

Key factor in innovation

The SEAT Prototype Development Centre celebrates 10 years boosting innovation

- / Located in SEAT's facilities in Martorell, it is a benchmark in the sector for combining the stages of vehicle development and industrialisation
- / With close to 300 qualified professionals and 19,000 m², the brand has invested 430 million euros here over the past ten years
- / SEAT has been applying virtual reality over a decade

Martorell, 01/12/2017. - This year marks the tenth anniversary of the SEAT Prototype Development Centre (CPD) and the milestone has been commemorated with a celebration event attended by all the professionals who work there. This unique centre is a pioneering facility in Spain, and at the time, the first of its kind belonging to the Volkswagen Group anywhere in the world. The CPD, located at the heart of the Martorell factory, is the link between R&D and Production, where the brand combines the development and industrialisation stages of its vehicles and where virtuality becomes reality. Since its inauguration in 2007, the company has invested 430 million euros here in launching new SEAT models. The centre features 19,000 square metres of modern facilities and employs close to 300 engineers and specialised technicians.

One of the main goals of the Prototype Development Centre is to reduce the time to market of new cars and promote efficiency in processes and resource management. A clear example of this is the use of virtual reality in the initial stages of vehicle development, which has lowered by up to 30% the production of physical prototypes.

In this sense, SEAT Vice-President for Production Dr. Andreas Tostmann highlighted that **"the Prototype Development Centre is a forward-thinking facility and a clear example of SEAT's commitment to Industry 4.0. We have been working with virtual reality for over a decade and applying it to prototypes and production processes"**. Dr. Tostmann added that **"the CPD is geared towards manufacturing processes and promotes the involvement of people in very diverse areas of the company. At the same time, it is a key factor for making improvements, which enables us to optimise new projects before they are made and reduce costs and the lead times needed to build prototypes"**.

High performance centre

Over the past 10 years, the CPD has produced 150 models to improve design viability, 2,000 test prototypes and 4,000 cars for product and process optimisation. Likewise, 12,000 improvements have been introduced, which contribute to higher quality. Work begins at the CPD in the earliest stages of a new project. Three years before a production launch, it builds

the first prototypes for testing and preproduction by implementing new technologies such as virtual reality and by simulating mass production processes.

So far, the prototypes and preproduction models developed at these high efficiency facilities include two generations of the Ibiza, the Leon, Toledo, Mii, Alhambra and more recently, the Ateca and Arona. Likewise, the centre has also contributed to developing Audi models such as the Q3 and the A1. The CPD is now working on preparing six new projects that will reach the market in the future.

Constant forward-looking approach

The CPD drives innovation in line with SEAT's commitment to digitising the industry. One good example of this is additive manufacturing, a new production method whereby layer upon layer of material is precisely deposited. Implementing this technology reduces intermediate processes and enables parts to be made up to 75% faster. In addition, the centre is working on future projects such as maximising virtual reality in designing prototypes.

SEAT is the only company that designs, develops, manufactures and markets cars in Spain. A member of the Volkswagen Group, the multinational has its headquarters in Martorell (Barcelona), exporting 81% of its vehicles, and is present in over 80 countries through a network of 1,700 dealerships. In 2016, SEAT obtained an operating profit of 143 million euros, the highest in the history of the brand, and achieved worldwide sales of nearly 410,000 vehicles.

SEAT Group employs more than 14,500 professionals at its three production centres – Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and Martorell, where it manufactures the Ibiza, Leon and Arona. Additionally, the company produces the Ateca and the Toledo in the Czech Republic, the Alhambra in Portugal and the Mii in Slovakia.

The multinational has a Technical Centre, which operates as a knowledge hub that brings together 1,000 engineers who are focussed on developing innovation for Spain's largest industrial investor in R&D. SEAT already features the latest connectivity technology in its vehicle range and is currently engaged in the company's global digitalisation process to promote the mobility of the future.

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