



Broadening horizons in a global environment

Engineers from more than 20 countries across the world work at Hyundai's European development centre in Rüsselsheim. By working together they benefit from the intercultural exchange every day.

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EXCHANGES AT ALL LEVELS

Lunchtime at the Hyundai Motor Europe Technical Centre (HMETC) in Rüsselsheim: On entering the canteen, in addition to the classic smell of schnitzel and fries you also sense the exotic aromas of kimchi, bibimbap or saengseon-gui, all traditional Korean dishes. And apart from knives, forks and spoons, the cutlery compartments also offer silver coloured chopsticks made of metal, which is perfectly normal in Korea. In the queues at the food counters you can hear a babble of voices of German, English, French, Italian, Spanish and Korean. This experience is typical of a company that has its roots in Korea. The close link between private and professional life is more marked in Korea than it is here. At HMETC you can literally extend your horizons at lunchtime – both in culinary and in intercultural matters. Surrounded by employees of

different nationalities, lunchtime is a welcome opportunity to interact with one another and get to know the customs of other countries and their culture.

TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE EUROPEAN MARKET

Hyundai as well as Kia are part of the Hyundai Motor Group, which employs more than 240,000 employees worldwide. All main markets have their own R&D centre, to meet the specific requirements, regulations and demands of the customers. Since 1995, Hyundai is also represented in Europe. The development centre at the Rüsselsheim location employs approximately 300 people, who among other things have to meet the challenge of implementing the European design trends in the latest Hyundai models. Engineers from Europe and around the world are on the job to increase the performance of engines, power-

trains and exhaust systems to inspire customers. The solutions arrived at meet the highest quality standards and take into consideration the relevant European rules and regulations, and made Hyundai the fifth largest carmaker in the world.

INTERNATIONAL TEAMS FOR GLOBAL COMPETITION

The main task of the engineers and designers at HMETC is to meet European preferences in terms of design and technology trends and to implement these in the range of models. For achieving this goal, the centre relies on an international team, which currently consists of members from more than 20 nationalities. Germans, Italians, French, Spaniards and Brits account for the largest share, but also colleagues from Eastern Europe (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland), the transatlantic countries like Venezuela

or Mexico and of course Koreans are included. English serves as the common business language. Those who work here are well prepared: In-house language courses are offered to learn or refresh ones knowledge of German, English or Korean. Intercultural training educates both European and Korean employees about the cultural differences and similarities. The mix of nationalities at the location also shapes the almost family like corporate culture, which is characterised by flat hierarchies and short communication paths between departments, notwithstanding the Group's size. In addition to internal training programmes, large corporate events are organised, where it is easy to get to know your colleagues from other cultures.

LIMITLESS EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE

HMETC is in constant contact with the

main R&D centre in Namyang, south of Seoul. The engineers from Rüsselsheim usually fly to Korea soon after they join Hyundai and work actively on projects with their respective counterparts. Thanks to the openness of their Korean colleagues, this offers them the unique opportunity to get to know the country and its culture during common dinner after work. They can gain international experience also during vehicle tests, for example, in Sweden or Spain, where the engineers put their developments to the test on the field. And if they like, they can also stay abroad for longer periods: As part of the Global Exchange Programme, employees can work in Korea for up to eight weeks. All affiliates of Hyundai Motor Company across the world take part in this programme. This way the participants on site meet employees from around the world, and in addition to the daily project work they will have memories for life to take home of common events and experiences.



3 QUESTIONS TO ...



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Klaas Altena (34)
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ATZEXTRA _ WHAT MAKES WORKING IN AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM SO SPECIAL? WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

ALTENA _ It is very interesting to see how the cooperation and approach to product development in different work cultures differ. After having worked for several years in a global environment, I realise that I can now adapt to other cultures more quickly and thus get to my goal faster. You see these cultural differences especially in a Korean company, where also language can sometimes be a huge barrier. If, however, you rise to these challenges, it makes working together a lot of fun!

What can be of help when working in an international team?

It has helped me personally to do the work following a different approach, and give it a chance. I also take the time to

establish a good conversational relationship. If mutual understanding and respect are there, things will work out by themselves. Naturally it helps if you know English, but knowledge of other languages is also an advantage because the teams consists of many nationalities.

How does the company support personal career planning and what are the opportunities for growth?

HMETC is a mid-sized company, in other words, the hierarchies are flat in comparison to big companies. This structure gives you the opportunity to work from the outset in varied and exciting projects. We also have the opportunity to work with our colleagues in Korea and exchange ideas – using virtual media and also on site at the R&D centre in Namyang, Korea.