

## 2. Who is Who

Technical Training Manager

### Helmut Blessing



For many Porsche employees, it was the first point of call in their professional career: the Porsche training centre. Since 1989, one of the leading figures there, more accurately the Technical Training Manager, has been Helmut Blessing. The Swabian native, born in Marbach am Neckar, took a fairly direct route to his current position. Impressed by the Porsche company's successful racing appearances, at the beginning of the 1960s he decided to apply for an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic in Zuffenhausen. "I thought that you would be sure to get good training at this kind of company, and that was how it turned out", he recalls.

Blessing's apprenticeship began on 1st April 1961, when the focus at Porsche was still on the 356 type, and he completed it with distinction. "I was presented with a watch for outstanding performance, with "Porsche Prize Winner" engraved on the back", he recounts. Even then he knew that he had found his vocation, as he noticed

that he enjoyed teaching other people things.

After two years of military service, he returned to Porsche and his first task was to familiarise himself with the new 911 type, while working towards qualifying as a professional trainer. He also studied at evening school for his foreman's exams, which he completed in 1971. He could then devote all his efforts to his vocation of passing on knowledge to young people, putting them on the right track for their future, so to speak – a task that the model railway lover was happy to take on.

Professional training was gaining in importance at that time. Porsche's order situation was excellent and there was plenty of work, leading the company to recruit numerous skilled foreign employees. However, as they had a limited knowledge of German, they were hardly able to tell trainees anything – making the trainers' work even more crucial.

Blessing is definitely not a believer in the value of theory alone. "Learning by doing" is one of his guiding principles, and so he sent the trainees into the various departments, so that they could be trained on the front line. Nothing has changed today, except that the 59 year old no longer works as the head trainer himself.

His role now involves organising the training programmes for a total of nine technical career paths. He is assisted by a network that has grown up over time, with numerous contacts in the appropriate departments within the company and also in schools. Along with his foremen, he agrees the content of the training, keeps a watchful

eye on the various training paths and, if problems crop up anywhere, he is on hand to solve them. A certain amount of educational expertise is of course beneficial, and sometimes he also has to be something of a judge.

Even his abilities in finance are in demand, as his department ultimately contributes to Porsche AG's turnover. The trainees frequently perform contracted work. This can be protective covers for components on vehicles or more complicated items such as sectional models of assemblies and even complete vehicles or a practical storage system for hardtops. Even the trophies for the famous Porsche Tennis Grand Prix are produced in the training centre.

However, one of the most intensive periods of work lies ahead for Blessing, when the new applications for training positions arrive in the late summer – on average these are 5,000 in number. Blessing has long since checked with the various departments in the plant as to their future personnel requirements. From his station, numerous tracks head out into the world of work, but his task is to ensure that none of his protégés suddenly hit the buffers.