossa (Brasil). DAF Trucks' engine factory, component plant, press shop, and final assembly line for CF and XF models are located in Eindhoven. Axles and cabins are produced in Westerlo. Leyland Trucks produces the company's LF series of light and medium duty trucks, as well as CF and XF vehicles. A network of over 1,000 independent dealers sells and services DAF Trucks at locations throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South America, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia.



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