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Leading
the **Future:**
The Visionary
CEO
to Watch
in 2025

The Alchemist
of Ambition
Turning Vision into
Victory in 2025

The Pace Setter
A CEO's Sprint
into 2025

Founder and CEO,
PeK Automotive d.o.o.

Dr. Mikhail
Kostkin

Engineering Tomorrow's
Autonomous Future



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One of the sectors that has always fallen behind in a world where industries are scrambling to embrace the use of advanced technologies is agriculture. When the aerospace, defense, and manufacturing sectors have quickly adopted the digital transformation, farming, as a practice fundamental to human survival, is still shackled to outdated practices and an inadequate dependence on manual labor. The net effect is increased disparity between the world population growth and the ability of the conventional systems to satisfy the demand.

Meet **Dr. Mikhail Kostkin**, the **Founder** and **CEO** of **PeK Automotive d.o.o.**, which is located in **Slovenia**. His vision is radical but straightforward; he wants to reinvent agriculture and other industries with autonomous, electric, and resilient solutions that should be tested in rugged conditions. Building a sustainable future is not merely building machines, according to Kostkin.

A Calling Shaped by Urgency and Opportunity

Mikhail's journey into the autonomous electric vehicle sector was born out of urgency. Observing firsthand how the agricultural sector struggled with labor shortages amid a rapidly growing global population, he recognized the immediate need for change. Agriculture, he realized, was both the backbone of societies and one of the least technologically advanced sectors.

For decades, innovations were directed toward high-profile industries, leaving farmers without access to meaningful modernization. To Mikhail and his team, this disconnect represented both a challenge and an opportunity. With their extensive background in complex engineering projects spanning aerospace, submersibles, and special-purpose applications, they saw an opening to transfer advanced know-how into agriculture.

By developing machines designed for harsh outdoor environments with long lifecycles, PeK Automotive could not only ease the sector's burdens but also deliver big advantages to society. This vision became the foundation of the company, which he formally established in 2019.

Driving a Mission That Matters

As both CEO and founder, Mikhail carries a dual responsibility: *to apply his technological expertise and to ensure PeK Automotive's mission reaches the widest possible market*. For him, the core responsibility is transformative, nothing less than changing the face of plantation agriculture.

He envisions agriculture elevated by Industry 5.0 principles and beyond, where automation, artificial intelligence, and sustainable practices come together to address food security challenges. His role, therefore, is not just managerial but profoundly visionary, to take pioneering technologies from prototype to global market adoption, empowering farmers and strengthening communities.

What makes this mission even more powerful is the human element. Mikhail is not driven by abstract numbers or corporate growth targets alone. His purpose is grounded in the knowledge that solving agriculture's challenges directly impacts billions of people. By focusing on systems that feed communities, sustain economies, and improve resilience, he brings a humanitarian dimension to what might otherwise be seen as purely technical work.

Leadership Rooted in Systems and Spirit

When asked about his leadership philosophy, Mikhail describes it as a balance between structured business flows and deep technical knowledge. He believes that strong leadership begins with establishing robust business processes that guide communication and decision-making.

PeK Automotive even developed its own enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, offering advanced capabilities like manufacturing planning, to ensure operations flow seamlessly. This, Mikhail argues, creates a culture of discipline and focus.

At the same time, his vast engineering expertise, spanning electronics, mechanics, aerospace, and deep-water applications, fuels innovation within the company. His extensive patents serve as a testament to his ingenuity and his ability to mentor teams by sharing practical insights.

Yet leadership for him is also about cultivating the right atmosphere. He stresses that individuals who view work as 'just a salary' will naturally leave PeK Automotive, making space for those who share the company's collective spirit of innovation. In his view, true culture arises not solely from the top but from the cooperation of like-minded people united by purpose.

This balance of discipline, technical mastery, and shared spirit explains why PeK Automotive has been able to attract and retain top talent despite competing in one of the most complex and specialized industries in the world.

Staying Ahead of the Curve

For Mikhail, staying competitive in a rapidly growing industry requires relentless forward motion. He likens it to the famous passage in *Alice in Wonderland*: “To stay in place, you have to run; to move forward, you have to run faster.”

PeK Automotive personifies this philosophy by designing systems not for today’s customers, but for tomorrow’s. Years before AI became widely integrated, the company had already arranged artificial intelligence, computer vision, cloud communication, and remote machine control into its products.

This future-oriented mindset allows PeK Automotive to predict trends rather than react to them, ensuring it remains a global leader in autonomous solutions. For Mikhail, innovation is not an afterthought; it is built into the company’s DNA.

Milestones That Mark a Journey

For Mikhail, each major project is a milestone, whether in aerospace flight computers, seismic recorders for deep water, or non-destructive testing systems for oil and gas pipelines. Yet he approaches every new challenge with a fresh mind, resisting the temptation to lean solely on experience.

