

Media information  
04 March 2021

## **WOMAN POWER AT MINI: THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS FOR INSPIRING PRODUCTS.**



Petra Beck



Elena Eder



Khrystyne Zurian

**Three questions for the International Women’s Day 2021: Did you know that a woman put the fastest MINI ever built on the road? Did you know that the first purely electric MINI was developed under the direction of a woman? Did you know that the design of the alleged “most masculine“ of all MINI models was shaped by a woman?**

**Munich.** In Berlin, 8th March is a public holiday. In Munich, men and women work on International Women’s Day. In everyday working life at MINI, progress towards true equality has long been evident on the personnel tables for departments, responsibilities and management positions of all kinds. “We are all different – but good together“ is a motto here, the meaning of which is constantly demonstrated in practice. There is no other way for a globally active premium car manufacturer to be, when on average half of its vehicles are bought and driven by women.

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The struggle for equality will only be successfully concluded when it no longer needs to be talked about. Until then, exceptional women in the MINI team provide plenty of inspiration for female self-confidence. Three of them will be introduced here. They are examples of strong women who have taken the helm at key positions at MINI and have got to where they are simply because they are the best at what they do.



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### **Did you know that a woman put the fastest MINI ever built on the road?**

Petra Beck attended a girls' secondary school for modern languages and then decided to study electrical engineering. "I didn't really realise at the time of the decision that it would be a culture shock," she recalls. "I was just excited about maths and physics and wanted to choose a degree that would give me as many opportunities as possible." In her degree programme, the proportion of women was then less than ten per cent. After starting her career, things were not much different. In international projects she supervised as a systems engineer in the aerospace industry, where male colleagues were clearly the majority. Five years of process consulting between sales, production and supplier management followed. What does it take to hold your own in a male domain? "You have to be really interested,



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enthusiastic and also have a little stamina," says Petra Beck. And at some point, according to her experience, competence and personality are what count the most. "Basically, especially as a manager, all topics – no matter how technical they are – are first and foremost people's business." However, the solid basis from her development work as an engineer has often helped her to gain acceptance more quickly.

Petra Beck has been working for the BMW Group since 2007, where it is obvious "that a lot has happened in terms of diversity in recent years". And when it comes to this topic she believes that "I always prefer to be part of the process rather than just a spectator". Exciting products, a great team, international work and diverse tasks – all that appeals to her about her job as vehicle project manager at MINI, which she has been doing for two years. One of the highlights so far has been to accompany the series development of the fastest MINI ever produced, in a leading role.



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The MINI John Cooper Works GP (fuel consumption combined: 7.3 l/100 km; CO<sub>2</sub> emissions combined: 167 g/km) is an extremely racy rarity with its 225 kW/306 hp four-cylinder engine and a production run of 3000 units. Despite its imposing appearance, this MINI is also a really likeable car, finds the project manager. "I like it when the car puts a smile on the face of other road users. That's exactly what happens in every MINI." And that also happens at classic car rallies, which Petra Beck likes to take part in in her spare time and is eagerly awaiting their comeback after the pandemic-related break.

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**Did you know that the first purely electric MINI was developed under the direction of a woman?**

“Being different is neither good nor bad, it just needs to be understood first,” says Elena Eder. She has “diversity” on her CV and describes herself as a “child of the world“. Born in Italy, brought up trilingual, raised as a child first in the USA and then in France, she studied mechanical engineering in Italy after graduating from high school, only to be on the road again soon after. Her first professional stations took her to France, Italy, England and Germany as well as to India and China. In the meantime, Elena Eder is a mother of three and has made herself a home at MINI. As project manager, she was instrumental in bringing the first all-electric model of the British premium brand, the MINI Cooper SE (fuel consumption combined: 0.0 l/100 km; electricity consumption combined: 17.6 - 15.2 kWh/100 km according to WLTP, 16.1 - 14.9 kWh/100 km according to NEDC, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions combined: 0 g/km), on the road.



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For Elena Eder, sustainability is a question of attitude, and technology is the instrument to realise it. She already felt a certain enthusiasm for technology as a child. “I didn’t play with dolls, but with cars. And so her professional career also led her into the vehicle industry.

