Audi receives Industrial Inclusion Prize

- Award for exemplary integration of disabled people
- Successful inclusion documented by the University of St. Gallen
- Board of Management Member for Human Resources Thomas Sigi: “Diversity enriches the entire company”

Ingolstadt/Neckarsulm, February 17, 2017 – For the exemplary integration of people with physical disabilities, AUDI AG has been awarded the 2016 Industrial Inclusion Prize in the large company category. At its plants in Germany in Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm, the company employs 3,100 people with disabilities, or 5.8 percent of the workforce. Together with the University of St. Gallen, Audi has carried out a comprehensive scientific evaluation of its integration process and has derived further specific steps to be taken.

One of the reasons the jury gave for its decision in favor of Audi was the company’s special focus on the continued employment of people with physical disabilities. To firmly establish inclusion at Audi, the company is training its management staff, and together with the Works Council is promoting “soft factors” such as respect and communication.

“Each individual employee contributes to the company’s success,” stated Audi’s Board of Management Member for Human Resources Thomas Sigi. “We see it as essential to deploy our employees where they can best apply their strengths.” He believes this is especially important with regard to inclusion: “People with physical disabilities give us a new, unfamiliar perspective and strengthen the creative potential of their teams,” emphasized Sigi. “This diversity is enriching and is part of the diversity culture that we encourage at Audi.”

Audi employs people with physical disabilities as long as possible in their usual teams, in the area of production for example. When an employee can no longer carry out his or her normal work, the line manager, Human Resources department and Works Council work together to find ergonomic aids or improved possibilities for deployment in the usual working environment. Other tasks within the same team are considered, for example. If this is not possible, a move to another department is examined. Since 2010, Audi has created approximately 1,000 new jobs for disabled people in areas close to production.

For Peter Mosch, Chairman of the General Works Council, this commitment is an obligation vis-à-vis the employees with disabilities. “For us, every person is an individual and must be treated as such,” he stated. In order to promote equal opportunities, the Works Council places
priority on strong representation of people with disabilities. “We not only stand up for the interests of disabled employees, we also support their integration in the company and continue to be available for advice after that,” continued Mosch.

A joint study carried out by Audi and the University of St. Gallen has confirmed the success of this integration concept: Mixed teams with disabled and non-disabled employees generate more ideas and work more creatively than homogeneous teams. Key factors for successful inclusion are respectful leadership by team leaders and managers and good cooperation within the team. These so-called soft factors have a significant impact on the employees’ satisfaction and health. “With ergonomic workplaces, we create the right conditions for the integration of employees with physical limitations,” stated Hubert Waltl, Board of Management member for Production and Logistics at AUDI AG. “It is even more important that managers and colleagues accompany and support these employees.”

Audi has integrated the findings from the St. Gallen study into its new management model, in which respect and appreciation play a major role. The company also trains its management staff on this basis. They are trained in working with disabled employees in specific scenarios and thus gain more confidence in challenging management situations.

The Industrial Inclusion Prize is regarded as Germany’s most important award for integration and inclusion issues. The current prize is awarded to companies that carried out exemplary projects and activities in 2015 and 2016. The initiators of the prize include the Confederation of German Employer Associations, the Federal Employment Agency, the Diversity Charter and Unternehmensforum (an association of companies for the promotion of inclusion at work).

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The Audi Group, with its brands Audi, Ducati and Lamborghini, is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the premium segment. It is present in more than 100 markets worldwide and produces at 16 locations in twelve countries. 100-percent subsidiaries of AUDI AG include Audi Sport GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant’Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy).

In 2016, the Audi Group delivered to customers about 1.871 million automobiles of the Audi brand, 3,457 sports cars of the Lamborghini brand and 55,451 motorcycles of the Ducati brand. In the 2015 financial year, AUDI AG achieved total revenue of €58.4 billion and an operating profit of €4.8 billion. At present, approximately 88,000 people work for the company all over the world, about 60,000 of them in Germany. Audi focuses on new products and sustainable technologies for the future of mobility.