

- [01] Senior experts: working for Bosch worldwide**
- [02] Bosch retirees contribute 50,000 days of work each year**
- [03] Senior experts at Bosch**

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Senior experts: working for Bosch worldwide Holding retired associates in high esteem

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Bosch places particular value on the expert knowledge acquired by its associates: after all, this is what underpins the thousands of patents filed worldwide by the supplier of technology and services each year. Experience has also shown that different perspectives foster creativity and help create better solutions, which is why Bosch has been committed to mixed-age teams as part of its diversity strategy for many years now. In line with this, the company believes its retired associates should also have the opportunity to continue contributing the expertise they accumulated while at Bosch, often over decades. In 1999, Bosch established a subsidiary that assigns retired associates temporary consulting or project tasks within the company. The aim is to retain Bosch expertise. As a consulting company, Bosch Management Support GmbH (BMS) manages the placement of senior experts within the Bosch Group worldwide.

Holding experience in high esteem

When it was established in 1999, Bosch Management Support GmbH counted 30 former Bosch associates; today, the company has more than 1,500 senior experts on its books worldwide. The great value placed on the counsel of older associates at Bosch is one of the reasons for its success. Experts are placed anywhere that professional consultation is required on a short-term basis or capacity bottlenecks need to be managed. This can be while setting up manufacturing lines somewhere in the world, in accounting, or as part of product development or plant quality assurance. BMS consultants work on fixed-term contracts for a fee that is based on their earlier salaries. The remuneration model ensures that cost alone is not the deciding factor when an expert is engaged. Moreover, BMS does not just act as a facilitator. The organization also offers senior experts advice on matters such as health insurance obligations and supplementary income limits.

Voluntary participation ensures dedication

Former Bosch associates who have specific specialist and leadership expertise can register as senior experts with BMS. They must be retired. Many associates decide they want to participate before they leave the company, some decide later, and some retirees are recruited specifically by a specialist department. A selection interview ensures that they can meet a high standard of consulting quality.

Professional consulting tailored to the job at hand

As a rule, senior experts only work within the Bosch Group and are engaged by specialist departments, which are free to choose between an external consultant and a BMS expert. There are no obligations on the client or the senior expert. If the retired associate receives a project inquiry, both sides arrange a meeting to discuss the tasks and the expected duration of the job. If the client and the senior expert come to an agreement, they also work out a schedule that suits both sides. Registered senior experts can access an online platform at home that they can use to manage the job's administrative tasks, their travel, and timekeeping. They can also update their skills profile at any time.

Satisfied customers, motivated senior experts

The model benefits both sides: retired associates aged between 60 and 75 feel renewed appreciation for their skills, earn a little on the side, and stay up to date professionally. Their specific specialist and leadership expertise and their in-depth knowledge of the Bosch Group and its corporate culture means that there is no need for senior experts to undergo lengthy training. They also have considerable experience dealing with specific technical issues and motivating associates. Their clients value this and typically express a high degree of satisfaction at the obligatory end-of-assignment performance assessment. On average, senior experts receive 93 of a possible 100 points. Of the senior experts working for BMS, around two-thirds are specialists and one-third are executives.

Expert pool with combined 40,000 years of experience

Bosch's expert pool brings together more than 40,000 combined years of professional experience. The senior experts are active in areas including development, manufacturing, accounting, purchasing, and marketing and sales. Their project tasks range from workshops, training, and talks, to quality assurance and management, construction support, process analysis and improvement, to mentoring and interim management. In 2016, retired Bosch associates around the world clocked up a total of 65,000 days of work. Of the days worked, 27 percent were in manufacturing, 9 percent in development, and 24 percent were commercial in nature. The remainder were distributed among a wide range of business areas.

Alongside Germany, BMS has branches in Brazil (Campinas), the U.K. (Denham), India (Bangalore), Japan (Saitama), Mexico (Mexico City), Austria (Vienna), Turkey (Maltepe-Istanbul), and the U.S. (Broadview).

