

SEAT Martorell's anniversary

How has car manufacturing changed in the last 25 years?

- / Two employees recount the most significant changes that have taken place in the SEAT Martorell factory on the occasion of its 25th anniversary
- / Ergonomics and the presence of robots to handle the most cumbersome jobs are just some of the advances towards Industry 4.0
- / The production time of a new car has gone down from 60 hours to the present 16
- / The Martorell factory has grown in size, equivalent now to 400 football fields, and has produced close to 10 million cars in the last quarter century

Martorell, 03/04/2018.- “I was only 18 years old when I first stepped into the Martorell factory and I remember the Barcelona Olympic Games had recently been held. I was an apprentice and my colleagues and I had high hopes for the future – everything was new and we were told that it was the most modern factory in Europe”. This is how Juan Pérez, who currently heads the Press Processes, recalls those early days 25 years ago at the SEAT Martorell factory. Both Juan and his colleague Victor Manuel Díaz, who is responsible for Teamwork, Standardisation and Shopfloor Management, have experienced historic changes in the plant over the last quarter century:

-A giant factory that looked like a laboratory: “They gave me a pair of brick coloured overalls that nobody wears anymore and I walked into the Body Shop with deep respect. Everything was so clean that I thought I was in laboratory”, remembers Juan Pérez. Victor Manuel, who was 20 when he began working in Assembly Shop 8, will never forget his first look at the factory: **“I thought it was enormous and it was filled with light. Cars were going up and down elevators. I’d never seen anything like it”**, he recalls. Even though the Martorell factory started out with 404,000 m², over the years it has expanded to a total of 2,800,000 m², equivalent to 400 football fields.

-I helped make my first car: Martorell kicked off in 1993 with the second generation Ibiza and the Cordoba, two models that both Victor Manuel and Juan Pérez helped make, and were both immediately drawn to: **“I distinctly remember the SEAT Cordoba. It was my first ever car. I helped make it every day and fell in love with it right away”**, says Víctor Manuel. For Juan, **“that navy blue Ibiza**

became my fellow adventurer. I had just gotten my driving licence. There will always be a special place in my heart for it". In the past 25 years of operation at Martorell, 39 different models have been made and some of them, like the Ibiza, are now into their fifth generation.

-When workers used to walk 10 kilometres per day: That factory was like a labyrinth for the workers: **"When it was time to go home I couldn't find the locker room. It was very easy to get lost"**, recalls Juan Pérez. **"We'd walk up to 10 kilometres a day in that labyrinth; a lot more than today"**, compares Víctor Manuel. Nowadays, there are 125 automated guided vehicles, AGVs, which assist employees by transporting 23,800 parts a day to the line by following invisible tracks all over the factory.

-Robots and employees, partners working together: In 1993 there were 6,000 workers in the Martorell factory, a figure that has doubled today. The 12,000 current employees share the workshops with more than 2,000 robots, which take care of assembling the structure of the cars and make up around 10% of all industrial robots in Spain. **"In those days it took two people to manually install the windscreens in the cars. They were very bulky and heavy. Today that's done by a robot and we can do things that are easier to carry out"**, explains Juan Pérez.

-From a heavy footstool to an ergonomic chair: 25 years later, a major development has been improved ergonomics for employees. One of the changes that Victor Manuel Díaz relates is that: **"You used to have to place a heavy footstool inside the car to sit on while assembling the interiors, which was cumbersome for the workers"**. Today there are ergonomic chairs called 'Raku Raku' that make workers' jobs easier, as they slide into the car in a seating position and have all the necessary materials close at hand.

-From 60 hours down to 16 to create a new car: 84 robots apply thin coats of paint in a booth and a latest generation scanner inspects the smoothness of the surface in just 43 seconds. Today's digitised, connected production makes it possible to build 2,300 cars a day, a total that amounted to 1,500 cars 25 years ago. A new vehicle now rolls out of the factory every 40 seconds. Virtual reality, 3D printing and augmented reality are further breakthroughs that have emerged with the arrival of Industry 4.0.



-The factory, my home away from home: Over a quarter of a century, almost 10 million cars have been made at the Martorell factory, which are currently exported to 80 countries. This is how Juan Pérez describes the last 25 years: **“Where there used to be empty plots of land, now there is a logistics park with several companies and even an urban development. I never would have imagined that today we’d have 10.5 km of train rails and 51 bus lines. I’ve spent most of my adult life in this factory; it’s where I met my wife and made great friends. It’s my second home”**, concludes Juan Pérez, visibly moved.

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 80% of its vehicles, and is present in over 80 countries through a network of 1,700 dealerships. In 2017, SEAT achieved worldwide sales of nearly 470,000 vehicles.

The SEAT Group employs close to 14,700 professionals at its three production centres – Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and Martorell, where it manufactures the highly successful 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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