Mr. Schäfer, may we take a look around your development laboratories:
what does the Porsche of the future look like?
PETER SCHÄFER For the customer, the essential features of Porsche quality are incomparable design, driving feel, ergonomics, and performance. We want to carry these genes, as we call them, into the future, whilst taking account of the new ecological and social conditions, which means consistent electrification, as featured in the Taycan, our first electric vehicle. Connectivity with many new functions based on big-data technologies and artificial intelligence is also another consideration.

How is the work divided between you and your clients?
PETER SCHÄFER As a traditional engineering services provider with a focus on development, we work both on behalf of Porsche, our parent company, but also for other companies. Vehicle manufacturers outsource certain components or even entire projects to service providers. We work on these up to an approval recommendation: final approval and type testing are then done by the manufacturer. We at Porsche Engineering place particular emphasis on new software-based functions in addition to the development of complete vehicles and systems. New functions could be implemented with the aid of AI and cloud-based data for example. For instance, the control system can be adapted to the current road conditions by recording them within the vehicle. Predictive driver information would even be conceivable if this were to be combined with data from other vehicles and, for example, with weather information from the Cloud...

"Our aim is to maximize the spread of our cars ... between driving dynamics and comfort, between the driving experience and everyday road capability."

Satellite

Earth
we put a lot of thought into the question: what will our customers care most about in
the future? Our response is to acquire skills, for example in high-voltage or charging
technology or in data analysis and artificial intelligence, at an early stage.

So you also develop new vehicle technologies even in the absence of a customer
order?
PS Yes, we allow ourselves that freedom to a limited extent, but we choose which tech-
nologies to focus on very carefully. And I’d like to point out that we’ve made the right
choices in the past by focusing on electromobility, networking and autonomous driving
functions at an early stage.

As an alumnus of the University of Stuttgart, which of your findings from your
time as a student and doctoral candidate do you still find particularly helpful?
PS For my PhD, I was very fortunate to be able to work on a topic relating to the use of
mechatronics even all those years ago. In those days, mechatronic systems consisting of
actuators and sensors as well as electronic control units that enable a range of novel
functions, were being integrated into traditional vehicle technology based on mechanics,
hydraulics and electrics. My PhD supervisor, Professor Werner Schiehlen, stressed the fact
that we need to explore the combination of mechanics and software and that we need to
find ways of integrating and testing mechatronic systems. That has had a major impact
on my professional career.

The University of Stuttgart collaborates closely with industry.
What do you regard as the University’s role in this?
PS Without a doubt, their primary task is to train, promote and prepare talented young-
sters for their early careers, which would include familiarizing them with future-oriented
technologies, sustainability and climate protection. These are the topics that really move
us. In my view, tackling the challenges of tomorrow requires a close dialog with industry –
on the industrial side we’re concerned with applied science and engineering, whereas
the University’s concern is basic research, always one step ahead. To this end, we always
need to find a balance between making the right contribution towards the further devel-
opment of our technologies and of Germany as a center of industry, and meeting our
social obligations with regard to the environment, climate and social issues.

After studying mechanical engineering and completing
a subsequent doctorate at the University of Stuttgart,
Peter Schäfer worked in the field of chassis engineering
for both Ford and Volkswagen AG. He joined the Porsche
Group in 2003, where, among other things, he was Man-
aging Director of Porsche Engineering from 2004 to 2009.
After that he was in charge of the Chassis and later the
Complete Vehicle/Quality Sections within Porsche AG’s
Development Department. He took over as Chairman of
the Board at Porsche Engineering in July 2019.