

AUTOMOTIVE

Car business amidst paradigm shift with autonomous driving

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Mercedes-Benz hosted a panel discussion on autonomous driving. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz

By KAYSORIN

AUSTIN, TX German automaker Mercedes-Benz kicked off South by Southwest last month with an official panel discussion about the future of mobility and the exciting changes that consumers can expect to see in the automotive industry.

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A featured session titled, "Autonomous Driving: More Time to Do What You Love," showcased industry experts discussing how the transition to electric, autonomous and software-defined cars will revolutionize the automotive industry and provide consumers with new levels of safety, convenience and entertainment. A top Mercedes-Benz executive was on the panel.

"For us, SXSW has a special charm because you can meet thought leaders from all sectors in a relaxed atmosphere and exchange views on relevant topics," said Markus Schaefer, chief technology officer of Mercedes-Benz.

"You get to know many new inspiring personalities, but you also meet old friends and partners. SXSW brings together the best of art, music, film and technology it is a festival of experiences," he said.

Safer and smarter driving

The experts on the panel, Rana June, CEO of ZYNC; Austin Russell, CEO of Luminar; and Markus Schfer of Mercedes-Benz, all had unique insights to share on autonomous driving.

One of the key takeaways from the discussion was the paradigm shift that is happening as the automotive industry transitions to safe autonomous driving. This shift is going to have a profound impact on the way that consumers think about cars and mobility, in general.

In the not-too-distant future, consumers can expect to see cars that are not only electric, but also autonomous and entertaining.

One of the key benefits of autonomous driving is the new sense of freedom that it will provide for both drivers and passengers.

With the need to actively operate the car eliminated, consumers will be able to use their time in the car for other things.

This means that drivers will be able to use their commute time for work or relaxation, while passengers will be able to do anything from reading a book to watching a movie.

Software-defined car

Another exciting development in the future of mobility is the rise of the software-defined car.

With software controlling the car, it will be possible to optimize everything from speed to fuel efficiency, making cars not only safer but also more environmentally friendly.

One important aspect of the software-defined car is the embedded entertainment content that will allow passengers to stream movies and television shows directly to the car's entertainment system. This means that passengers will be able to enjoy a wide range of entertainment options while on the road.

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of the software-defined car is the ability to give consumers back their most valuable resource: time.

With cars that are safer, more efficient and more entertaining, consumers will be able to use their time in the car in new ways.

THE PANELISTS AGREED that the future of autonomous driving looks bright, and there is no doubt that the automotive industry is on the cusp of a major transformation. The SXSW forum also helps in gaining preliminary expert feedback.

"[SXSW is] an ideal match for our products as we have created a fully immersive, multi-sensory symphony of audio, video, gaming, art galleries, movement, light, climate control and even scent right in our vehicles," Mr. Schaefer said.

"Our goal is to give our customers more time for example, with Drive Pilot, our conditionally automated driving technology, with which Mercedes-Benz drivers can enjoy the immersive entertainment experience in traffic jams," he said.