Export Hit

Dear Reader,

the German automotive industry is known throughout the world for the quality of its vehicles and its innovation power that has also boosted the prospects of German engineers on international markets. With exciting things happening in the development of connected electric vehicles, many leading German developers are now accepting sweetheart deals with young Chinese companies that are determined to drive the success of e-vehicles, not only in China but on markets around the world. Losing out in the battle are the traditional OEMs in Germany. They are trapped in internal conflicts of interest unable to make a similarly exclusive commitment to e-vehicles since they need to continue producing combustion-engine vehicles in parallel that remain the cornerstone of major industry branches' success.

Prominent examples of this engineer migration include Carsten Breinfeld, former Chief Developer of the BMWi8, and Marcus Hafkemeyer, former Developer at BMW. Breinfeld is now CEO at Byton, Future Mobility's subsidiary focusing with the slogan "Bytes on Wheels" on experience-driven and service-oriented connectivity. Hafkemeyer is now in charge of electric-drive production at BJEV, the e-vehicle subsidiary of BAIC, one of the largest Chinese OEMs. In April, Dr. Karl-Thomas Neumann joined Evelozcity: The former Opel CEO is now committed to sustainable urban logistics solutions based on electric axles. What these and other leading engineers who have left Germany have in common might be the belief that they can now accomplish more in the development of electric vehicles than would have probably been possible if they had remained in Germany.

Highly skilled engineers willing to relocate are helping to turn comparatively young and inexperienced e-vehicle com-

panies into reputable OEMs. Part of the promise is driven by the support the engineers are able to bring with them in the form of good relationships to German automotive suppliers eager to gain profit from the long awaited increase in purchase quantities. Several German carmakers also have a stake in these companies beyond the joint ventures stipulated by the Chinese government – as in the case of Daimler, which recently acquired a 3.9-% share in BJEV.

While parts of the media talk of an "electric shock" to which the domestic automotive and energy industry is currently exposed, it is essential to maintain a realistic view of the shifting roles including the potential of German companies. While the German National Platform for Electric Mobility (NPE) may have failed to accomplish its mission, an international platform is currently being built.

To learn more about these and other developments, don't miss the Stuttgart elect! Exhibition & Conference (October 8 and 9, 2018), which will feature, among others, some new companies from Asia.

Markus Schöttle
Deputy Editor in Chief

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