

MACIEJ DRYJAŃSKI FROM AVL SOFTWARE AND FUNCTIONS POLSKA ON THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

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Z FIRMY AVL SOFTWARE AND FUNCTIONS POLSKA O BRANŻY AUTOMOTIVE



SOFTWARE AND
FUNCTIONS

AVL Software and Functions Polska: Established in 2015 to allow AVL Software and Functions Poland to serve its international clients worldwide, AVL Poland has a staff of more than 60 people and currently has 8 engineering skillset. This Technical Center has capability to develop and test electronic control units in house.

The company AVL Software and Functions in Warsaw involved in the generation of combustion control systems, electric and hybrid power units.

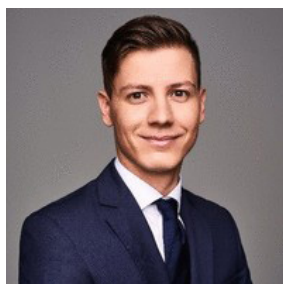
The department offers competences in the field of:

- analysis and development of requirements for vehicle control systems;
- system design and integration propulsion systems;
- functional safety;
- EMC;
- software development of high reliability control systems using the Model in the Loop methods;
- electronics design for electric drive propulsion systems;
- creating low-level software for control units used in vehicles;
- programming of control units used to manage chemical batteries.

Website: www.avl.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/avl-in-poland/>

Polish Technical Review: *Why have you decided that opening a branch office of AVL in Warsaw would be a good decision?*



Maciej Dryjański - Department Manager AVL Software and Functions Polska:

The decision to open a unit of AVL Software and Functions in Warsaw arose from the needs of the company, originally located in Germany. Moreover, that was caused by businesses generated in Poland. The German client was relocating

parts of his activities to Poland, hence the opportunity of local support came into existence. Back then, it was decided that AVL should launch a small engineering team, consisting of two people who could support the German project. Yet, over time, the needs were larger and higher. Our team began to expand.

Together with my colleague, with whom I managed the company at that time, we realized that there is a high investment value in Poland. Hiring engineers here, locally, would be the right decision. We've started to create teams which have supported not only the

client in Poland, but also our units in Germany and in Austria. And that, in short, is how AVL started in Poland. Starting from a small team of two persons, we've grown into a unit of sixty workers.

PTR: *What were the preparations for the opening the office?*

Maciej Dryjański: Our first meeting took place in a small office, which was actually an apartment. After two months of working there, we've found that there is not enough space for our projects. We've decided to start looking for another one. We have rented an office space for around 20 people, and in short time, this space was also too small for us as well. In reality, we have organized everything by ourselves at that time: the IT section, the whole infrastructure. We even chose the color of the floors and the walls. It can be easily said, that the startup atmosphere was in the air. We were only supported by the German budget.

PTR: *As you've mentioned before, the Polish office of AVL has been open for five years now, and the startup atmosphere remains unchanged. How is it possible?*

Maciej Dryjański: I believe that it stems from the fact that we

have started from scratch, and that everyone's ideas were included into how we're working right now. Of course, some of the concepts were hard to introduce, because we are covered by a global process control framework, so we have certain rules that must be followed. Despite this, I believe there is a really friendly atmosphere among our employees. They are curious and engaged people who put a lot of effort in both their individual tasks and joint ventures. We also have a small back-office support, so topics such as company events, ideas for cooperation, or self-development, are emerging mostly from the team.

I wouldn't say we are a startup as everyone imagines. We don't have swings at our desks, we don't come up with solutions during one week, although it may happen from time to time. Everyone's responsible for his own part of the task, which, for sure, gives an opportunity to put yourself in the ownership role and to strive for pride in your solutions and your team. All in all, we still have that sort of startup atmosphere. We try to create solutions, not problems.

PTR: *How do you manage to lead 60 people? What techniques do you use to motivate your employees?*

Maciej Dryjański: Out of those 60 employees, around 40 of them report directly to me. I would really love to have a contact with each of them every day, yet it is almost impossible to achieve. Giving everyone a few minutes a day would leave me with not much time to follow my own tasks, which is why I focus on independence at work. I employ people who are motivated, who want to achieve specific goals and who come out with their own ideas and solutions. Although sometimes I do not agree to all of them.

However, when it comes to the techniques I use, I definitely try to give people the opportunity to solve problems by themselves, so they can come with an idea for a solution. Someone wise once said that people are employed to come with problems and solutions, not just come for the guidelines. If you have such independent employees in your team, if they are full of faith, optimism and willingness – you've won.

The cleverness and independence of our employees reassures me that they are not afraid of any challenges. In my opinion, leaders emerge from such courageous attitudes, and, over time, other smaller teams are formed under their guidance. Whether they are restructured and formalized in some way in or not, this is another aspect. What I focus on today are these local self-organizing teams with leaders who take great responsibility.

