

Forza Italia!

🇮🇹 They're ready for the off in Milan. The strong team at newly founded Porsche Consulting Italia S.r.l. aims to conquer the market south of the Alps, pass on process know-how—and enjoy life to the full while fulfilling the high expectations of head office in Bietigheim.

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Anna-Lucia Di Paolo usually starts her working day riding pillion on a Scarabeo. The scooter, piloted by colleague Valentina Mocchi, transports them safely through the chaotic rush-hour traffic to the Milan house of Porsche at Viale Vincenzo Lancetti 46. In the first-floor offices, the two ladies—along with consultant Anna Paola Ferioli—represent the attractive female fraction at Porsche Consulting Italia S.r.l. The duo supports their ten colleagues in their consulting work in pursuit of specified

objectives with the same enthusiasm that can be sensed around every corner here. “You feel as if you’re part of a sports team,” says Anna Lucia Di Paolo. “We are euphoric, we high-five each other and enjoy even the small successes.”

For the ladies, continuous improvements are as much part of everyday work as an espresso, whether they are making innovations in handling travel requests or ▶





Attorney Federico Magno (l.) and head of division Nils Hof: "If the office is empty, business is going well"

ensuring strict ordering of the office supplies and forms on the cupboard shelves in accordance with the kanban principle. “Procuratore” Federico Magno and operational division manager Nils Hof call this “office Kaizen” and cite permanent change in the small details as one of the practical examples of the general corporate philosophy. According to Federico Magno, “We don’t just sell Kaizen, we also live it ourselves.”

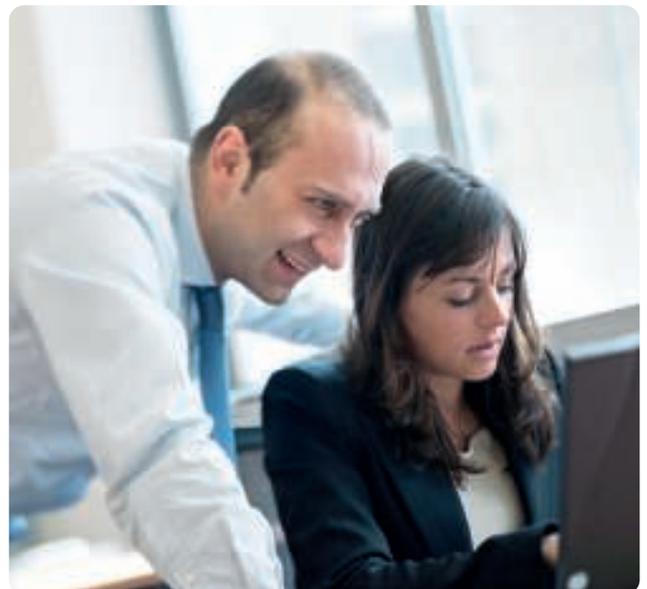
The consultants at Porsche Consulting GmbH’s first foreign subsidiary have moved into position—and are immediately fanning out again collectively as their period of service begins. On this Monday morning, Nils Hof is looking at the deserted workstations with great satisfaction. “There is an old consultant’s saying,” he declares. “If the office is empty, business is going well.” In other words, the employees are out of the office, where they are needed. The consulting firm has handled around 30 projects in Italy since 1997; since November, it has been looking after 20 clients from the Milan office.

The “spirit” (Magno) of Porsche Consulting is blowing through northern Italy and its own offices, the result of the careful planning which is characteristic of the company. Using the Quality Gates system and their own map, Federico Magno and Nils Hof handled the establishment phase as if it was the start-up phase for series production of a new Porsche model. “Every week, we used the map to check how far on we were with the preparations, whether the framework budget was still correct and whether everyone had carried out their tasks,” says Magno. In addition, in the past few years a number of qualified Italian-speaking consultants who wanted to undertake the adventure of working abroad at some point were taken on at Bietigheim. There is thus no shortage of lean management know-how and Porsche experience in Milan.