This openness allows him to architect innovative solutions without the controls of a pattern. By constantly reminding himself, “*You are not an expert here, look with open eyes,*” he maintains the curiosity and creativity that drive his success.

It is this philosophy that allowed him to transition seamlessly from aerospace to agriculture and to create what had never been attempted before: a full agro-cycle autonomous system, capable of managing every stage of agricultural work across the calendar year.

Overcoming Challenges Through Fresh Thinking

Developing advanced autonomous solutions for agriculture, rescue, and defense comes with formidable challenges. One of the biggest challenges, according to Mikhail, was redefining Industry 5.0 concepts to fit real-world demands.

Agriculture, in particular, presented a steep learning curve. Traditionally conservative and centuries-old, the sector had never seen a complete agro-cycle solution, a system capable of handling tasks from January through December. PeK Automotive became the first in human history to design such a system using autonomous robotic technology.

The key, Mikhail insists, was direct engagement with end-users. Farmers often told him he was the first manufacturer in decades to ask what they actually needed. This feedback not only guided PeK Automotive’s product development but also highlighted a critical gap in the industry: manufacturers had become too insulated, relying on distributors instead of customer voices.

By listening to users directly, Mikhail and his team created products that genuinely solved real problems, setting them apart in agriculture, demining, and firefighting robotics.

Balance Beyond the Boardroom

Despite his demanding role, Mikhail prioritizes a healthy lifestyle. His daily routine begins with yoga, while weekends are dedicated to active sports such as skiing, sailing, cycling, and mountain hiking. Slovenia's lush, green environment provides the perfect backdrop for these activities.

He also maintains a conservative diet centered on simple, healthy food, complemented by abundant pure spring water. These habits, he explains, are not just lifestyle choices but integral to sustaining the energy and clarity required to lead such an ambitious venture.

Advice for the Next Generation

For aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators, Mikhail offers a universal lesson: *"Don't be proud and selfish."* Success, he argues, comes not from pursuing one's own desires but from fulfilling what people truly need.

He urges future leaders to remain grounded, curious, and above all, connected to the real-world needs of users. This is more than advice, it is a principle that defines PeK Automotive's success and ensures that the company never loses sight of its purpose.

Opportunities on the Horizon

Looking ahead, Mikhail sees vast potential for autonomous agriculture, particularly as labor shortages intensify. He predicts that within a few years, major agricultural producers could lose up to 80% of tractor drivers, making traditional farming models unsustainable.

PeK Automotive's autonomous systems provide not only labor substitution but also cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable alternatives. Unlike conventional cycles reliant on subsidies, their solutions reduce dependency on government support while delivering higher productivity and ecological benefits.

Beyond agriculture, Mikhail identifies urgent opportunities in civil defense. In regions like Ukraine, where millions of mines remain buried in fields, cost-efficient demining machines are essential for restoring land. Similarly, with rising threats from kamikaze drones and industrial fires, PeK Automotive's firefighting robots present life-saving solutions that reduce human risk.

A Long-Term Vision Anchored in Utility and Sustainability

PeK Automotive's long-term vision is clear: to expand its low-voltage, high-traction electric machine technology across multiple sectors. These systems are designed to withstand harsh environmental conditions while performing essential utility tasks, from agriculture to defense to mining and even sea-bottom operations.

The roadmap includes scaling into underwater caterpillar machines for seabed tasks, alongside continued expansion into firefighting and mining robotics. Each step, Mikhail emphasizes, aligns with the company's mission to tackle humanity's most pressing challenges with resilient, sustainable, and intelligent solutions.

Beyond Technology- The Human Element

What sets Mikhail apart is not only his technical expertise but also his human-centered approach. While many leaders speak in abstractions about innovation, he grounds his work in the lived realities of farmers, rescue teams, and defense personnel. By asking simple yet often-overlooked questions – *What do you need? How should it work for you?* he bridges the gap between cutting-edge technology and practical utility.

This humility and curiosity ensure that PeK Automotive's products are not just advanced but deeply relevant. It is this combination of empathy and engineering that defines his leadership.

Redefining What's Possible

In just a few years, Dr. Mikhail Kostkin has positioned PeK Automotive as a global pioneer in autonomous electric mobility. His journey reflects the power of combining technical expertise, visionary leadership, and a determined focus on real-world impact.

From agriculture to defense to environmental sustainability, Mikhail's work exemplifies how engineering, when guided by empathy and purpose, can transform industries and lives. As the world grapples with population growth, labor shortages, and mounting environmental challenges, his story is not just one of entrepreneurial success but of urgent relevance for the future of humanity.