PTR: *If we look into the heart of the company, what will we find there? What technologies are used in AVL every day?*

Maciej Dryjański: We use computers, this is probably the most valuable information. Once, I had the opportunity to talk to a person who has been working for AVL for 40 years and who will be retiring this year. It was his first and only job. He told me how AVL changed over time, from a company that employed 300 people worldwide, into a company which today employs 12,000 people on a global scale.

He remembers how in the 80s everyone still made mechanical

sketches on drawing boards, at that time they had only a dozen or so computers in the whole company. He also talked about the implementation of the first pneumatic mail on the company's premises and how it changed and also fasten the communication. Another big step was when the first computers connected to the Internet appeared. Can you imagine that employees signed up timesheets to work on the computer or to use the Internet? Well, it was a completely different world.

At that time, I heard the history of the entire transformation of the company into the world of digitalization. What is more, a small circulation of documents appeared and all the data was digitally produced. AVL had also translated all its know-how into this digital world. New options appeared, such as simulation tools that we have created and continued to develop. We have also designed tools for collecting and processing big data. AVL also did calibration-related solutions, where experiments with 10 or 50 thousand variables could take place within one night. It was an amazing jump from the world based on the number written on a paper freehand, to the digital world.

What is the company doing in the digital world today? The most valuable information is data. More precisely, the information that we can develop during our own R&D project which we can later on use and transfer to our commercial projects. AVL is one of the top leaders that is able to use such kind of approach because each year we are investing around 10 % of our turnover into our own R&D know how. In the end, this is the most valuable part. Without innovation you cannot survive in such a rapidly changing engineering world.

PTR: *How do you evaluate the development of the automotive industry in Poland in recent years?*

Maciej Dryjański: I would say feebly... It is said that part of the automotive industry amounts to over 20% of export in Poland and constitutes a significant part of Poland's GDP. However, we are still a country where only assembly takes place. We have a lot of factories. An example of this is Volkswagen, Opel, or Fiat. We also have a large number of Tier 1 or Tier 2 suppliers, mostly western companies located in Poland. Few business partners in the country belong to a group of large companies. They deliver things for the automotive industry in the western Europe. Yet, I believe there's a lot of small and medium enterprises with Polish capital.

When it comes to research and development, I think we are at the very beginning of this path. We're taking the first steps in this area. In my opinion, Poland and Polish engineers can still afford much more. Unfortunately, the problem may be the lack of financial capital and high competitiveness on the western market.

We could be much further when it comes to R&D (Research & Development.) Moreover, the government support could be adequate and interesting here. A lot of emphasis is put on supply chain of R&D activities in Poland, because Polish entities are also emerging there. However, how a Polish company that is designing cars can locate its development work in Poland? Will it continue to use the services of western companies? As for today, I can say

that I do not know a privately owned research company, which has Polish capital, able to design car parts especially in complex areas as electronics or Power Electronics. There is simply no such capital. The fastest solution is to transfer it from the west.

It is easy to buy a license, as it happened in the case of a small or large Fiat, but the trick is to start designing these solutions yourself, on a Polish territory, with Polish capital, with help of the local engineers.

It seems to me that this would allow Poland to gain a commercial advantage in the market. I see that capital is slowly beginning to grow, but it is still being transferred to Poland from the west. An example of this is the AVL company, our projects that we do locally in most cases are implemented for well-known manufacturers, components or vehicles around the world. Currently, the demand for our services on the Polish market is relatively small, but I hope it will be changed in near future.

PTR: Last but not least, how can the automotive industry be affected by the pandemic of coronavirus?

Maciej Dryjański: I think it will have a huge impact on global industries.

The level of demand for new cars will drop significantly, and thus in the longer term all elements of the supply chain related to the automotive industry will drop as well. Expenditure will start to fall,

there will be less demand for cars, production, less demand for parts and for research and development. I believe that the global demand for consumer goods will slow down. It will probably take 6 to 12 months for us to return to the same level as before the pandemic. Although before the outbreak of coronavirus, the number of cars sold also began to decline or stabilize.

In the long run, the global trend will return to normalcy. People will return to their habits. I think it is related to consumption needs which have not disappeared. They have just been suspended. Demand for less luxurious goods will return quite soon.

When it comes to the automotive industry in Poland, I think that Eastern Europe can benefit from it. Quite a large part of the supply chain will be moved from Asia to Europe. We have a fairly good chance to expand our production competences in the area of locating new factories, research and development sites for subsequent levels of the supply chain on Polish territory. In my opinion, not only Poland, but also the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania are the countries that can gain because of the location and cultural similarities associated with the European Union.

PTR: Thank you for your time and we wish you and AVL nothing but success.

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