Now that they have a local presence, it is a matter of vigorously maintaining the good old traditions from home. Consultants working on customer sites have to ▶



The elixir of life: the “Porsche espresso”



Teamwork: Magno, Valentina Mocchi

wear dark trousers and the Porsche work coat. The dress code serves as a signal. “We don’t visit customers just to talk, but to contribute,” says Hof. Every Friday morning the team meets in the office to share breakfast. Over Anna-Lucia Di Paolo’s home-baked pumpkin seed bread, everyone says how the week has gone and what can be improved. When the ritual was introduced and the projector displayed the first chart on the wall, the clock on the computer read 9.11. “Since then, we’ve called it our nine eleven meeting,” explains Magno.

Sometimes symbolism strengthens belief. And in Milan the belief is unshakeable. “We didn’t simply set up an outpost in Milan,” says Magno. “Instead, we staffed it with experienced people from head office who are just closer to their customers now.” Italians who join the team have to be able to speak German, the office language. “Everything we sell to our customers here comes directly from Porsche,” explains Magno, an Italian. “And Porsche is German.” The close connection to head office is part of the agenda. Once a month, Eberhard Weiblen, manag-

ing director of Porsche Consulting, comes to Milan so that his governors can report to him on the state of affairs.

The Milan crew is proud to be something of a guinea pig for the internationalization of the consulting firm. They are only a 45-minute flight, or just under a 600 km drive, from Stuttgart. Near enough to the centre of things and yet also far enough away. There is also a tradition behind the link to Italy. Companies from the aeronautical and commercial vehicle sector, companies from the automotive supplier industry and subsidiaries of German corporate groups are long-term customers.

Everyone in Milan is ready for the off, at work and in their personal lives. Anna-Lucia Di Paolo sometimes feels as if she is back in her childhood. When she was a little girl, Milan for her was the great cathedral. Her mother comes from Apulia, her father from Sicily; she was born and grew up in Germany but they visited her aunt in Milan three or four times a year. And little Anna-Lucia



History meets future: A Porsche 356 marks the entrance to Porsche Consulting Italia



Relocation work: A map was used to plan the launch in Italy in the same way as the start-up of series production for a new Porsche model

always insisted on a trip to the cathedral. “I had to feed the pigeons after all.” Now, she is living in her homeland for the first time, and has a weekend marriage. Her husband could not leave his company behind.

For Valentina Mocchi, her career path from Porsche Consulting in Bietigheim has led her directly back home to her parents. She was born in Milan but brought up speaking German: her kindergarten, primary school and grammar school were German. “That’s the way my parents wanted it.” After her school-leaving exams, she studied business management and worked for a Milan finance company for two years. “I wanted to use my German—and no longer had any opportunity to do so,” she recalls. So it was lucky that at that time Porsche Consult-

ing was urgently looking for interpreters for its projects in Italy. In Mocchi’s words, “We had one conversation—and I went to Bietigheim immediately.” That was barely two years ago, and now she is back again.

Back then, contact with Italy was via Federico Magno. The man from Padua came to Porsche Consulting in 1999—as an intern. His first task was to determine a possible site for an Italian office for the company. Rome? Turin? Bologna? Even then, he believed that there was no alternative to Milan. The points in its favour were the transport links, with two airports, the railway line and motorways, as well as the fact that Italy’s industry is located in the north of the country. Milan also has the attraction of being Italy’s financial centre. ▶

The entire supply industry for the automotive sector—including Porsche suppliers—is located in Lombardy and Piedmont; the Italian medium-sized companies are grouped around Padua and Bologna. “What we still lacked at that point in time was the necessary turnover,” recalls Magno. “It had to exceed the threshold of two million euro.”

In the last financial year, Porsche Consulting had a turnover of 31.9 million euro; the share accounted for by foreign business rose to 23.5 per cent. Italy is far ahead—and expectations are high. In future, activities on the Italian market are to make up around ten per cent of turnover. The conditions are favourable. Since the introduction of the euro, Italy’s economy is more dependent than ever on quality, efficiency and process stability in order to remain competitive on the international stage. Not a bad situation for a company which is basically the only consultancy firm in Italy to teach lean production and lean management. “The Porsche name is a draw,” says Magno. He explains his vision for the future: “We will implement Japanese methods with German single-mindedness coupled with Italian imagination and flexibility.”

There is no shortage of initial aid. At the start of November, second-hand cars were still parked on the 113 square metres of office space at the Milan house of Porsche. “The rent is a real gift,” says Magno. And Porsche Italia, based in Padua, has actively taken the newcomer under its wing by providing help with marketing matters. As Magno puts it, “Although they really have nothing to do with us, they have been very helpful to us. It’s not normal, it’s Porsche.”

