



**COMING IN FOR A SMOOTH LANDING AT ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:  
NEW U.S. HEADQUARTERS FOR PORSCHE**

# WHERE THE PORSCHE BRAND FLIES HIGH

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**D**elta Airlines flight 117, arriving from Stuttgart, Germany. As the plane approaches Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport around 3 p.m., ready to touch down on runway 26 R at the north complex, the passengers sitting on the right side of the plane are in for a memorable sight. Their eyes are drawn to an imposing white arch-shaped building surrounded by a field of meticulously manicured lawn, in which a winding track made of smooth, dark asphalt lies embedded. Large letters, white on red, proclaim: “Porsche.” “The spectacular view out of the airplane window on One Porsche Drive is something I’ll never take for granted,” says Dr. Norman Firchau, President and CEO of Porsche Consulting, Inc.

One Porsche Drive. The address is also the name of Porsche North America’s new corporate headquarters. Even the interstate exit is named after the sports car brand. It’s a 27.7-acre complex with space to expand. The facility will house 400 employees, including Porsche Consulting’s U.S. team. Five years have passed between the first planning session and the official opening in May of 2015.

The paint had not yet dried when Norman Firchau met with Detlev von Platen, President and CEO of Porsche Cars North America, and Daniel Barcham of Mace, the project management company, in the lobby. The three men were deeply involved in the story of One Porsche Drive. They know about the challenges they had to overcome, and the qualities

the building has to offer. “One Porsche Drive emphasizes our commitment to the American market, which is the world’s largest market for Porsche,” says von Platen. The new headquarters intends to reflect that role. “Furthermore,” von Platen adds, “we want to make the Porsche brand more tangible, bring it to life, make it an experience.” It wasn’t enough to show the cars on glossy paper or in flashy video clips, he says. “You have to be able to feel them, hear them, and smell them.”

Making the Porsche brand an experience—not only for the employees, but also for customers and visitors, is the guiding principle behind the building. It’s what makes the entire complex so unique, according to Project Manager Barcham. “From the concept to the design

to the smallest detail, there's nothing cookie cutter about this project," he says. Most commercial headquarter buildings in the U.S. tend to be constructed in a straightforward manner: rectangular boxes, one floor built like the other, says Barcham. After all, corporate headquarters typically have just one function: administration. "Unlike most other corporate headquarters, One Porsche Drive is a multi-functional complex," he points out. All of Porsche's North American business units are consolidated under one roof. At One Porsche Drive in Atlanta, Porsche offers training for technicians, sales associates, service advisors and parts managers, as well as after-sales experts. At the heart of the complex is the Porsche Experience Center, with a gourmet restaurant open to the public, and a Porsche museum with vintage cars from various decades.

And then there is the famed test track adjacent to the building. On this 1.6-mile course, visitors can drive different Porsche models under a great variety of conditions. The track was designed by German architect Hermann Tilke, who also provided the concepts for several Formula One courses, including Austin, Texas, and Abu Dhabi.

The Atlanta test track has six driving modules. In addition to the actual circuit, there is also a dynamics area where the driver can accelerate to high speeds on a smooth skid pad, as well as a low-friction skid pad for figure eights. One of the modules can be flushed with water to test driving conditions when roads are wet. Then there's a kick plate that causes the rear of the vehicle to skid; and finally, an off-road course featuring ditches and extreme gradients. And in an unusual twist, the test track is connected to the building via a loop that leads through the courtyard of One Porsche Drive.

Experience is the dominant theme within the building as well. "One Porsche Drive reflects Porsche's corporate culture," says Firchau, which includes functionality, transparency, clarity, and efficiency. The workspaces are open, their design intended to stimulate constant exchange and communication. Office and meeting room walls are made of glass. Island-like

sitting areas invite employees to meet on a more spontaneous and informal basis—a style not necessarily ingrained in traditional American corporate culture.

There are a number of other advantages for Porsche Consulting. "Here, our clients clearly perceive us consultants as part of the Porsche brand," says Firchau. Also, Porsche Consulting can now expand its portfolio in the U.S. and offer workshops at the Porsche Consulting Academy. By mirroring company-specific situations, the workshops train clients on how to enhance their business processes. "The building enables participants of Porsche Consulting Academy events to experience the Porsche brand at close range," says Firchau. "In the U.S., we can now show first-hand what we previously could only describe in an abstract way."

In numbers alone, One Porsche Drive is a massive project. 3,000 trucks of concrete; 25,000 dump trucks of dirt; 500 tons of steel and over 600,000 total man-hours are the parameters of the construction process for the entire complex. Looking at the facility today, it's hard to believe that in May of 2010 the project started with a single flip chart and three words: Brand. Product. People. "When planning One Porsche Drive, we operated according to the classic design principle of 'form follows function,'" von Platen says. "That's typical Porsche."

Therefore, the project did not begin with a blueprint of the building, a suggestion for certain materials, or a choice of color. Instead, it began with a specification sheet: the requirements that Porsche had for the complex. "One of the guiding principles at Porsche Consulting is that we strive for operational excellence," says Firchau, adding that everyone involved in the project had gone by this idea—from the first planning stages to the design phase, the procurement and financing to the construction itself. "We were extremely well prepared every step of the way," he says. "Preparation is 90 percent of success: that's our mantra at Porsche Consulting." He also points out that constant synchronization and transparency between all parties involved had been of paramount importance. "The key people at Porsche

in the U.S. and in Germany knew at all times exactly what was going on," he says.

Project Manager Barcham agrees. With most corporate construction projects that he had supervised so far, he observed that the client's senior management had often been somewhat detached from the project, and tended to delegate the majority of decisions. This simply is not the case at Porsche. "Porsche was completely different," says Barcham, adding that the company's leadership team had been involved in every decision, every step of the process. "That's why communication is so critical, and I mean both upstream and downstream." ←



**"Landlords" at the new U.S. headquarters One Porsche Drive: Detlev von Platen (center) of Porsche Cars North America and Dr. Norman Firchau (left) of Porsche Consulting. Building construction was supported by Daniel Barcham of Mace, the U.S. project developer. In the foreground, you can see the model of One Porsche Drive's on-site test track.**