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SHIFT Automotive 2019: Mobility-as-a-Service can be a trillion dollar market

“The mobility landscape has changed forever”, but will “work only by deeply integrating all solutions providers” – Full house for the start of this year’s SHIFT Automotive at IFA Berlin – Industry experts, designers and policy experts explore the future of mobility with AXA, BMW, Daimler, Ford, Fujitsu and VW on the list of speakers

SHIFT Automotive – the two-day convention exploring the future of mobility – has started at IFA Berlin 2019, with experts discussing whether new smart mobility solutions can be both sustainable and acceptable to society. “The mobility landscape has changed forever,” said Boyd Cohen, the CEO of Iomob, who called for the creation of an Internet of Mobility that would integrate all available modes of transport – from electric kick scooters and bike sharing, to trams, trains and car sharing solutions. He cited the example of Madrid, where 18 companies are licensed to offer electric scooter services, but people would want only one app, not 18 to download and manage. If Mobility-as-a-service solution were truly integrated, the market could reach a value of \$1 trillion by 2030.

His speech kicked off two days of talks, discussions and networking, with participants drawn from the world of technology, the automotive industry, plus designers, architects and mobility experts.

Discussions centred on whether cars still have a role to play in the transport economy of the future, with Prof. Harold Welzer, director of Futurzwei, declaring that the rollout of electric or autonomous cars would not solve today’s transport systems. Instead, he argued “we have to get rid of cars.”

Most other speakers, however, still saw a role for cars – but debated whether privately owned cars would still be the norm rather than the exception (rural areas excepted). Can drivers be persuaded to let go of their beloved car? Venkat Sumantran, the chairman of Celeris Technologies and former CEO of Tata Motors, said social change was ahead, with younger generations now ready to swap our society’s passion for cars with our love for digital devices and digitally powered transport experiences.

Change, however, has to start at local level, with local authorities setting the direction for the transport revolution. First, though, they have to use “data to really understand what’s happening in their cities,” because “new mobility solutions alone – from scooters to car sharing – will not solve their mobility problems, said Christof Schminke, managing director of Trafi.

SHIFT Automotive continues during Tuesday and all of Wednesday, with speakers like Zipcar founder Robin Chase, former CTO of Barcelona, Francesca Bria, the creative director of the Cars franchise at Pixar Animation Studios, Jay Ward, and industry leaders from AXA, BMW, Daimler, Ford, Fujitsu and VW yet to speak to the audience of Shift Automotive.

The convention runs alongside a very unusual, experiential exhibition space, where Daimler’s Smart, Fujitsu and others show their latest ideas and concepts.

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