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THE QUINTESSENCE of Automotive

The Knowledge Magazine from EBV Elektronik

A Changing Sector

Last year will go down in history as the year when the global automobile market declined more severely than ever before. Vehicles sales in 2009 were down by around 20 percent. But there are already some signs of recovery in prospect. In fact, a study by the Automotive Research Center at the University of Duisburg-Essen predicts that global car sales will achieve a new record of 60 million by as early as 2012. The drivers of that new growth will no longer be Europe and the USA, however, but primarily Asia – and most especially China. Even in a year of global crisis such as 2009, its car market grew by more than 50 percent. As in other emerging economies, though, demand is mainly for cheap cars at a net price of below 7,000 Euro. In the "traditional" markets of Europe and the USA too, smaller, cheaper cars are increasingly in demand, reflecting greater environmental awareness and also the impact of the surge in oil prices in 2008. Incorporating all those factors, a forecast by management consultant A. T. Kearney predicts that the "low-price vehicle" segment will grow by more than 500 percent by the year 2020. The Kearney study does, however, also indicate that the premium and luxury car segment will remain a lucrative market, with annual worldwide growth rates of well over three percent through to 2020. It is predicted that global car ownership will more than double by 2050. So the prospects for the industry are certainly bright.

Nevertheless, such growth will only be politically acceptable if all cars sold are specified as low-emission vehicles, and provided increasing individual mobility does not mean less safety on the world's roads. Solutions delivering the necessary energy efficiency, alternative drive systems and safety levels will only be feasible with the aid of intelligent electronics. Indeed, even today some 90 percent of automotive innovations are driven by electronics. By 2015, according to a Mercer study in 2006, electrical and electronic components and software will account for over 30 percent of a car's total value. The challenge will be to also implement intelligent electronic solutions in the low-price vehicle segment – for the sake of the environment and to enhance safety, but also to share in the future growth of that market.

So the future is bound to be exciting, and we look forward to helping carmakers and component suppliers to meet the challenges it will bring!

Slobodan Puljarevic
President & CEO, EBV Elektronik

Editorial

Dear Reader,

"Worldwide demand for motor vehicles will be no more than one million – due to the lack of available chauffeurs if for no other reason." That was the view of Gottlieb Daimler, one of the fathers of the modern-day automobile. How wrong even an inventive genius can be! Global vehicle numbers are forecast to top the one billion mark this year, and the trend is rising. Electronics will play a key role in ensuring that increasing traffic volumes can be managed safely and in the most environmentally friendly way possible in future.

In this latest issue of our knowledge magazine, we focus on the wide-ranging applications for electronics in the automotive sector – from alternative drive options, through driver assistance systems to personalised comfort and convenience functions. The solutions we present have long since been extended beyond the realm of the luxury class. With a view to their future markets in Asia and South America for example, component suppliers and vehicle manufacturers are increasingly coming up with solutions to make electronic systems affordable even in small cars. In our round-table discussion, automotive industry experts debate how we can make sure, against the background of such advances, that the increasingly complex systems do not overtax drivers and impair the reliability of vehicles.

The fact that electronic systems are today already highly robust is demonstrated by the many successes of rally driver Jutta Kleinschmidt, the first woman ever to win the Rallye Dakar desert rally. In an exclusive interview, she reveals the role played by motor sport in the development of new technologies. Partly thanks to the severe trials which they undergo in the motor sport arena, automotive electronics systems have today become so reliable that serious research is now being conducted into the production of a self-driving car – turning the car itself into the "chauffeur", and so further surpassing the limitations envisaged by Gottlieb Daimler back in those early days of the automobile.

I very much hope that this latest issue of "The Quintessence" will once again provide you with entertaining, interesting and informative reading. As ever, I look forward to receiving your feedback or suggestions for topics to be covered in future issues. You can contact me at bernd.schlemmer@ebv.com.

So now, enjoy "The Quintessence of Automotive"!

Best regards,

Bernd Schlemmer
Director of Communications, EBV Elektronik

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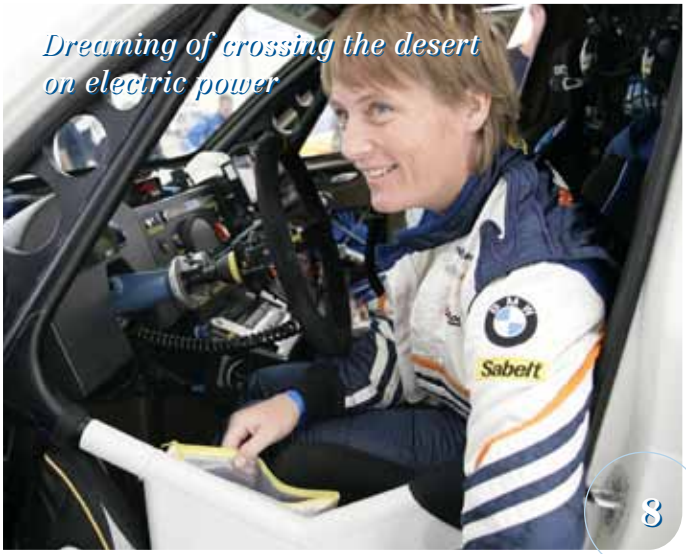

Jutta Kleinschmidt was the first woman to win the Rallye Dakar

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