

Big dreams, Big Data: the IT transformation at Porsche

31/01/2024 As the move towards a digital future continues apace, the Porsche Newsroom shines a light on Sridhar Mamella, an IT expert helping to revolutionise Porsche's working practices.

Growing up in Mumbai, Sridhar Mamella had a poster of a Guards Red 911 Targa on his bedroom wall. Little did he know that, by the age of 35, he would not only be driving the real thing, but playing a vital role in the future of the company that made it.

As a child, Mamella took on a part time job in order to save enough money to buy his first computer. And while still in his teens, the ambitious and adventurous youngster moved to London to pursue a higher education in computer sciences. He completed a Bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering at the University of Greenwich, followed swiftly by a Masters in Big Data & AI. Mamella worked in the data industry in London for a couple of years before resolving to find a fresh challenge. He upped sticks and moved to Germany in 2017, arriving with nothing more than a backpack and a laptop.

His IT expertise soon saw him employed as a Big Data architect for a tech services giant, a job he

juggled with intensive German-language lessons at night school. “The first couple of years were pretty hard for me,” Mamella admits, “but I made it a point that I wanted to work in a German environment, not an international one. In other words, to properly integrate.”

It didn't take long for Mamella's itchy feet to return and after a couple of years working on Big Data projects he began contemplating his next career move. A lifelong car lover, he applied for two IT-based roles at Porsche in Zuffenhausen and, remarkably, was offered both. “Having the choice was a very privileged position, but I made my decision based upon the manager with whom I was going to work. And my first manager at Porsche is still my greatest mentor.”

Responsibility at Porsche at a young age

Mamella began working as a software engineer, developing a data streaming product alongside one other colleague and travelling internationally to conferences to increase, and share, his understanding of a rapidly evolving industry. Following the departure of his team colleague, Mamella found himself shouldering a considerably greater degree of responsibility at Porsche at a young age, and undertook further intensive training to enable him to work alone, creating a completely new product from scratch. ‘Streamzilla’ is a data streaming platform that allows Porsche's engineering product teams to work more efficiently with streaming data. It is now regarded as the one-stop-shop for all of Porsche's data streaming needs.

“During this phase I got my first promotion,” Mamella recalls, “and moved on quite quickly to being a Product Owner with a development team doing the hands-on work while I decided on the strategy for the product. From there I moved on again to being a Product Manager and eventually Project Lead, responsible for the entire product with a full-time team.”

With Porsche Digital in Zagreb

Mamella's advanced grasp of Big Data streaming and the significance of its implementation at Porsche would soon see him diversify, leading a project to bring more digital know-how inhouse with the creation of Porsche Digital in Zagreb, Croatia, linking up with two more new digital teams in Germany and Barcelona. Despite now managing three separate international teams, Mamella still found time to undertake an internship with Porsche's Brand Management & Partnerships department (VMB), and it was during this process that he stumbled upon his next adventure.

Porsche had been developing an online medium called OverTake, a community-driven platform designed to enhance the virtual racing experience. It is about creating new digital adventures for this worldwide community. Mamella revealed a compelling interest in the concept and how the vast quantities of data it already produces could be harnessed to benefit both its users and multiple departments at Porsche. OverTake GmbH has been up and running since mid-August with Mamella its Head of IT.

"Making the jump to a start-up comes with some obvious uncertainties," he admits. "At the same time it is a huge opportunity for me. And we´ll still be a part of the Porsche family. This gives me a certain security." Mamella will continue to have bi-weekly coaching sessions with his mentor at Porsche.

Wherever Mamella is working in five years' time, his career to date reflects a revolution in the outlook and opportunities at Porsche that is in step with the changing face of the industry itself. "We mustn't forget that Porsche is a luxury brand," Mamella says, "and one of the big challenges is how to offer the customer luxury in software – something Porsche Digital was established to achieve. Porsche is going through a total transformation, going from 0-100, with connected services, connected factories, analytics and data. Everything is being upgraded, right down to the working culture, with flexible and remote working."

Mamella is just one example of a new breed of Porsche employee redefining the future direction of the brand. But for him and so many others like him, one thing will never change. "I always loved fast cars," he says with a smile. "It's every child's dream to own one, and I always wanted a Guards Red 911 Targa. But never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I'd one day be working for the company that made it. Let alone driving around in one."

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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