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How international businessman, Patrick Katenkamp, expanded incadea's global reach, and how he's now strengthening the presence of Cox Automotive's retail solutions internationally.

IMAGES INCADEA

In 2010, automotive software firm incadea was beginning to strategise its expansion from Germany into the global market. With ten years of streamlining its products and services, the only thing left was acquiring the right person to lead the initiative. This person had to be a seasoned automotive expert; someone who understood technology solutions, and who naturally embodied an international mindset.

With a career path that began with a masters degree in computer science and then spanned more than a decade of strategic roles in the automotive sector across Germany, Ireland, Switzerland, the UK, America, Italy, and China — Patrick Katenkamp was the perfect man for the job. “With my professional background, and two bilingual children at home, I have always lived and worked in an international environment,” he says. “I was always joking when I first joined incadea that I was overcoming cultural shock because I had never actually worked for a Germany-based company.”

Starting out as General Manager for incadea Regions, Patrick was quickly promoted to Chief Operating Officer in 2011. In 2013, he climbed the ladder to become Managing Director for a year before stepping into the CEO role in February 2014. Before joining incadea, Patrick held significant executive positions in which he led international teams, including seven years in General Motors Europe, where he was responsible for the Global DMS strategy. >>



Name Patrick Katenkamp
Company incadea, Cox Automotive
Position CEO and President
HQ Munich, Germany

“At incadea we like to move fast and then adjust as we go, and that is why we are so competitive.” - Patrick Katenkamp

Then in 2008, he was appointed Head of Retail, CRM, and Digital Marketing Strategies and Implementation.

Before this, he worked as a strategy and management consultant for the automotive industry with Booz Allen for eight years, and also headed the implementation of various large automotive IT projects with Electronic Data Systems/Hewlett Packard. Patrick says what drew him to that first opportunity with incadea was the company’s speedy reputation around implementing strategy. “I previously worked at Booz Allen, where I developed and implemented strategies and new business concepts. However, working in a large, global environments, I often found the information flow challenging, and that executing strategy could be difficult. So I saw an opportunity with incadea to develop a strategy and also implement it and drive the business,” he says.

“I’ve heard it said that it is better to ask for forgiveness than for permission, and I think that is our culture at incadea. Speed over perfection is also very critical, and I think that is not always easy, especially for Germans, because we have a bit of a tendency to go 110 per cent with our engineering. At incadea we like to move fast and then adjust as we go, and that is why we are so competitive.” Patrick was also drawn to the opportunity of developing a uniquely global software solution for an expanding automotive industry that was being held back by a fragmented niche software field, with numerous small-scale local proprietary solutions not positioned to develop a global product.



With a plan to become an end-to-end partner for the automotive industry, incadea’s international strategy began with Russia, India, China, Latin America, and the Middle East, due to projected growth of local manufacturers and the lack of any other major global players in the regions.

“We thought it would be much easier to challenge our main competitors in countries like Russia, China, and India, so our strategy was first going to be focused on these regions, and then we planned to come back to the traditional Western countries,” Patrick says. Today, incadea’s recognised automotive industry expertise is embedded in its proprietary software, which drives a suite of solutions, is available in twenty-one languages, and is localised to the specific needs of individual markets.

With Patrick at the helm, the company now has a presence in more than ninety countries, serving a growing community of approximately 92,000 end users, and more than 3,500 dealerships of market-leading car manufacturers. Over five years, revenue has become ten times what it was — from US\$10 million to US\$100 million — and growth is expected to continue. This means tackling the additional challenge on ongoing large-scale recruitment. “With annual growth at around 35-to-40 per cent, we need new talent and more of it, to develop new concepts and ideas,” he says. “Our target is to be number one in the segment by 2020, and that means we have to double our current size. We need people who are multicultural, who speak multiple languages, and are also able to deal with a lot of uncertainty. These people are not easy to find, so that’s something we have focused on from the very beginning.”

“Incadea is a very strong, growing company, and working with them is very inspiring and motivating. If you are qualified you can get responsibilities for large teams, markets and projects to really challenge yourself.” - Robert Schübler, Vice President, Bright Box Europe

Growing an international team also means driving substantial cultural change in the organisation, with incadea now home to around forty different nationalities. Patrick jokes that the company has become the United Nations.

“The scope of people makes the company much more competitive, as hiring the best in the world means they have the right skills, speed, and agility when it comes to reacting to sudden market changes and scaling solutions to suit,” he says, also sharing the fact that incadea’s strength in this area has attracted a lot of talent from larger software organisations. “We are often surprised when people come to us from companies like SAP, HP, Accenture, and the bigger software firms, and we ask, ‘Why they are joining us?’” he says. “They always say that they love the speed of incadea, and the capability to

make decisions and to influence direction, and that’s why they prefer to work for us, a smaller company.”

Incadea has a network of worldwide-certified channel partners, including a strategic alliance with Microsoft, to provide proven and reliable solutions to its range of blue-chip customers, which includes BMW, Toyota, Volkswagen, and Mercedes Benz. Having recently been acquired by Cox Automotive — an Atlanta based company with industry-leading e-commerce solutions for consumers, dealers, and manufacturers — incadea is looking to spur innovation by globally expanding Cox Automotive brands Modix and Xtime.

“We work with some other software companies to innovate, and develop new businesses. How you drive innovation is crucial, especially with growing trends

like the Internet of Things (IoT). Take Uber — there is nothing new there. It’s the combination of existing technologies put together in a very clever way and suddenly you have a multi-billion dollar company,” says Patrick.

“In the future, partner networks will be more complex, and we’ll need to work closely together to share expertise and change with market needs,” Patrick adds. “It’s easy to say ‘I want to be number one’, but it comes down to how well you can adapt and strategise, and it’s about whether you can get people behind your ideas. Then you’ll quickly see if your plan has substance.” ■

“Incadea has proven its strong position in the automotive market by delivering high-quality software to its customers. We are able to complement these services with a high-quality Cloud offering including automation tools, which enables OEMs to vastly deploy new dealers in the Cloud in a matter of minutes.” - Berend-Jan van Maanen, CEO, SaaSPlaza

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