

A photograph of Oliver Blume, CEO of Porsche, standing in a modern, brightly lit showroom. He is wearing a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. To his left is a white Porsche 911 Turbo S, with the text "911 Turbo S" visible on the side. In the background, there are other cars, including a yellow one, and large windows with blinds. The floor is highly reflective, showing the cars and the man's reflection.

“Autonomous driving on demand”

Trends such as electro-mobility, digitization, and autonomous driving have galvanized the automotive industry to move at breathtaking speed.

In this interview, Oliver Blume, CEO of Porsche, describes how the sports car manufacturer is preparing for the future and using innovation to shape the transformation.

PORSCHE IS LAUNCHING MISSION E, THE FIRST PURELY ELECTRIC SPORTS CAR, TO MARKET IN 2019. IS THIS THE BEGINNING OF A LARGER TRANSFORMATION FOR YOUR COMPANY?

BLUME / The automotive industry is facing a sea change, and will radically shift in the next few years. We must engage with the major trends of electrification, digitization, and connectivity to continue successfully leading our company into the future. The digital transformation affects core areas in the business, ranging from workplace equipment, to digital processes, to Production 4.0 – which is why we want to enable our employees to become drivers of the digital transformation, and thereby create a new culture of innovation in the company. We are already in the midst of the transformation. Our goal is to develop Porsche to become a leading provider of digital mobility solutions in the premium automotive segment.

WHAT WILL THE CAR OF THE FUTURE BE ABLE TO DO THAT TODAY'S CARS CAN'T?

BLUME / It used to be that cars were used primarily as means of transport, but today customer requirements for individual mobility are undergoing tremendous change. The car of the future will not just make users mobile, but will also be digital and smart. One example is the Mission E, in which we will offer on-demand functions for the first time, meaning the customers can acquire new functions whenever they wish – even after the car has been bought, or only on a temporary basis. Examples of conceivable customization options include autonomous driving modules, additional horsepower, a different chassis setup for racing circuits, and dynamic headlights.

WILL WE EVEN NEED SPORTS CARS IN FUTURE IF THEY DRIVE AUTONOMOUSLY?

BLUME / Absolutely! When building the sports car of the future, we apply the emotional power to fascinate that has always characterized our products, in combination with innovative technologies. The sporting and emotional driving experience is the key focus for customers – meaning that autonomous driving is not the top priority. A Porsche will always be a car that you can also drive yourself. However, we're not closing ourselves off from autonomous driving – functions like a traffic jam pilot or automatic parking are certainly of interest to Porsche drivers.

INNOVATION PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN YOUR 2025 STRATEGY. IN WHAT WAY IS IT NEW?

BLUME / Porsche always has been and always will be innovative; the company lives on innovation. Today we are taking an even more systematic and structured approach to it. We concentrate on those fields in which Porsche already has particular strengths, and will also be in pole position among the competition in future, for instance design, drive, and vehicle architecture. And we are working on an even more connected basis, accelerating processes, and using resources more flexibly.

HOW ARE YOUR NEW UNITS – PORSCHE DIGITAL GMBH AND PORSCHE DIGITAL LAB – DIFFERENTIATED FROM YOUR DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN WEISSACH?

BLUME / Porsche Digital GmbH is our center of expertise: It's where digital visions are transferred into reality, with the focus on service offerings for our customers. On the other hand, the Digital Lab concentrates on testing and using digital technologies within the company. Our development center in Weissach, meanwhile, is our forge for ideas relating to the vehicle itself – and that's what it will continue to be.

WHAT APPROACH DO YOU WANT TO TAKE TO ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION THAT CAN KEEP PACE WITH APPLE OR GOOGLE?

BLUME / We are not afraid of competition – in fact, we see it as an opportunity. We want to create an atmosphere in our company that enables even greater creativity. We must have the courage to enter new territory: It's key that we support people with a passion for digital issues, and we must not be afraid of mistakes. In all of this, the focus must be on people. Rather than being afraid of the future, we actively take part in shaping it.

WHERE DO YOU SEE PORSCHE IN THE YEAR 2030?

BLUME / We have a clear vision: Porsche will continue to be Porsche – the leading supplier of exclusive, sporty and emotional premium sports cars. ■