

What Exactly Does Quality Mean, Mr. Moser?

Text PETER WEIDENHAMMER / Photos JÖRG EBERL

E-mobility, connectivity, and digital services are transforming customer experience. That means Porsche's quality assurance work also has to keep on developing.

Frank Moser lives and breathes quality. "We have to keep developing all the time, not just to address the greater complexity in quality-related matters, but also to keep improving ourselves. That is my aim," says Porsche's forty-nine-year-old head of corporate quality. Moser's high aims serve his work well. But no matter how clearly he formulates them, they're anything but easy to achieve. As cars become more complex, so too do the demands on quality assurance. They are becoming more varied and intricate.

In the past, customers have based their assessment of the Porsche brand on their impression of the cars' overall quality. In the future, however, they will increasingly consider additional matters such as software, connectivity, and services. "Connectivity will become ever more important, both for the components within a car, and between the car and its environment," says Moser. The number of software modules and the demands placed on them are increasing all the time. And more functions will be shifted from hardware to software. "That's why it's important for us at corporate quality to address these changes and keep expanding our software quality processes. Digitalization and smart mobility are also fueling changes in quality management."

To keep pace with the increasing level of connectivity and the speed of developments in digitalization, Porsche has based its corporate quality processes and structures on functions and systems. "Employees used to be responsible for particular components. Today they monitor entire functions," explains Moser. Corporate quality now also has a smart mobility section, which focuses exclusively on services.

This means that Porsche's corporate quality department now needs new types of experts such as software specialists. And new tools. Many methods from the past have proved themselves well and will continue to be used. "But we also need new ones," says Moser. "And digitalization offers a good opportunity for this." For example, Porsche evaluates data with a new advanced analytics platform, whereby experts use machine-learning technologies to automatically cluster customer complaints. The advantage here is that the system is much quicker at detecting quality issues, which enables the company to respond much more quickly itself.

Damage and wear often correlate with ambient conditions like humidity, temperature, and a variety of other climate-

Frank Moser joined Porsche in 1996 after earning a degree in mechanical engineering. Today he heads one of the company's most exciting departments. As he puts it, "We're involved in every stage of the projects, from design and development to production and field analyses. In every single division and for all model series."

"Superior quality is a key component of the Porsche brand identity, and our customers are justified in expecting it."

FRANK MOSER
Head of Corporate Quality, Porsche





“It’s good to have someone take a more distanced look and offer us new stimuli. That’s why we’re enjoying working intensively and productively with our colleagues from Porsche Consulting.”

FRANK MOSER

think our leather interiors smell refined and high-end, Chinese customers tend to think the smell has an unnatural quality.”

Moser doesn’t agree with the idea that quality is necessarily a matter of money. “Quality is a question of culture,” he says, “and a question of individual standards. The moment

you stop trying to fix the tiniest defect is the moment you start becoming careless. We will never be satisfied, and we will never stop working on improving our quality. The employees in all of our departments are highly motivated every day to further optimize our outstanding and very emotionally appealing products. We’re using key indices to make our quality transparent and visible, and also to guide our work and clearly identify the areas where we still need to improve.”

The quality department can also make a major economic contribution to the company by reducing the number of customer complaints. That lowers warranty costs—while increasing customer satisfaction at the same time. “Despite the greater complexity of our products, we have to set our sights on optimizing quality even more for our customers,” insists Moser. “For us at the quality department, the customer is the absolute focus of our work. Which means that even one complaint is one too many.”

But there is one area in which customer perceptions of quality will in fact change. The new Taycan electric sports car does not make engine sounds—which have thus far been a key source of emotionality for Porsche. Other sounds—like how the wind rushes by, how the tires roll on the road—or the hum of the air-conditioning system—will now be more apparent. Work right now is concentrating on either eliminating or accentuating these sounds. No attempts will be made to replace the typical sound of a Porsche engine, let alone generate it artificially. On the contrary. “This new experience of superior yet utterly quiet dynamics is fantastic. It’s a new type of quality. The emotional quality will consist precisely of the fact that we won’t hear anything at all,” says Moser with obvious enthusiasm.

“The complexity of our cars keeps increasing. They will become more connected, digital, and multifaceted. Moreover, the automotive industry will soon be shifting from assisted to autonomous driving, and a crucial factor there will be the quality of the safety of those systems,” says Moser. “The demands placed on quality management in the future will therefore be rising dramatically. At the same time, there won’t be any decline in the existing standards of aesthetics or harmony. That means we will have to rethink quality. We will have to keep developing further, not just to address the greater complexity in quality-related matters, but also to keep improving ourselves. That is my aim.”

Quality at Porsche THE SIX QUALITIES

EMOTIONAL QUALITY arises from the interplay of design, performance, and sound. It has always been a key characteristic of Porsche cars and an important criterion for customers.

FUNCTIONAL QUALITY means that a Porsche always runs perfectly and reliably and is suitable for everyday use. It is the precondition for all other types of quality.

A great love of detail goes into the appearance of Porsche cars, including uniform composition and superior-grade materials that give it the visuals and feel. All of this is part of the **AESTHETIC QUALITY**.

Porsche customers expect excellent **SERVICE QUALITY**: rapid, attentive service at every interface from Porsche Centers to apps.

Simple and intuitive operation of all elements in the car, and smooth interplay of all systems and services make up the **CONCEPTUAL QUALITY** of Porsche cars.

CONTENT QUALITY covers all the information provided. Correct data that are available at all times—about routes, parking spaces, or charging stations—add up to a perfect driving experience.

related influences. The experts have therefore introduced an environmental screening process in order to systematically analyze the impact of climate on such problems. Damage-related data are linked with environmental data, allowing statistical inferences to be calculated and displayed on a screen with just a few clicks. The results enable Porsche to develop and correct climate-related factors in faster and more targeted ways.

And customers? Their idea of quality won’t change under these new conditions. If anything, it will expand. “Customer journeys now extend beyond just the ‘car’ product. All manner of new quality-related aspects are now involved,” says Moser. Such as content quality. If customers use a Porsche app to reserve parking spots that turn out to be occupied, that

affects how they view the quality of the Porsche brand. For the customer, it doesn’t matter whether the error is the fault of the car company, the content provider, or the parking garage operator. “The quality of the data that we provide has to be high,” says Moser.

“Our customers’ awareness of quality has not really changed. People who bought Porsches a few decades ago already had high standards back then. They don’t praise us for quality, they expect it of us. What’s changing is the degree of internationalization and the ways in which quality is perceived in different markets. The expectations of European, American, and Chinese customers are not the same. For example, Chinese customers have different ideas about how things should smell. Whereas we in Europe