

International Women's Day: Women driving Porsche forward

08/03/2026 Six women. Six paths. One shared goal: shaping the future of Porsche – on the road, in engineering, in IT and beyond.

Right across Porsche – from engineering and IT to marketing and motorsports – women are informing the future of the sports car manufacturer on many different levels. Whether they are leading global teams and redefining customer experiences or developing next-generation interiors and digital ecosystems, their impact spans the entire company and is felt by every customer who gets behind the wheel.

International Women's Day is not about marking a single day in the calendar; at Porsche, it's about recognising talent, passion and expertise 365 days of the year. The sports car manufacturer is firmly committed to equal opportunities and to a corporate culture in which diversity – particularly gender equality – is recognised and strategically embedded as a key driver of success. A diverse working environment strengthens the company's innovative capacity, performance, and long-term viability.

This is just a small selection of the powerful women helping to shape Porsche today – and inspiring generations of women to come.

Maren Springmann: from minority to CIO

As CIO of Porsche, Maren Springmann oversees the digital backbone of one of the world's most iconic sports car brands – along with a team of about 700 people. From vehicle development systems to sales platforms, cybersecurity and AI, her remit is vast. But while she now leads the many, she was once one of the few.

"When I began studying computer science, I was one of maybe three women in a lecture hall of 200 male students," she says. It never held her back – but it was the first time she became aware of perhaps being in a minority.

Throughout her career across multiple automotive brands and international markets, the mother of two has never personally faced discrimination, but she has witnessed it elsewhere. "I have seen more qualified women who wouldn't have been hired if I hadn't been involved," she says. "That's something I fight strongly against. It's why diversity is so important – to prevent it from happening in the first place."

Mentoring has become a natural extension of that belief. "I always thought I needed to adapt, to be more 'masculine' to fit in," she reflects. "But it's not true. You don't need to fit in. It's better to be unique." Today, she encourages other women in tech to see emotional intelligence as a real force.

Much of that confidence traces back to her mother. "Growing up, she never focused on stereotypes," she says. "Whatever I wanted to do, she supported."

Anna Zahlava: leading the charge

Before she joined Porsche, Anna Zahlava (formerly Žaja) was among the world's best tennis players, competing in every WTA Grand Slam and numerous times at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Stuttgart – where the idea of a career beyond sport first took shape.

Today, recently returned from maternity leave, she brings a new perspective to her work – shaped by life with a young son and the focus and discipline that saw her rank 145 in the world for women's doubles and 184 in singles. Both roles, she says, have strengthened her patience, resilience and ability to reset under pressure.

Now a product owner for the My Porsche app, Zahlava leads the integration of charging solutions. Working at this intersection of digital innovation and everyday usability, she connects developers, designers and managers, turning complex systems into intuitive customer experiences. In meetings,

she is often one of the few women present, reflecting the still male-dominated nature of the tech and IT landscape. “But I’ve never felt held back,” she says. “If anything, I feel recognised for what I bring.

“Tennis taught me that momentum can change quickly. You learn to refocus and move forward,” she adds. It’s a mindset she brings to one of Porsche’s fastest-evolving areas – staying agile and ready for the next serve.

Samantha Balzano: the engineering force

“Growing up, I remember seeing a Porsche on the road and instinctively turning my head,” says Samantha Balzano. The manager of interior body engineering joined Porsche 28 years ago, “at a time when very few women worked in production”.

But it never occurred to Balzano that her gender might in any way hold her back – not when she was a child, enraptured by the tools, sounds and smells in her grandfather’s “magical” garage, or during her impressive engineering career.

“I’ve always been supported by colleagues who value competence and dedication over stereotypes. I’ve only ever experienced a strong culture of respect, collaboration and a genuine interest in diverse viewpoints,” says Balzano, who was the first woman ever appointed as a team leader in Porsche’s production department. “The more diverse our teams become, the more we all benefit – and I’m proud to contribute to that evolution.”

Her passion for cars undoubtedly began with her grandfather – a technician who raced motorcycles. “I loved everything about that technical environment,” she says. Today, that early spark is both her profession and passion: Balzano’s team develops everything from luggage compartments to carpets and acoustics – always with the customer in mind. “In this industry, there’s no room for weakness. You have to be at the top of your game.”