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“I always had a fascination for complexity and for beautiful things,” says Elena Eder. “And cars are to engineers as a dive on the Great Barrier Reef is to divers.”

The fact that she had to immerse herself in a man’s world for this never bothered the engineer much. “I never wanted to see it as a man’s job. I just saw it as a passion, that’s where I wanted to go.” Elena Eder is convinced that determination, openness and a basic attitude that simply takes diversity for granted are the best recipe against the restrictions that still too often stand in the way of women. “I think everyone should follow their passion and no one should fit into a prejudice or pattern.”

## **Did you know that the design of the alleged “manliest” of all MINI models was shaped by a woman?**

The MINI Countryman is the largest, most versatile and, in some eyes, described the most “masculine” model of the MINI brand. The robust all-rounder owes its expressive design largely to a woman. MINI designer Khrystyne Zurian feels a close connection to this model. “The MINI Countryman is sporty and versatile, it unleashes a lot of energy in a comparatively small footprint. In a way, it’s exactly my lifestyle,” says the woman who balances an intense workload with snowboarding, surfing, cycling, hiking and crossfit.



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Khrystyne Zurian’s love for MINI awoke during her studies at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. A red MINI Cooper S with a black contrasting roof was “the first car I had an immediate emotional connection to.” And that’s saying something for a woman who comes from a “truck family“. In the south of the US state of California where she grew up, pickups with large-volume V8 engines were the preferred mode of transport. Aside from her passion for drawing, Khrystyne Zurian also developed an interest in cars at an early age. Together with her brothers she regularly accompanied her father, who owned and operated a design studio. There they created concept and film vehicles, including the “Batmobiles“ and other vehicles for various superhero blockbusters. “It was a creative world that I really wanted to be a part of,” Khrystyne Zurian recalls.

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It was during her studies that Khrystyne Zurian realised exactly where she most wanted to express her creativity. It was the character of her red MINI that captivated her. “At that time I fell in love with the brand. I knew that one day I wanted to work for MINI.” In 2010, that day had come, and Khrystyne Zurian remembers well that she was almost a little intimidated at the beginning. This was not so much because she encountered a male domain in the automotive industry, but “because I suddenly joined so many talented designers in the studio“. But at MINI she quickly learned to develop self-confidence and trust in her own abilities.



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“The only obstacles that stood in my way were the ones I had built up for myself,” Khrystyne Zurian knows today. She is all the more pleased about the togetherness in the small community of MINI exterior designers. “The team spirit at MINI is really something special.“ For her, one of the most challenging tasks is laying the foundations for the character of a new model, wrestling with the demands of technology and fighting for good design in the process. Being successful in these processes is no longer a question of gender, says Khrystyne Zurian. “Currently, there are a lot of women rocking the automotive industry, with more upcoming.“



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Fuel consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> emission figures, power consumption and range were measured using the methods required according to Regulation VO (EC) 2007/715 as amended. They refer to vehicles on the automotive market in Germany. With regard to ranges, the NEDC figures take into account differences in the selected wheel and tyre size, while the WLTP takes into account the effects of any optional equipment.

All figures are already calculated on the basis of the new WLTP test cycle. NEDC values listed have been calculated back to the NEDC measurement procedure where applicable. WLTP values are used as a basis for the assessment of taxes and other vehicle-related levies that are (also) based on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and, where applicable, for the purposes of vehicle-specific subsidies. Further information on the WLTP and NEDC measurement procedures is also available at [www.bmw.de/wltp](http://www.bmw.de/wltp).

For further details of the official fuel consumption figures and official specific CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of new cars, please refer to the "Manual on the fuel consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and power consumption of new cars", available at sales outlets, from Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH (DAT), Hellmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Schramhausen and at <https://www.dat.de/co2/>.

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### The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2020, the BMW Group sold over 2.3 million passenger vehicles and more than 169,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2019 was € 7.118 billion on revenues amounting to € 104.210 billion. As of 31 December 2019, the BMW Group had a workforce of 126,016 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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