

Daimler have named research chief Ola Kaellenius as their next CEO in a succession plan that promotes a raft of tech-savvy managers at their Mercedes-Benz brand and also seeks to install long-serving CEO Dieter Zetsche as chairman.



The appointment of Swedish national Kaellenius will be the first time Daimler will be headed by a non-German.

With Kaellenius, Daimler are naming a long-serving employee who has risen through the ranks to the top job. He previously headed sales for the core Mercedes-Benz Cars division and led the AMG performance cars unit. His appointment as development chief at the end of 2016 put him ahead in the race to replace Zetsche, prompting Daimler Trucks then-head Wolfgang Bernhard to leave.

Kaellenius joined Daimler in 1993 after studying management and finance in Sweden and Switzerland. After a stint in the U.S. Mercedes plant in Alabama, he developed a track record in performance cars, heading operations at McLaren Automotive and then running Mercedes' performance division AMG from 2010 to 2013.

Kaellenius has worked to introduce Silicon Valley management techniques at Daimler. Together with Zetsche, he oversaw an effort to sweep away layers of bureaucracy and encourage a more experimental approach to new products, changing a culture often slowed by strict hierarchies and meticulous planning.

Daimler's current chairman Manfred Bischoff will recommend Zetsche's election as his successor to take effect at the end of the annual meeting in 2021 following a two-year transition period.

Markus Schaefer, currently head of production and supply chain management, will succeed Kaellenius as head of research and development.