She still turns her head for a 911 – especially a GTS. “I’m addicted to that car,” she laughs. And when she sees a new Porsche on the road, knowing she helped bring it to life, that childhood magic is still there.

Ayesha Coker: the legacy builder

At Porsche Cars North America, Ayesha Coker doesn’t simply market the brand – she shapes how it is experienced. As Vice President of Marketing, she leads customer relationship management, marketing communications, dealer marketing, the Porsche Track Experience, Porsche Experience Centers in Atlanta and LA, and national experiential and motorsport initiatives – ensuring that every customer touchpoint reflects the performance and emotion that define Porsche.

Coker began her career in 2010 in an entry-level events role and, over the next 12 years, steadily rose through the organisation's leadership ranks. In 2022, she joined the Executive Committee, becoming the first African American woman in the company's history to do so – a milestone that resonated deeply with her family, colleagues and the broader community she represents.

"I was shaped by the women in my family. They balanced careers, households and community responsibilities without ever lowering their standards. They didn't talk much about resilience – they modelled it," she says. "From a young age, I understood that excellence wasn't optional – it was expected."

That conviction continues to guide her leadership. For Coker, meaningful progress comes from intentionally elevating diverse perspectives and creating space for people to contribute at their highest level. "Innovation doesn't happen in isolation," she says. "It's driven by curiosity, the courage to think differently and the teams we choose to believe in and develop."

While she recognises the significance of being a 'first', her focus is on the legacy she's building – one where cultural insight and strategic rigour are opening doors for the next generation.

Carolina Maag: the human owner's manual

Every person who sits in a new Cayenne or Macan experiences Carolina Maag's work firsthand. But when she joined Porsche as an events intern in 2019, she wasn't even sure she'd be hired. "I remember thinking 'It's such a big company – they'll never take me,'" she smiles. Seven years on, Maag is an overall HMI project leader, responsible for everything drivers see and touch on the screens inside the vehicle – from instrument cluster to central display.

Her path, she says, "was not a straight line. It was constant change and development." Moving into complex software projects required technical growth and confidence. Everything she works on must feel intuitive and immersive – whether it's 3D visualisations of an owner's car brought to life on screen or widgets that give them direct and distraction-free access to their favourite apps.

Working in what she describes as a still male-dominated environment, she has found her strength in communication, coordinating input from more than 100 colleagues. "My biggest skill is being a translator – bringing different personalities and hierarchies together to deliver the best product for the customer."

Maag credits her parents for shaping that leadership style: her emotional intelligence comes from her mother, her sharp business focus from her father. At home, that same combination has earned her a nickname: her husband proudly calls her the 'human owner's manual' – the person who can explain not just how things work, but why.

Nina Braack: from aces to sim races

Elite sport has always been Nina Braack's focus. For 10 years she played professional volleyball in Germany's first and second Bundesliga, while completing a master's degree in corporate communications. That combination of athletic drive and strategic thinking defined her long before she joined Porsche in 2022.

Today, as Manager of Esports at Porsche Motorsport, Braack leads the Porsche Coanda Esports Racing Team – a factory team competing at the highest level of sim racing. For her, esports is far more than 'just gaming'; it is a credible motorsport discipline that connects Porsche with a tech-savvy global audience and complements the brand's rich racing heritage.

Although the industry remains largely male-dominated, gender is not something she dwells on. "In a competition, you have to be the best version of yourself. It doesn't matter who you're playing with or who you're up against – and it's the same in my role today." Often one of only two women at international events, she sees no barrier. "Commitment is what counts," she says. Indeed esports is widely praised for broadening access to motorsport, opening doors for those who might not otherwise see a place for themselves.

Braack's advice to young women is simple: "Say yes. Take the opportunities that come your way. You can adjust direction later if something isn't right – but first, you have to put yourself out there."

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Consumption data

Macan Turbo (WLTP)*: Consumo energia elettrica ciclo misto (gamma modelli): 20.6 – 18.3 kWh/100 km; Emissioni CO_2 ciclo misto (gamma modelli): 0 g/km; Stato [StandHeute]

Taycan Turbo GT con pacchetto Weissach (WLTP)*: Consumo energia elettrica ciclo misto (gamma modelli): 24.8 – 20.6 kWh/100 km; Emissioni CO_2 ciclo misto (gamma modelli): 0 g/km; Stato [StandHeute]

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

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