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## Interview with Alois Kauer, new head of the ŠKODA Academy and patron of the apprentice car 2020

- › Alois Kauer has been director of the ŠKODA Academy in Mladá Boleslav since February
- › Training and further education have traditionally been a central part of ŠKODA's HR strategy
- › As part of an annual practical project, apprentices have been designing a concept vehicle based on a series model since 2013
- › The project prepares apprentices for the demands of everyday work at ŠKODA

Mladá Boleslav, 9 March 2020 – The ŠKODA Academy has a new director: since February 2020, Alois Kauer has been leading ŠKODA's vocational school and has also assumed the patronage for the practical project 'Apprentice Car'. "Every year the apprentice car proves the high standard of our training and is an integral part of our programme," emphasises Kauer.

### Mr. Kauer, what role does the ŠKODA apprentice car play for the company?

Kauer: The apprentice car is a unique project in automobile production in the Czech Republic. Every year, it proves the high standard of our training and is an integral part of our programme. Since 2013, our apprentices have been designing and building a concept vehicle based on a ŠKODA series model. This year, we are looking forward to the seventh apprentice car. The unique model will be presented to journalists from all over the world in June. The project is a unique opportunity for budding designers, mechanics and technicians. They can design their own dream car and then build it themselves. This is a lot of fun, and they can also look over the shoulders of the professionals in different areas of the company and work alongside them. This is very exciting for the apprentices and the results are spectacular every year.

### What is the aim of the project?

Kauer: The apprentices work on the project for one academic year. Most of them are in their third year of training. During the development of the apprentice car, they consolidate and hone the skills they already have. At the same time, they have to work in a team with their classmates in order to achieve the best possible result in the allotted time. The young people are highly motivated and very creative. Their ideas and feedback are invaluable to ŠKODA. In addition, the project improves the apprentices' practical skills and promotes teamwork. In this way, ŠKODA gains excellently trained specialists at the end of the course.

### You are a consultant and trainer for managers. How does this affect your new role as head of the ŠKODA Academy?

Kauer: The leadership competence at ŠKODA is outstanding. The academy supports and accompanies our managers' further development in all matters. They have a high level of responsibility for the company and our employees. They have to reach the employees, take them along and at the same time keep an eye on the goals. Due to the profound changes in the automotive industry, the demands on our leadership have increased immensely and new ground has to be broken.

### How have the first few days been in your new position?

Kauer: I was given the opportunity to quickly and intensively get to know the management of the ŠKODA Academy and the crucial issues concerning the institution before I started. Things have got off to a good start, and I am looking forward to having many more discussions and establishing contacts.



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## **What tasks are you most looking forward to?**

Kauer: I am a team player. That is why I am particularly looking forward to working well with colleagues in the various areas. I am always fascinated by what can be achieved through open and good cooperation in terms of innovation and enthusiasm. For me, education is a matter of the heart. We can only master future challenges together, and a strong company needs strong employees. That is why we have to prepare our workforce not only for the current requirements but also for the ones we will face in the future.

## **What do you see as the most significant challenge in training?**

Kauer: Through vocational training, ŠKODA accomplishes a central educational mission that also forms the basis of our work in nurturing new talent. The particular challenge is to devise apprenticeships that match the company's needs and teach theory and practice at the highest level. We want to make young people enthusiastic about vocational training, develop technical skills in new technologies and strengthen our apprentices' self-confidence and personal responsibility. The further development of our training is based on the comprehensive and continuous feedback from apprentices, parents and departments. It makes us proud when our apprentices prove their capabilities in their work and go on to have a career at ŠKODA. This is the only way we will remain a pioneer in vocational training.

## **ŠKODA operates its own academy for young professionals. Why?**

Kauer: Excellently trained specialists are a valuable asset and today's students are tomorrow's specialists. For this reason, ŠKODA is investing heavily in the quality of training at the ŠKODA Academy, which was established in 2013. On the one hand, the educational institution offers further training programs for employees, on the other hand, we train young people and consistently promote young talent.

## **Is this a new approach for ŠKODA?**

Kauer: ŠKODA has been running its own vocational school since 1927. Since then, around 23,000 young people have completed their training here. Good training and further education opportunities have, therefore, long been an integral part of our personnel strategy. For this reason, ŠKODA invested around 320 million Czech crowns between 2013 and 2019 to expand the existing training programmes and modernise the educational institutions.

## **What skills does vocational training focus on?**

Kauer: ŠKODA attaches great importance to excellent specialist knowledge in combination with high social skills, for example, in the area of teamwork. In this way, we prepare the students optimally for their future professional life and a successful career path.

## **How do you develop talented young people?**

Kauer: Our educational institution has state-of-the-art equipment, and our lecturers teach according to the latest standards and using the latest methods. We focus on trendsetting technologies in both electronic and mechanical engineering. We also attach great importance to the practical side. That is why the students spend part of their training directly at ŠKODA in their future workplaces. In this way, they experience all facets of vehicle production and are well prepared for their professional life and long-term employment. This is important for us because we offer a job to every graduate of the



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ŠKODA Academy. With our range of training courses, we are very successful and pioneers in specialist training.

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## Media image:



### Alois Kauer, new head of the ŠKODA Academy and patron of the apprentice car 2020

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

## ŠKODA AUTO

- › is this year celebrating 125 years since the company was founded during the pioneering era of the automobile in 1895, making it one of the longest-established car manufacturers in the world.
- › currently offers its customers nine passenger-car series: the CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA and SUPERB as well as the KAMIQ, KAROQ and KODIAQ.
- › delivered 1.24 million vehicles to customers around the world in 2019.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. In association with the Group, ŠKODA AUTO independently develops and manufactures vehicles, as well as components such as engines and transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- › employs approximately 42,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.
- › is pressing ahead with the transformation from a traditional car manufacturer to the 'Simply Clever company for the best mobility solutions' as part of the ŠKODA 2025 Strategy.