Internet:

Bosch Management Support: http://bit.ly/bosch_management_support

Bosch as an employer: http://bit.ly/bosch_arbeitgeber_de

Diversity management at Bosch: http://bit.ly/bosch_diversity_de

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Taking stock: the fifteenth anniversary of a successful concept

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Bosch retirees contribute 50,000 days of work each year

- ▶ Pioneering work: Bosch introduced its senior expert concept in 1999
- ▶ Life experience and professional expertise are held in high regard
- ▶ Director of industrial relations Kübel: “Senior experts make important contributions”
- ▶ Retired associates contribute more than 40,000 years of expertise

Stuttgart – At Bosch, demand for company retirees is growing around the world. In 2013, senior experts worked some 50,000 days, about twice as many as five years ago. Specialists including technicians, engineers, management accountants, and logistics experts were in especially high demand. Fifteen years ago, Bosch established Bosch Management Support GmbH (BMS), a subsidiary that offers the services of former associates for project work and consulting tasks of limited duration. The aim was to hold on to decades of Bosch expertise, all the while passing knowledge on to younger associates. The global provider of technology and services currently counts 1,600 retirees in its pool of experts. Over the course of their careers at Bosch, they acquired more than 40,000 years’ worth of know-how. In 1999, the senior expert concept was the only one of its kind in Germany. Since then, it has served as a model for many other companies and organizations.

Mixed-age teams: better results

“What launched with 30 associates in 1999 has developed into a global success story for Bosch,” says Christoph Kübel, member of the Bosch board of management and director of industrial relations at Robert Bosch GmbH, on the anniversary of the subsidiary’s establishment. “Our senior experts make important contributions. Thanks to their decades of expertise, they can help find solutions, provide new ideas, and enhance our

innovative strength.” Moreover, mixed-age teams make cross-generational learning easier, says Kübel.

Senior experts provide professional consulting services

The senior experts are called upon in instances where professional advice is required on short notice. For instance, help may be needed to start up a new production line in another country, or to carry out quality assurance activities at a plant. “Knowing that my life experience and professional expertise are valued is a great source of motivation,” says Siegmund Kaiser, a 67-year-old Bosch senior expert for hydraulics. “I find solving technical challenges exciting, and I am pleased to be keeping abreast of technical developments.” BMS experts work on projects of limited duration and receive an honorarium that is based on their past salaries. They work in a number of areas, including development, production, purchasing, finance, marketing, and sales.

Excellent problem-solving skills, high customer satisfaction

In 2013, senior experts worked on 1,027 consulting projects around the world, which added up to a total of 49,556 working days. The rising demand for senior experts is attributable to their strong ability to find solutions. Without career goals and free of financial interests, they can quickly tackle the challenges at hand. “I can apply my expertise directly, I can draw on my Bosch network, and colleagues accept me as an associate and their equal,” says 65-year-old Ursula Glatz, who most recently worked as a senior expert for quality management. “If I am not interested in the contents of a project, I sometimes decline a request. After all, I want to deliver convincing results. I am not looking for a way to fill my free time.” As a result of this determination, senior experts’ customers are generally very satisfied, giving them ratings of 93 out of 100 possible points on average.

Senior experts working around the world

While demographic developments in Germany have led to a shortage of specialists in many places across the country, the senior expert concept reflects Bosch’s global diversity strategy. “Mixed-age teams are often better equipped to meet a range of customer needs,” says Dr. Georg Hanen, managing director of Bosch Management Support GmbH. “Many senior experts have more than 40 years of Bosch experience under their belts. For this reason, demand for their services is growing in other countries as well. Besides its offices in Germany, BMS also has a presence in Denham, U.K.; Broadview, U.S.; Saitama, Japan; and Campinas, Brazil. Most recently, Bosch opened a BMS office in Bangalore. Hanen predicts

that the senior expert model will have a successful future. “Today, every second senior expert is commissioned for a follow-up project, and the numbers continue to increase.”

Internet:

Bosch as an employer: <http://bit.ly/1kuDdrM>

Diversity at Bosch: <http://bit.ly/1oMHOMK>

Video:

Bosch’s senior experts at work: Ernst Gründler <http://youtu.be/IQYbAcm-zjc>

Background information:

Senior experts at Bosch – Five questions for Robert Hanser

<http://bit.ly/1mUKYbE>

Diversity management at Bosch – Five questions for Heidi Stock

<http://bit.ly/SSDxoR>

Press photos: 1-PE-20416, 1-PE-20417, 1-RB-19879, 1-RB-20355, 1-RB-19234, 1-RB-19233, 1-PE-20414, 1-PE-20415, 1-PE-20418, 1-PE-20420

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The Bosch Group is a leading global supplier of technology and services. In 2013, its roughly 281,000 associates generated sales of 46.1 billion euros. (NB: As a result of changes to accounting policies, the key figures for 2013 can only partially be compared to the previously published figures for 2012). Its operations are divided into four business sectors: Automotive Technology, Industrial Technology, Consumer Goods, and Energy and Building Technology. The Bosch Group comprises Robert Bosch GmbH and its more than 360 subsidiaries and regional companies in some 50 countries. If its sales and service partners are included, then Bosch is represented in roughly 150 countries. This worldwide development, manufacturing, and sales network is the foundation for further growth. Bosch spent some 4.5 billion euros for research and development in 2013, and applied for over 5,000 patents, an average of 20 patents per day. The Bosch Group’s products and services are designed to fascinate, and to improve the quality of life by providing solutions which are both innovative and beneficial. In this way, the company offers technology worldwide that is “Invented for life.”

