

Lateral Thinking

____ Porsche Engineering's Interdisciplinary Qualification Program (IQP) for young professionals has established itself as a rich source of ideas for extraordinary development-related products. In cooperation with the Porsche Design Group, the fifth edition of the initiative led to the development of an extraordinary watch winder.

By Nadine Guhl

Exclusive products require expert development and craftsmanship. With these qualities in mind, the IQP program has already led to multiple collaborations between the Porsche Design Group and Porsche Engineering.

The Interdisciplinary Qualification Program (IQP)

The IQP is an 18-month personnel development program at Porsche Engineering aimed at young professionals with the goal of preparing them for the challenges and demanding responsibilities and situations they will face in their professional lives. The main component is a project independently conducted by the participants that focuses in particular on promoting interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition, the participants complete a 14-day internship outside of their own specialization (generally in a social area), take part in various interdisciplinary seminars and receive advice and support from a personal mentor. Through it all, there is a strong emphasis on cultivating a service mentality.

A watch winder for the Porsche Design Group

The team from the IQP young-professional development program decided to dedicate its efforts this time around to

developing a watch winder for the presentation of the new watch collection from Porsche Design. Watch winders are used to wind automatic watches and thus keep them running. Aside from the convenience of having a wound-up watch, a watch winder also improves the lubrication of the movement and thus contributes to the durability of the watch itself.

The goal of the project was not to develop an ordinary watch winder, but rather one, like the watches themselves, whose impressive design and exceptional quality make it a “talking piece,” in the lingo of the design world. The idea rests on Porsche Design's principle of establishing a thematic bridge between the technology in Porsche vehicles and the watches. The result is a gear wheel design reminiscent of a technical gearbox. Visually striking as a product, the technical implementation was nevertheless challenging.

Through a central drive mechanism, the watch winder winds up to five modules in which the watches are stored individually. The gear design in the drive mechanism and the modules is an extraordinary feature. The gear wheels fit into each other like in a technical gear mechanism and create the watch winder's characteristic circular motion. To create the prototype, the individual components were manufactured from plastic in the rapid-prototyping procedure. The drive mechanism is a small electric motor hidden in the drive wheel. >



Prototype of a design watch winder that was recently developed for the Porsche Design Group as part of IQP.

Prototype of a design floor lamp based on an original 911 LED main headlight, developed by the 2013 IQP team.



The projects that make up the Interdisciplinary Qualification Program do not simply promote “lateral thinking,” but actually demand it. Even the development of a watch winder required knowledge and experience from vehicle development in order to apply both elements to this technically complex product. Moreover, as the development activities were ongoing, it was necessary consistently to bear in mind and coordinate with the design and cost parameters of the project partner—a collaboration precisely analogous to the relationship between the customer and service provider in the automotive project business. From the original idea to the end product, the young professionals implemented the project independently.

Traditional collaboration

The best-known product that has emerged from the collaboration between the Porsche Design Group and Porsche Engineering and met with high market demand is the Porsche champagne cooler based on an original finned cylinder. Another IQP team developed a fully functional prototype for an extraordinary floor lamp based on an original 911 LED main headlight. Whether, and with what degree of success, the newly developed watch winder comes to the market for end customers remains to be seen.

“We’re impressed over and over again by the dedication and passion the young professionals in the IQP program bring to their respective projects. With great imagination, technical expertise and lateral thinking, they’ve developed extraordinary products,” says Frank Angelkötter, CFO Porsche Design Group. ■



The Porsche Classic Cooler. The 2010 IQP team developed this unusual champagne cooler based on an original finned cylinder.