



People

Between two worlds

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‘A heart for sales and a head for technology’ is how you could describe Taskin Kilincat. This ‘profile’ helps him in his role as the new global product account manager for MES* and IIoT** at KHS, one that also requires him to build bridges between sales personnel on the one hand and engineers on the other.

PHOTOGRAPHY / ILLUSTRATION

Frank Reinhold

COVER PHOTO

As a child Taskin Kilincat wanted to become an engineer and fly to the moon as an astronaut. He managed the engineer part; maybe one day he’ll also make it to the moon ...

Taskin Kilincat got off to an unusual start at the KHS production site in Bad Kreuznach. His first day at work as the new global product account manager for MES and IIoT was on April 20, 2020 – in other words, right in the middle of the corona crisis. “I spent the first three weeks of my induction period working from home, where I could only get to know my new colleagues and their areas of responsibility on Skype.” Corona didn’t exactly provide ideal conditions for starting a new job but it was “definitively an extraordinary experience,” he says, looking back.

Despite his technical training as an engineer, Kilincat has always felt himself drawn to the ‘dark side’ as he calls sales, jokingly referring to the supposed conflict of roles between the two company departments. “When I was 16 I had a job at a hardware store in the afternoons after school. I didn’t just work in sales here but also managed a small group of people my own age, some of whom were already working as apprentices in various building trades. We worked on minor customer projects together.” At the age of 18 Kilincat met an insurance broker from whom he learned all about sales from scratch – parallel to his studies. In the meantime he also ran his own insurance agency with up to nine employees and discovered how much fun he had supervising and further developing the skills of other people. When he was 21 he set up a pro bono private coaching program in his home town of Offenbach where he made it his aim to get the best out of his students. “Everyone has something extremely valuable to offer,” he believes, also referring to his own experience in sales. “A good salesperson must use these strengths to develop and pursue a common goal with his or her clients. This has been my mantra since I was 16. My way of thinking hasn’t really changed much since then.”

* MES = Manufacturing Execution System, the process-related execution level of a multilevel production management system.

** IIoT = Industrial Internet of Things, a global infrastructure that networks physical and virtual objects with one another and enables potential increases in productivity and efficiency.



Taskin Kilincat

Global Product Account Manager for MES und IIoT

»Engineers are like big kids who question facts, analyze things and solve problems.«

Interface between Sales and Technology

As a little boy he thought about becoming an engineer who worked in aerospace and flew to the moon. “I managed the engineer bit; maybe I’ll also make to the moon one day,” he laughs. Technology fascinated him even then. Kilincat thinks that engineers are basically like big kids who question facts, analyze things and solve problems.

He also had encounters with outer space when taking his first steps as a fledging mechatronics engineer: while working for IT and business consulting service CGI he programmed a ticketing tool for communication with the European Space Agency ESA, among other tasks.

After four years as a system integrator at Actemium, Kilincat was employed by the Bühler Group from 2018 to 2020. As international sales manager for automation, here he was responsible for boosting the efficiency of existing chocolate-molding machinery with the help of new technologies, such as a motion control system or sensors and database-driven benchmarking and resource-planning tools.



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Kilincat has noticed that his colleagues in Technology are relieved to have a contact at the Sales end who they feel understands them.

Like many of his colleagues, Kilincat sees himself at the interface between the Sales and Technology departments. It's important that you understand one another, he believes, and that you can judge what can be done with how much time and effort. As global product account manager for MES and IIoT systems at KHS, it's not really his job to battle it out alone on the sales front. Instead, one focus of his activities is to teach sales colleagues well-versed in mechanical engineering to also accept and create an affinity with IT. This enables the existing structure to be used to actively discuss and position digital projects with customers. Another part of his job is to monitor market demands and compare this to the present KHS portfolio. The aim is to identify potential for development in good time together with colleagues from Line Engineering, Service and the respective product centers.

As long as business travel is practically impossible due to corona, he communicates with customers on the channels that make or break digitalization. His colleagues in Sales involve him

heavily: they make contact with the right people at the company and inform him about the decision-making process and the customers' respective digital agendas.

Profile: Taskin Kilincat

Kilincat completed his Master of Science in Industrial Engineering in Darmstadt. After first gaining experience working for IT and business consulting service CGI, he was a project engineer for Actemium for four years. He was then responsible for automation sales worldwide in the service business at the Bühler Group. Here, Kilincat was also entrusted with various digital issues in the new system business, such as IT interfaces and platforms. He's been with KHS since April 2020.

Bridge builder

When asked what his colleagues think is his greatest strength, Kilincat laughs and gives a surprising answer. "It's my weakness that first comes to mind. I often seem very forceful – but try to always smile at the same time. On the other hand, I also can't afford to let up, for at the end of the day I have to get my input from somewhere." His strength is said to lie in his ability to build bridges, to account for all interested parties with their different expectations in talks and to ensure that a consensus is reached. He sees himself as more of an intermediary and not as someone who forces his opinion through at all costs. "In the end, the best solution wins and not the person who can shout the loudest."

Outside work travel is one of Taskin Kilincat's greatest passions. He's already familiar with most of Europe, several Arab countries and the United States. He describes Asia as his blind spot, however – at least up to now. As soon as international travel is again allowed, he's heading for Thailand. "I've had a route planned for ages that I want to explore there," he smiles, anticipating the time to come after corona. One big aspect for him – besides personal encounters – is the local cuisine. "I'm a

fan of Asian food. But it's very different whether you eat it here or in the country it actually comes from." Until then, a little patience is called for ...