“We need to be active in relevant technology hubs”

05/05/2021 In a double interview, Stefan Zerweck, Chief Operating Officer of Porsche Digital, and Tomislav Car, Chief Executive Officer of Infinum, talk about the Porsche Digital Croatia joint venture, taking stock of its first months of operation.

In September 2020, Porsche Digital opened a new office in Croatia's capital, Zagreb – the fourth in Europe and the ninth worldwide. The subsidiary of the Stuttgart-based sports car manufacturer launched the joint venture Porsche Digital Croatia with the tech company Infinum.

In this interview, the two managing directors Stefan Zerweck and Tomislav Car take stock of the joint venture: how has the company been developing in past few months? What are the main projects? And how is the cooperation with the other locations worldwide taking shape?

Mr Zerweck, what had to be taken into consideration when starting the joint venture?

Stefan Zerweck:Porsche Digital was founded to develop, establish, and improve new digital business models. The focus is the customer. Depending on where the customer is, digital solutions have different requirements. For example, different ecosystems are more prominent in China than they are in the US or Europe. To attract the most talented people and be able to cater to the characteristics of each market, we need to be active in the relevant technology hubs worldwide.

Thanks to the university there focussing on IT and natural sciences, Zagreb is clearly one of them – especially when looking at Europe. We are working here with outstanding colleagues from the tech and development scene, and, with Infinum at our side, we have an excellent partner with a local network.

Infinum employs more than 300 people in offices across Europe and the US. At its core, it is also about developing digital products. How did the partnership come about?

Tomislav Car:We were very pleased that Porsche Digital wanted to partner with us in Croatia. We are bringing our expertise in developing high-tech software solutions to the joint venture, where we have more than 16 years of experience. We will benefit from this knowledge in many ways – for example, in developing e-commerce platforms.

In the long run, we want to work together to continue improving digital products in Porsche's portfolio. And we are also developing entirely new technological solutions. Our goal is to offer Porsche customers the best digital service for everything having to do with their vehicles.

About seven months have passed since the office was opened. What has been done so far?

Car:A lot has happened here since the office opened. We've remodelled the office spaces, hired a lot more talent, and intend to continue doing so. Currently, we have about 25 employees – mainly in the fields of software engineering and data science. Even though we are still in the early stages with our joint venture, we already feel like an integral part of the Porsche Digital family.

Porsche Digital Croatia headquarters in Zagreb

What projects are you working on?

Zerweck:We are focussing on various projects, but digital products for the Porsche ecosystem are always at the centre. That means, jointly together with our Porsche colleagues, we are developing solutions that flow into corporate processes or are integrated into customer offers – for example, in the context of online sales or for payment applications. This way, we help to make the digital experience across all channels as pleasant as possible for users.

What is particularly important when it comes to networking the international teams?

Zerweck:With our office in Zagreb, our network now includes nine offices worldwide. The teams work partly independently and partly together on projects. Organisation is sometimes complex but, for some time now, we have been able to learn how product teams can work together across national borders. In addition to flexible and motivated teams, a functioning IT infrastructure is a basic prerequisite. This includes digital communication capabilities as well as new collaboration tools that we can set up quickly and according to each team's needs. From the very beginning, we have been relying on agile working models to offer the teams on site as much freedom as possible. This gives us the opportunity to develop specific solutions. From our perspective, it is a key success factor. We will continue to strengthen our international positioning and orientation.

Porsche Digital GmbH

Porsche Digital is the technology and digital unit of the Stuttgart-based sports car manufacturer. Its main mission is to find and scale new digital business models and optimise existing products. For this goal, the subsidiary of Porsche AG develops digital offerings and services, designs excellent technological industry solutions, and is the driving catalyst for the digital ecosystem.

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