The team wants to do justice to all of this in its new old home. The employees find it easy to live with the constant changes. “There is now a ban on feeding the pigeons at the cathedral,” says Anna-Lucia Di Paolo. ◀

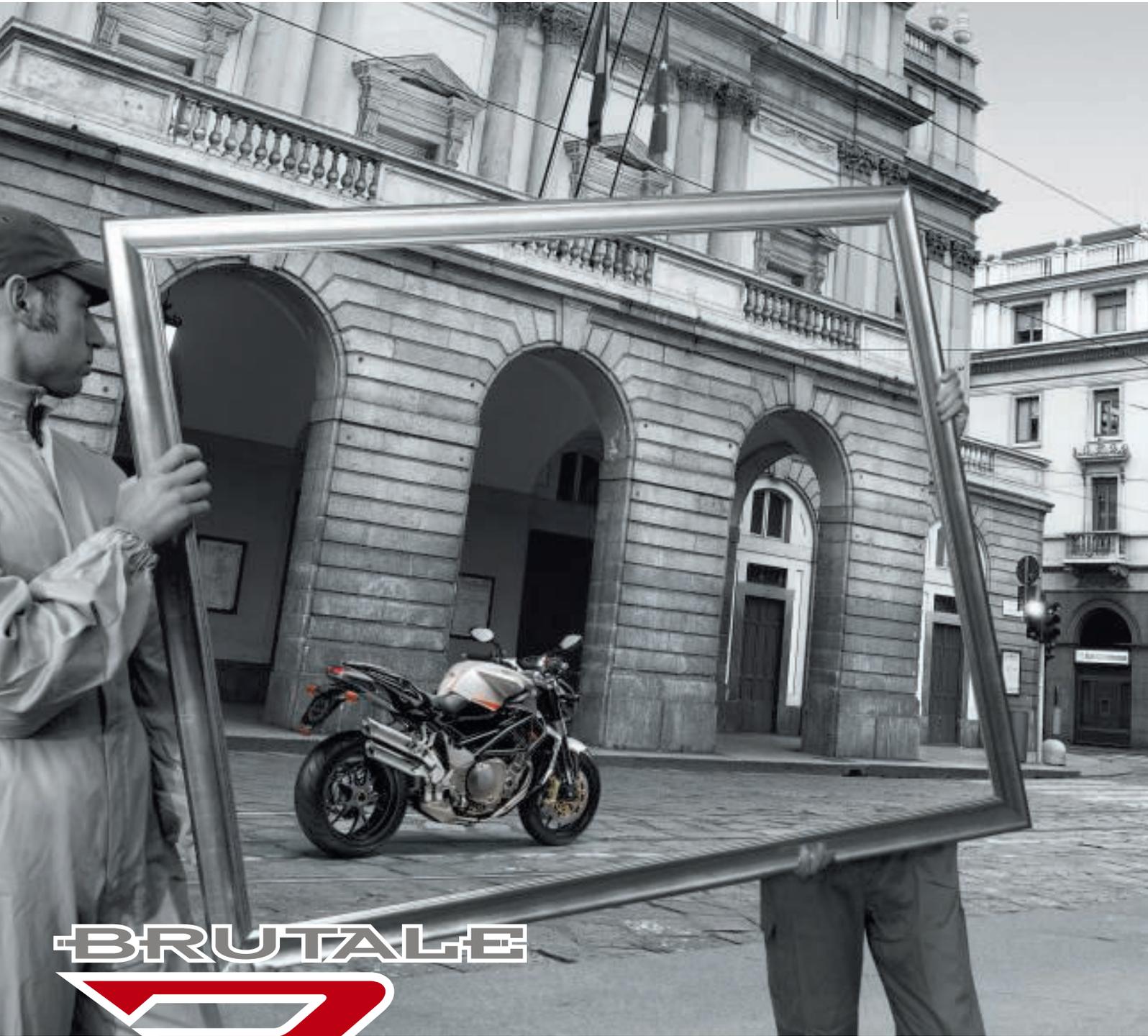


Near to the customers: Projekt Manager Simone Cigada



The dynamic duo speeds: Anna-Lucia Di Paolo (l.), Valentina Mocchi

Brutale 910 R Art in motion.



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