

a report by

**Dr Norbert Reithofer***Member, Management Board, Worldwide Production, BMW AG*

Dr Norbert Reithofer has been a Member of the Management Board of Worldwide Production at BMW AG since 2000. He initially joined BMW in 1987, subsequently holding positions including President of BMW Manufacturing in the US, Technical Director of BMW South Africa and Director of Maintenance Planning. He was Scientific Assistant at Munich Technical University's Institute for Machine Tools and Operating Science from 1984 to 1987. Dr Reithofer studied production technology and operating science at Munich Technical University (1978–1983) and mechanical engineering at Munich Technical College (1974–1978) and received his Doctor's degree from Munich Technical University in 1987.

Welcome to the sixth edition of *Business Briefing: Global Automotive Manufacturing and Technology*. This report expertly focuses and reports on the key technology and market drivers within the automotive design, manufacturing and production fields.

### Global Markets

The notable boom in Asian automotive markets has made a major impact on the industry. Japanese and South Korean car-makers have made great progress in the US and are now threatening market share in the volume segments. Economic growth within the region also means that the Chinese market is now the fastest-growing car market, emerging as a global automotive superpower that has displaced Germany to become the world's third-largest auto market in 2003 behind the US and Japan.

Growth in the remainder of the global automotive industry is expected to be gradual. Despite market maturity in the European markets, car-makers are still investing in their product development and production processes. For example, new plant investments in Europe have continued to grow year on year during the last decade. Included in the report are articles that analyse the global markets.

### Automotive Technologies

The US government is supporting the research and development of hydrogen as the fuel of the future with a total of US\$1.2 billion, with the Freedom Car project as an important catalyst for the hydrogen age. The continuing research into the use of hydrogen as alternative fuel, new designs and better materials is being led by safety and emissions-related regulators as well as automotive manufacturers trying to maintain and grow brand awareness and market share. This will, in turn, result in growth in the industry. A consumer-led focus by automotive manufacturers is also seeing new paths into more assistance for the driver and entertainment for the passengers. The interaction between car, driver and environment will be included in the focus of research. Drive-by-wire, Internet-based services in the car and intelligent navigation systems are on the brink of being widely available in series production cars.

The new International Organization for Standardization Technical Specification (ISO/TS) 16949:2002, written in line with ISO 9001:2000, has now been published and will replace QS-9000 as the quality management system specification for the automotive industry when it expires in December 2006. Articles in the publication have been dedicated to this important topic.

Once again, this edition of *Business Briefing: Global Automotive Manufacturing and Technology* includes high-quality articles in the fields of electronics, telematics, alternative fuel and engine technology and includes contributions from BMW, General Motors, PSA Peugeot Citroën, Ford, Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar and Audi.

I am sure that you will enjoy reading *Business Briefing: Global Automotive Manufacturing and Technology* and I trust that you will find all of the articles informative and interesting. ■