

> **“LIXIL is a place where you can use your creativity and bring your ideas to the table. We are empowered to take ownership of our projects and make impactful choices.”**

Tobias Heine

2022 – Present:

Leader

Showering - Product Development R&D, Fittings, LIXIL





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#### Apr 2022 – Present

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Showering - Product Development R&D,  
Fittings, LIXIL

#### 2018 – 2022

Deputy Team Lead Innovation Management  
Purchasing - Supplier Enabled Innovation  
Mechatronics, Automotive Industry

#### 2011 – 2018

Advanced Engineering Electronics -  
Mechanics and Industrial Design,  
Automotive Industry

#### 2009 – 2011

Product Development and Industrial Design,  
Medical Industry

#### Education

##### 2013 – 2018

University Hannover, Germany,  
Ph.D. Mechanical Engineering

##### 2009 – 2011

University of Applied Science Magdeburg,  
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##### 2005 – 2009

University of Applied Science Emden,  
Germany, B.Eng. Mechanical Engineering -  
Product Development & Industrial Design

## WHAT MADE YOU JOIN LIXIL AND WHAT'S DIFFERENT FROM YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES?

Over 20 years ago, in the early years of my career, I completed vocational training as a bricklayer and concrete builder. This served as my first foray into the construction sector.

I went on to study mechanical engineering and industrial design, and I started my R&D career journey in an automotive electronics company.

My interest has always been to work on consumer and user-centric products developed by an original equipment manufacturer (OEM). LIXIL sounded like a great match with its diverse portfolio. Coincidentally, my family and I were moving to the part of Germany where GROHE was founded and we took it as a good sign to take up the opportunity, and I joined LIXIL in April 2022.

## HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE IN LIXIL BEEN SO FAR?

It was a steep learning curve at the start due to the projects I was working on while I adjusted to a new culture.

I would say my experience at LIXIL has been exceptionally rewarding. It is a place that provides you with opportunities to test yourself with new challenges within a global portfolio, encompassing a wide range of products and markets.

What truly sets LIXIL apart is the unparalleled support system that extends beyond just your team; it comes from your colleagues as well. Knowing that I have a network to rely on has been key to providing me with the foundation to develop many ideas and create value that I can be proud of.

At LIXIL, there's a prevailing culture that not only acknowledges but also rewards collaboration and teamwork. This has been a constant driving force behind my achievements and has continually fueled my passion for what I do.

## COULD YOU SHARE ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN LIXIL AND WHAT DO YOU DO ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS?

I am part of a team that is the holistic R&D arm of LIXIL. We are also in charge of product innovation and the designing of new products.

We are highly integrated and we work closely with several relevant departments such as industrial design, category management and more.

We create the next range of products from our current portfolio. This

includes new and improved products or systems that integrate new technologies, materials, design, and user aspects. At the same time, we are also responsible for developing energy and water saving capabilities.

I would say that we are at the heart of creating sustainable products for the future. This is critical in today's environment and I am pleased that our team is responsible for making our products more attractive for our customers.

For example, we collaborate with the advanced development technology department in Japan to create new types of shower engines. We work to constantly keep our products on top of trends and needs. We improve the shower experience while driving water conservation and reducing water consumption.

## WHEN IT COMES TO R&D, THE CHALLENGES CAN BE DAUNTING. HOWEVER, ON THE FLIP SIDE, AN AMAZING HORIZON OF OPPORTUNITY AWAITS.

We consider user-centered aspects such as the functionality, accessibility, ergonomics, while we factor in aesthetics and appearance as well as the improved user experience.

R&D at LIXIL is an important interface for our colleagues in industrial design. I do think work is more exciting when we have the opportunity to work with different brands and products for a range of audiences.

We also have a winning formula with our diverse workforce. We have a really diverse team where unique skill sets and backgrounds converge with a shared commitment to diversity and inclusion. This is a really important

factor as it contributes to our vision to make better homes a reality for everyone, everywhere.

We also have colleagues who were at LIXIL since its conception alongside new joiners. This abundance of knowledge, experience, and fresh perspectives from each individual from different backgrounds allows us to realize new ideas that are novel and innovative.

Everyone works really hard across all of LIXIL's product verticals, be it a standard portfolio product or an innovative development. This is one huge perk of being in LIXIL's R&D team. We have extraordinary experiences and an empowering environment. We can be hands-on and we can also shape our working behavior.

We work with physical products and we have a high level of exchange and interaction with our colleagues in the test lab and the hydro lab. We have a motivating environment where we are empowered as we can see things that we worked hard on, with a passion, come to life.

## **WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT COLLABORATING ACROSS MARKETS AND WORKING WITH DIFFERENT TEAMS? CAN YOU SHARE ANY SPECIAL MOMENTS THAT WERE SPECIAL FOR YOU?**

We usually start the early phases of the new product development together with the design and marketing teams.

For each R&D process, we work closely across departments around the globe to understand the category, the design, our plans and operational functions.

For example, we are currently in an international exchange with colleagues from the pre-development department at LWT Japan Design, the New Technology Division and R&D Americas to implement new technologies in shower products.

