

APRIL  
2025



TECHFUELD

# Q1 2025 Newsletter

Issue 02



This edition explores **key global shifts** – from new tariffs, to the rise of AI, SDVs, and large-scale EV manufacturing in Asia.

See how top companies are turning disruption into opportunity – identifying **high-impact talent** and relying on **expert partnerships** to secure a competitive edge.

Find the latest updates from Techfuel, including major placements, market expansion, and how we're continuing to support clients across **North America, Europe, and APAC.**



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# Trump Tarrifs

## *Impact on the Automotive Industry*

Upon taking office, President Donald Trump introduced a **25%** tariff on imported automobiles and certain auto parts, it's raised important questions about the effects on the automotive industry. **Did these tariffs benefit U.S. manufacturing, or did they create challenges for automakers and consumers?**



### Increased Production Costs

Tariffs on imports from Canada, Mexico, and China raised production costs for manufacturers.



### High Vehicle Prices

Analysts estimated the tariffs could add \$1,500 to \$3,000 to the price of an average vehicle.



### Reduced Profits

Automakers faced potential core profit reductions of up to 17% due to increased expenses.



### Supply Chain Disruptions

Estimates showed up to 20,000 vehicles per day, one-third of North American output, could be affected within a week.

# BYD "EV City" *The World's Largest Electric Vehicle Factory Takes Shape in China*



**BYD** is building the world's largest EV plant in **Zhengzhou, China**, spanning an incredible 50 square miles - larger than San Francisco. Designed to produce over one million EVs annually, the site functions like a self-contained city, with housing, sports facilities, and amenities for thousands of on-site workers. Currently expanding through phases five to eight, it will far exceed the size of Tesla's Nevada Gigafactory, which covers 4.5 square miles.

BYD's innovation goes beyond scale. In March 2025, it revealed the Yangwang U9, a high-performance EV that can jump off the ground -an industry-first. Still in development, it reflects BYD's bold approach to R&D and its drive to redefine electric mobility.

**Could this be the new benchmark for automotive manufacturing - and is the rest of the industry ready to keep up?**

# The Cost of Transition

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The Transforming Automotive Landscape

## SCHAEFFLER

Cutting 4,700 jobs across Europe and closing two sites.



Reducing 3,000 R&D roles by 2026.



Eliminating up to 5,500 jobs by 2032, mainly in Germany.



Slashing 11,000–14,000 jobs in Germany by 2028.



Contributing to Schaeffler's 4,700 planned job cuts after their merger.



Facing historic job cuts in Germany, with possible factory closures.



Cutting 4,000 roles in Europe by 2027, mostly in Germany and the UK.



Cutting 2,000 jobs in 2024 over two layoff rounds.

## WHAT OUR DIRECTORS THINK



Workforce reductions often give the impression that there is an abundance of top-tier talent available. However, feedback from our clients indicate that while the number of direct applications has increased, the overall quality of candidates has declined. As companies strategically retain their strongest performers, identifying true high achievers has become even more challenging. Partnering with a specialist agency ensures businesses avoid inefficient hiring processes and the costly consequences of poor recruitment decisions.

- *Hakeem Adeshina*

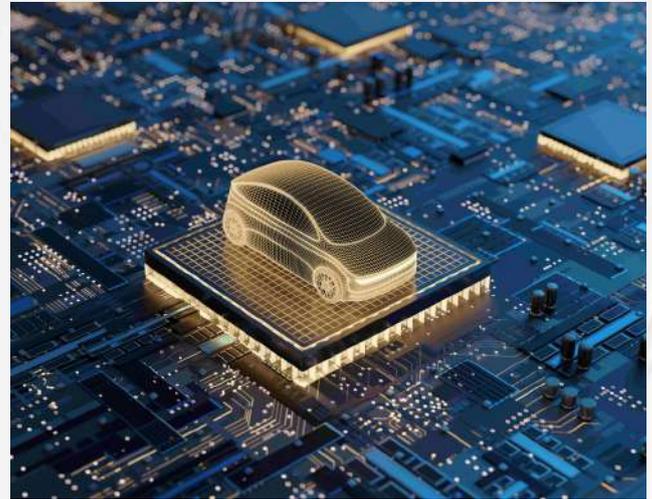


Mass layoffs naturally create fear, but discussions with global executives suggest they also present opportunities. Many job losses have affected those who haven't upskilled in emerging technologies, highlighting the urgent need for change. For Europe to compete in the New Mobility race, innovation must take priority. Asian car OEMs have moved faster, leaving others struggling across the supply chain. This shift will intensify competition for AI/ML and SDV talent while pushing companies to prioritise workforce upskilling for future success.

- *Chris Everitt*

# The Rise of AI and Software-Defined Vehicles

*Transforming the Automotive and New Mobility Industry*



## AI Impact

**Enhanced Safety and Efficiency:** AI is powering features like ADAS, predictive maintenance, and personalised driving experiences. **Volvo's** City Safety System uses AI for collision avoidance, while **BMW** employs AI for proactive maintenance. AI is being used to detect driver distractions and alert the driver. This technology will be mandatory in new vehicles across Europe starting next year to help reduce road accidents.