The company was set up in Stuttgart in 1886 by Robert Bosch (1861-1942) as “Workshop for Precision Mechanics and Electrical Engineering”. The special ownership structure of Robert Bosch GmbH guarantees the entrepreneurial freedom of the Bosch Group, making it possible for the company to plan over the long term and to undertake significant up-front investments in the safeguarding of its future. Ninety-two percent of the share capital of Robert Bosch GmbH is held by Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH, a charitable foundation. The majority of voting rights are held by Robert Bosch Industrietreuhand KG, an industrial trust. The entrepreneurial ownership functions are carried out by the trust. The remaining shares are held by the Bosch family and by Robert Bosch GmbH.

Further information is available online at www.bosch.com and www.bosch-press.com, <http://twitter.com/BoschPresse>.



Senior experts at Bosch

Five questions for Dr. Karl-Heinz Schrödl,
CEO of Bosch Management Support GmbH

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What are Bosch senior experts?

Schrödl: “Our senior experts are former Bosch associates who have already retired but take on temporary consulting or project tasks. For example, they might have special expertise or could be called in to manage temporary capacity bottlenecks. Our consulting company Bosch Management Support GmbH has a pool of senior experts, who we place in roles across the Bosch Group. They are specialists and executives, some of whom have up to 40 years of Bosch experience. Overall, there are more than 1,500 retired associates in the expert pool. Together, they bring approximately 40,000 years of professional expertise.”

What is the goal of the senior expert model?

Schrödl: “As a company shaped by the power of innovation, Bosch places special value on the expertise as well as the life and professional experience of highly qualified associates. This is why we recognized the potential of our retired associates early on. For this reason, we founded our consulting company in 1999 with the goal of preventing the loss of knowledge acquired over decades at Bosch, instead retaining it for the company. At the same time, it is intended to give younger associates the opportunity to learn from their older and more experienced colleagues. In technical fields in particular, there is a lot of specialist knowledge, such as how to set up a manufacturing line, which is very difficult to find on the external consultant market.”

What are the advantages for Bosch – and what are the advantages for senior experts?

Schrödl: “Our senior experts – from master craftsmen to managers – have specific expertise and broad knowledge about company structures, and are very familiar with the Bosch culture. This makes them quicker at familiarizing themselves with the material than external consultants, they need less training to get up to speed, and can build upon their existing Bosch networks. There is often

a special dynamic when they work with younger colleagues, as the advice of experienced colleagues is usually easier to accept than that of external consultants. Senior experts can concentrate on the actual problem and its solution, because they are not pursuing a career or a sales target. Former associates also appreciate the opportunity to be valued again for their expertise, stay up to date professionally, and earn a little on the side. In Germany in particular, many of our experts see it as a chance to transition into retirement gradually without having to completely leave their working lives behind them all at once.”

What kind of experiences has Bosch had with the senior expert model?

Schrödl: “Since it was set up more than 15 years ago, demand for our senior experts has been increasing within the Bosch Group. The model has established itself successfully, internationally too. There is global demand for the senior experts’ knowledge – many of our experts work abroad, especially in growth markets. More than half of the consulting orders are accounted for by our regional organizations in Japan, India, and the U.S. Our senior expert model is recognized everywhere. Companies from industries such as the automotive industry, the mail order industry, telecommunications, and aviation have sought exchange with and advice from them. We are happy to pass on our expertise, because we know that demographic change requires innovative employment concepts, especially in Europe.”

What makes the model so successful?

Schrödl: “Our values-based corporate culture is crucial, as it recognizes life experience and professional experience in a special way. Moreover, we view mixed-age teams as part of our global diversity strategy, which improves our innovative strength. This attitude has been essential for the long-term success of the model. It is just as important that the senior experts really perform. They should be chosen because of their skills, not to provide them with a leisure program. Our senior experts want to be worth the money and compete with other service providers. This is a particular incentive for many senior experts – they want to be more highly valued by their customers than an external consultant would be.”

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