As the saying goes, sharing is caring. We are open for everyone on the team to use the knowledge gained from this project for themselves and to extend the learnings and great ideas for other projects.

There is a unique culture in LIXIL and the success in R&D is the result of different cultures coming together and working towards the same purpose. Most recently, we participated in the Global Technology Discussion. This is an annual gathering of minds to brainstorm and work together on key plans for the future.

I met the colleagues I work with closely from across the globe. We discussed new technologies, new innovations and how we can apply new and upcoming innovation for products within LIXIL.

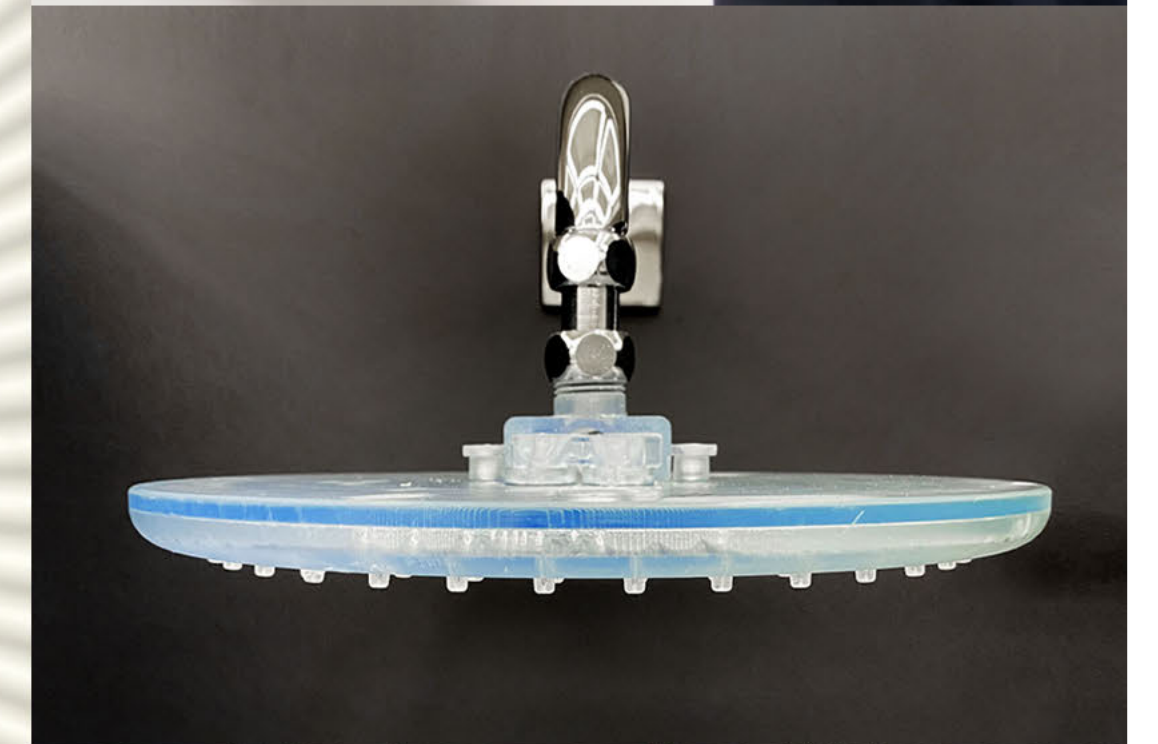
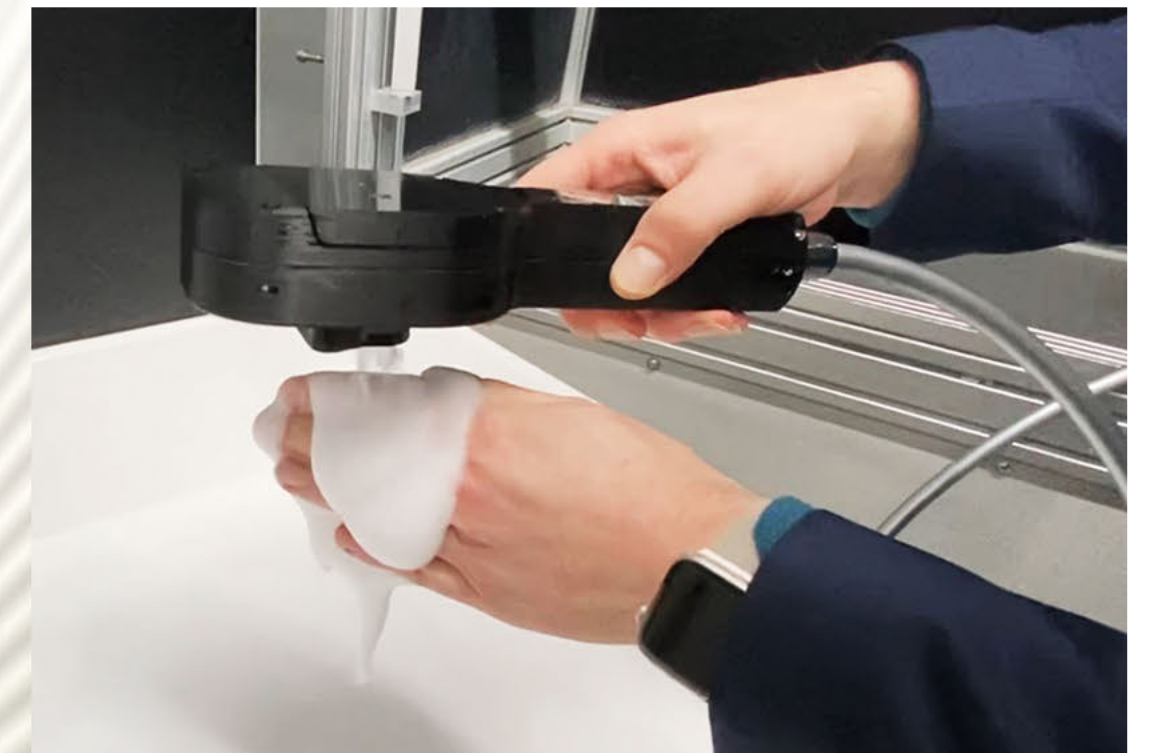
At LIXIL, we take ownership of our projects and are empowered to make impactful choices. This empowerment fuels our drive to provide effective solutions and explore a multitude of possibilities.

