

Volkswagen Group strengthens its Technical Development Board function in China



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Thomas Ulbrich, former Member of the Board of Management of the Volkswagen Brand for “New Mobility”, to take over as Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for the Group in China from April 1, 2024

- Ralf Brandstätter, Volkswagen AG Board Member for China:

As one of our Group’s top development and software experts, Thomas Ulbrich will now continue to advance the localization and networking of our development activities in the region.

- “New Mobility” and “Technical Development” Board functions of the Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand to merge under the direction of Kai Grünitz, Member of the Board of Management of the Volkswagen Brand for Technical Development

The Volkswagen Group is strengthening its Technical Development Board function in the China region as part of its “In China, for China” strategy. Thomas Ulbrich, former Member of the Board of Management of the Volkswagen Brand for “New Mobility”, will head up Technical Development for the Group in China from April 1, 2024. In his new capacity, Ulbrich, who has already held two management positions for the Group in China, will continue to advance the technological localization of the portfolio. He succeeds Marcus Hafkemeyer, who – with his extensive experience of China – will support the company’s transformation in a new role in the Group.

The Volkswagen Group’s ‘In China, for China’ strategy is about systematically adapting to the dynamic changes taking place in China’s automotive industry. A high degree of localization will allow us to cater to the wishes of our Chinese customers. I would like to thank Marcus Hafkemeyer, whose outstanding personal commitment and broad expertise in China have really moved forward Technical Development’s regional focus, for example through the establishment of our new development center in Hefei,

said Ralf Brandstätter, Member of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG for the China region and CEO of Volkswagen Group China.

Thomas Ulbrich, one of our top development and software experts, will now continue to advance the localization and networking of our Group's development activities in the region. Ulbrich has exceptional expertise in important future technologies and excellent connections in the company and the China region. One of his priorities will therefore be to further strengthen the collaboration with our joint venture companies FAW-Volkswagen, SAIC Volkswagen and Volkswagen Anhui. I firmly believe that this will be an important source of impetus in our transformation to smart e-mobility

In his new role, Thomas Ulbrich will also be the CEO of Volkswagen China Technology Company (VCTC) in Hefei in eastern China. The Group's biggest development center outside Germany is the central development unit of Volkswagen Group China, which focuses squarely on intelligent, fully connected electric vehicles.

VCTC will therefore play a key role in the development of specific models for China. One of the things being developed there is the first local electric platform, which will form the basis for new Volkswagen brand models in China from 2026.

By implementing efficient development processes and using state-of-the-art technologies, VCTC will reduce the time to market for vehicles and components by 30 percent. Further synergies will be leveraged by closely interweaving development work with the joint venture companies SAIC Volkswagen, FAW-Volkswagen and Volkswagen Anhui as well as with Gotion (batteries) and Chinese automaker XPENG. Partners Horizon Robotics (autonomous driving), ARK (user experience) and Thundersoft (infotainment) will also be incorporated, working closely with Volkswagen's software arm CARIAD.

After a pioneering phase, the "New Mobility" Board of Management department of the Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand will be transferred to Technical Development (TE) as planned to ensure efficient structures and stronger networking. Thomas Ulbrich specifically tested and established new software development processes for electric vehicles based on MEB in the "New Mobility" department. The transfer of these activities to the MQBevo has already taken place as planned, and the "New Mobility" division's mission has been accomplished. Kai Grünitz, Member of the Board of Management of the Volkswagen brand

responsible for Technical Development, will in future manage the technical project management for future technologies and development under one roof.

Thomas Ulbrich studied automotive engineering at Hamburg University of Applied Sciences. In 1992, the engineering graduate started his career in plant logistics at Wolfsburg, where he assumed a management role in 1995.

In 1996, he became head of logistics at FAW-Volkswagen in Changchun, China. Two years later he assumed responsibility for assembly “segment II” at the Wolfsburg plant before becoming head of plant logistics at Emden in 1999.

The next stage of his career took him to AUTO 5000 GmbH in Wolfsburg, where he was technical managing director and speaker of the management board from 2001 to 2008. He became Board of Management member for Production at Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles in Hannover in 2008.

Ulbrich moved to SAIC VOLKSWAGEN, China, as Technical Executive Vice President in 2010, taking charge of development as well as production and logistics at a total of five locations.

From April 2014 until January 2018, Thomas Ulbrich was responsible for Production and Logistics as Member of the Board of Management of the Volkswagen brand. From February 2018 until January 2021 he was Member of the Board of Management of the Volkswagen brand responsible for E-Mobility. Since February 2021, he has been a member of the Brand Board of Management responsible for Technical Development at Volkswagen Passenger Cars and took over the newly created “New Mobility” Board function at Volkswagen Passenger Cars effective October 1, 2022.

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