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## Night Shift on Track

The last passengers have hardly disembarked before nightly maintenance work on the fleet of ICE trains begins. A precise timetable is important here too, as shown by a visit to Deutsche Bahn's newest maintenance depot.



The sun has gone down. A shutter gate rises and the signal switches to green. A white high-speed Intercity Express train glides at a walking pace onto one of the four tracks in the 410-meter hall. It comes to a stop at precisely the place marked for it—in Deutsche Bahn's most modern maintenance depot. This sparkling clean and environmentally friendly facility in the Nippes district of Cologne just started operating in June of 2018. Sonja Askew is the site's manager of train preparation and maintenance. She leads a team of technical specialists who meticulously inspect both the outside and the inside of the high-speed trains every night. After being cleaned and repaired, the trains are dispatched early the next morning on time to set off on their inter-city journeys with more than 800 passengers on board.

When the ICE comes to a stop, the site manager glances at the clock. The train is scheduled for an "IS 200" drivetrain inspection and review. The code stands for the second-smallest routine maintenance session. In less than six hours the next passengers will already be waiting for this ICE 3, which is 200 meters long, weighs 410 tons, and is authorized for a peak speed of 330 kilometers an hour. Its scheduled maintenance now has to run like clockwork, similar to a pit stop at a racecourse. The focus is on safety, quality, and a comfortable ride for its passengers. Something else counts too: absolute punctuality. If the train doesn't arrive at Cologne's main train station on time the next morning, this would not only annoy the travelers waiting for it but also cause problems for the busy rail network in general. It would set off a cascade of delays.

Huber announced that Deutsche Bahn plans to launch its half-hour schedule of departures within Germany on a truly well-used set of rails—the very popular connection for business and private travelers alike between the port city of Hamburg and the capital city of Berlin. An ICE train covers the total distance of around 280 kilometers on that flat stretch with some perfectly straight high-speed segments in only 106 minutes. Cars often need twice as much time.

Deutsche Bahn is offering introductory prices of well under 20 euros in a 2020 marketing campaign, even though it has virtually no competition beyond slower inter-city buses. For profitability reasons, flights for this relatively short distance were stopped back in 2002. But the high demand for rail service here deserves a correspondingly high level of quality. More trains will be needed to meet the

goal of thirty-minute intervals. They will also clock more kilometers and need correspondingly more maintenance, inspections, and repairs.

Working with experts from Porsche Consulting



**Christian Dittmer-Peters, Partner, Porsche Consulting**

Twice the performance — how is that possible?

“At Deutsche Bahn’s ICE high-speed rail service maintenance depot, the ideal situation is similar to that of a pit stop on a racecourse. Every second counts and everyone on the perfectly trained team does their job at just the right moment,” says Christian Dittmer-Peters. As a partner at the Porsche Consulting management consultancy, he and his team of experts helped Deutsche Bahn achieve the important goal of servicing eight instead of four trains in a single shift at its depot in Cologne. “Improved planning and control with digital support, standardized communications, and intensive training for everyone involved have led to better coordination of personnel and better use of resources. Clear visuals mean that everyone can monitor workshop processes,” adds Dittmer-Peters. The most important and obvious goal: as soon as an ICE train is finished, it leaves the track free for the next one. The motto here is never to waste valuable time in the “pit” and to always return rapidly to the track—just like at a car race.

Information

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