What ties all of this together is our strong connection to all the regions where LIXIL operates, where we demonstrate, share and extend the technology expertise with each other. I would say that collaboration and connection are not just principles, they are the very essence of our journey with R&D and LIXIL.

## CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT A RECENT CHALLENGE YOU HAD TO DEAL WITH?

We were operating within the constraints of a tough fiscal year with a highly volatile environment. Our current focus is on providing stable quality within our standard portfolio and continuously delivering great products. This means having to work with agility to react quickly to a fast moving and changing market, with constant new technology integration and new product development.

It is evident that today, our industry has evolved beyond simple shower systems; it's now about embracing cutting-edge technologies and energy-saving features as the core unique selling point (USP) for a showering system. While the product is in development and I can't share much at this stage, I can share that it is projects like this that conveys how LIXIL is a place that drives better living with our careers.





## COULD WE LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE? HOW WILL YOU ADVISE YOUR TEAM WHEN THEY ENCOUNTER CHALLENGES?

I'm all about open communication. I like to keep the doors open for my team to reach out to me anytime – it could be through a call or even one-on-one sessions.

Being a leader of the team is similar to soccer or sports in general. Trust is a key factor for success. For a close knitted soccer team, it is about fostering that loop of leaders who can enable the players, and nurturing players to eventually become leaders themselves. LIXIL is a place that supports this priority wholeheartedly.

In this analogy, I see myself as the coach on the sidelines, providing guidance and enabling the team, while my team members are the players

on the field, scoring the goals. A recent award showed that we are doing the right thing and we are moving forward as one team.

Motivating my team or bringing members forward in their careers is something I strive to do. I always reassure my team that they are not alone. I am there as their mentor. For those with a drive and keen to grow and development, LIXIL's focus on learning and enablement is valuable.

Our managers are equipped with the right skills to nurture and guide our teams to ensure every employee can bring the best of themselves to work and the best solutions can flourish.

Having a sense of team belonging and trust is also important to me. However, it has to be a two-way relationship. As a leader at LIXIL, we allow our teams to experiment and learn. I trust my team and their capabilities to deliver and similarly they can rely on me when needed. This also applies to the leadership team – where they trust my team and that I can rely on them for good decision making.

## WHAT IS YOUR HOBBY OR IS THERE A PERSONAL STORY TO SHARE?

On a personal level, I identify strongly with my profession as I am a technical and creative person by nature. As a result, I spend a lot of time at home working on handcrafts and mini projects such as designing my own furniture.

Spending time with my family as I work on my crafts is something I really enjoy outside of work. My son enjoys participating and being part of the process – and he learns a lot about what I do in my role. At the same time, it taps into his own creativity as well.

My son always says that he wants to be a dad as well in the future so that he can do all these things, too. This is something I am really proud of.

As a leader, I hope that I can inspire my team the same way and provide opportunities for them to integrate their skills, motivating them to work on new projects and enabling them to leverage on their creativity for growth. It is important to surpass yourself and to get better every day. If I can do this for my team, then I'm successful.



## WHAT WILL YOUR ADVICE BE FOR SOMEONE WHO IS CONSIDERING A CAREER AT LIXIL?

LIXIL is a place where you can use your creativity and bring your ideas to the table. It is undeniable that the world is evolving, lifestyles are changing, and the demand for healthier and better-designed products is increasing.

We are user-oriented and we constantly develop products and innovations that can influence and improve the daily lives of our customers. Meaningful design and creating user-centric products that matter are a huge part of LIXIL's business.

We bring value to our people, homes for everyone everywhere. It is not only a vision but it is integrated in our work every day. That makes work we do very valuable, and it is something that you can be really proud of!

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