Customer-focused, independent, fast: Volkswagen Group realigns structure in China

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BY VOLKSWAGEN

“With this new structure in China, we are laying the foundation for the strong, integrated management of our Group activities in close collaboration with our joint venture companies. The China region is being given significantly greater decision-making powers and autonomy. We are therefore tailoring our services, technologies and products even faster and more consistently to the specific needs of our local customers,” said Ralf Brandstätter, who assumes responsibility for the Chinese market on the Group Board of Management and will lead Volkswagen Group China from August 1.

The China Board will be the driving force for swifter and more flexible decision-making processes. Going forward, this is where fundamental cross-brand strategic and operational decisions will be taken and their implementation efficiently managed. Ralf Brandstätter, who will chair the China Board, will be joined by the regional CEOs from Audi, CARIAD and Volkswagen Passenger Cars as well as by representatives from major functional areas.

Stefan Mecha, currently CEO of the Volkswagen Group’s Russia business, will become the new CEO of the core brand as well as Head of Group Sales of Volkswagen Group China effective August 1. Mecha will report to Ralf Brandstätter. “Stefan Mecha is one of our most experienced and internationally

distinguished managers. He has an outstanding international record of success in Brazil, South Africa and, most recently, Russia. Stefan has impressively demonstrated his ability to expand business sustainably and successfully, even under the most challenging conditions”, Brandstätter said.

Faster pace of innovation and more regional responsibility for development

The Group is also fundamentally realigning its technical development in the region: Strong cross-brand coordination is to drive forward the pace of development, accelerate digitalization and tailor products and services even more closely to the needs of Chinese customers. In this process, the company will build on the foundation laid by the “One R&D” program that pools all development activities in the region. To that end, personnel capacities in China will be further expanded and development initiatives intensified with a view to harnessing synergies more effectively.

In this newly-created function of Chief Technology Officer for the Group Marcus Hafkemeyer will report to Ralf Brandstätter and will become a member of the China Board effective August 1. Hafkemeyer will advance and accelerate the pace of autonomous development activities in the region, and will also leverage Group-wide synergies in close collaboration with the relevant brand and entity CTOs.

“China plays a pivotal role in the success of our NEW AUTO strategy and the global transformation of Volkswagen. Systematically aligning our organization to the specifics of the Chinese automotive market is a key success factor. The focus of our strategy is to strengthen our local research and development. Here, too, we will be taking up the motto of ‘in China, for China’, which already applies for our factories. Priority areas are the further electrification of the portfolio as well as digital technologies and mobility services”, Brandstätter said. “We are delighted to welcome Marcus Hafkemeyer, an outstanding automotive and digitalization expert currently based in Shanghai. Marcus has been working with Chinese automotive companies for many years and therefore has extensive experience with the specific local development opportunities and the needs of Chinese customers.”

Stefan Mecha has been with the Volkswagen Group for more than 15 years. He holds a degree in Economics in Germany and a Global Executive MBA from Insead Business School. Prior to joining Volkswagen AG, he held various positions at Sixt AG and Daimler AG. In 2005, Stefan Mecha became Regional Sales Director of Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles in Western Europe. He then held various positions in Sales within the Volkswagen Group in Europe and in the Middle East. In 2016, he became Member of the Volkswagen Board in South Africa and Managing Director of the Sales company. From

2018 to 2020, he was Vice President of Sales and Marketing in the South America Region at Volkswagen Brazil. In 2020, he was

appointed as new General Director of Volkswagen Group Rus.

Marcus Hafkemeyer studied mechanical engineering at the Technical College of Cologne. The chartered engineer began his professional career in 1997 as a development engineer at AUDI AG in Ingolstadt. From 2001 to 2003, he served as a section manager in Electrical Systems Series Development at AUDI AG. In 2003, he joined BMW Group in Munich and held several management positions in the fields of battery electric vehicles (BEV), hybrid systems and CO reduction systems. In 2017, Marcus Hafkemeyer took over as Deputy General Manager and Vice President Electric Powertrain Development at BAIC Beijng Electric Vehicles (BJEV) in China. One year later, he was appointed as Member of the Board of Beijing Siemens Automotive E-Drive Systems, Changzhou, China. In 2020, he was named Executive Strategy Advisor to the President and COO Automotive of HUAWEI Automotive in Shanghai, China.

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Press Contacts

1. **dfgdfggd**
   fdfds
   dfgdfgdfg@gmail.com
   32443432

   fsdsdfsfd

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