



German supermarket discounter Lidl to sell Fiat 500 cars online

Lidl said it is getting into the car retailing business, with a fully digital lease program for Fiat 500 models together with startup company Vehiculum.

The chain of discount supermarkets said it will offer the Fiat 500 in Germany at a leasing rate of 89 euros a month through its online shop starting February 4. There will also be a full-service offering for 164 euros a month, which includes all maintenance, insurance and winter tires.

The offering, which shows the potential challenges traditional car dealerships face from new players, is somewhat of a trial for Lidl. The offer is limited to 1,000 vehicles and will run through April 30.

"With this offer we are letting our customers lease a car in a quick and uncomplicated manner," Michael Nieberl, management board member in charge of Lidl Digital, said in a press release. "Together with the Berlin startup Vehiculum we aren't just offering a city car at a fair price, but also a completely digital and modern ordering process."

Lidl says that leasing the Fiat 500 should take a mere 15 minutes. Vehiculum uses online identification, a digital contract from IDnow and a quick credit check with the help of FinTecSystems.

The customer's actual leasing contract will be with Spain's Santander Bank.

Vehiculum, which has been in business for three years, has developed an algorithm that allows users of its platform to compare leasing options across Germany and even conclude a leasing agreement online.

Although every second car in Germany is leased, Vehiculum founder Lukas Steinhilber said the actual leasing process is as complex as it was 20 years ago.

Said Steinhilber: "With the Lidl action we are showing today how you can acquire a car: simple, transparent and completely digital."

-By Arjen Bongard



German supermarket discounter Lidl to sell Fiat 500 cars online