**Optimised Manufacturing:** Streamlining production by predicting demand, improving supply chain management, and reducing costs. We've seen **Volkswagen** recently integrate AI-powered supply chain management to better predict parts shortages and reduce downtime, and **Tesla's** AI-enhanced Gigafactories utilising deep learning algorithms to optimise the assembly line.

## Software Defined Vehicles (SDVs)

**Growth of SDVs:** The shift to SDVs, where software controls critical functions, is projected to make up **90%** of global auto production by **2029**. The market for automotive software is expected to grow from **\$87 billion** in 2023 to **\$248 billion** by 2030.

**Autonomous Driving:** SDVs are enabling the next generation of self-driving cars through real-time AI processing. In 2024, **Waymo**, **Tesla**, **Baidu**, and **WeCruise** expanded their autonomous offerings, while **Toyota** and **Volkswagen** ramped up software investment to stay competitive.

# How We Stay Connected to Our Industry

Staying actively engaged with the automotive and new mobility industry is central to how we operate at Techfuel. Through major events and continuous market interaction, we seek out opportunities to stay informed, strengthen our network, and deliver even greater value to our clients and candidates.



With Techfuel attending CES 2025, this event proved to be our most impactful yet. Our team connected with a record number of industry professionals, including OEM leaders, Tier 1 suppliers, and mobility

innovators from across the globe. These high-quality interactions led to new partnerships, deeper relationships, and tangible business outcomes. The momentum from CES set the tone for an exceptional start to the year. Q1 marked our best-performing quarter to date, with both client engagement and successful placements across North America, Europe, and APAC.

In the quarter ahead, we'll be attending several key conferences globally, including:

Let's connect! Reach out to schedule a meeting and discover how Techfuel can support your growth.

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W WARDS AUTO.  
AutoTech 2025

SOLAR &  
STORAGE  
LIVE London 2025



THE BATTERY SHOW  
EUROPE

# Techfuel Growth

## Introducing our **Renewable Energy** Focus

We are committed to aligning our growth with the evolving needs of our clients. Following a series of successful placements and longstanding relationships within the **renewable energy** sector, we are pleased to announce the formal expansion of our service into the market.

This move reflects not only the momentum we've built in the space, but also our long-term vision to support industries that are shaping a more sustainable future.



### Hugo Saunders

 020 3836 9364

 hugo.s@techfueld.com



*"It's an exciting time to be working in this space. The level of activity and demand we're seeing across the sector is significant." – Hugo*

## Leading Growth

We are proud to have **Hugo** leading this expansion. With a proven track record in executive search and a strong understanding of the renewable energy industry, Hugo brings a deep insight and a clear strategic vision.

His leadership will ensure we continue to connect high-performing talent with the companies powering the energy transition.

***If you're growing your team within renewable energy or exploring career opportunities in the sector, we're here to support your journey.***

# Notable Placements

## Placements made last Quarter

We excel at understanding your needs and delivering tailored solutions. Your mission brief becomes our RFQ, driving results seamlessly through to SOP plus 30 days. This dedication is why clients trust us repeatedly.

See the results for yourself - **let's get started!**

x2 Global Sales  
Directors

USA & Europe

Chief Financial  
Officer

Europe

Chief Technical  
Officer

Europe

Head of Business  
Development

Europe

Project Build - Supporting a leading  
OEM in scaling their Engineering  
team

USA

89%

of candidates are  
hired from the initial  
shortlist

100%

of our clients have  
partnered with us  
again



Matheus has a strong understanding of the market and brings a genuinely positive attitude to everything he does. He's an outstanding recruiter who consistently goes the extra mile. Matheus takes the time to truly listen, understand your goals, and align your skills and aspirations with the right opportunities. I highly recommend Matheus to anyone navigating the job market!"

**TECH** -- *Manager Closures Engineer*  
**mahindra**



Worked for the first time with Chris and Techfueld and must say I'm extremely happy with the cooperation and the result. With a very professional business behavior, they found highly skilled candidates and were always available for us. Not only that, they were proactively managing the whole process. Thanks for the cooperation, it was not the last time for sure."

**3SS** – *Head of Automotive*



Hakeem has been outstanding from the very beginning of my hiring process with SKBA. He and his team played a crucial role in helping me secure my new role, and I couldn't be happier. They skillfully negotiated and secured the deal and compensation package I was aiming for. Transitioning from an OEM to a Tier 1 supplier was a significant decision, but Hakeem's expertise and guidance made the process much smoother! I highly recommend"

**SK battery America** – *Key Account Manager*

# Testimonials

*What our Clients say about us – let's connect!*



Hakeem is an exceptional senior leader and a passionate "professional". As a recruiter, entrepreneur, leader and influencer. But much more, he is a loyal and honest team player with great teammates surrounding him. A person with the right sense of humor professionalism and commitment...! Techfueld already successfully helped us to fill two critical Management positions within a newly created organization. This was an outstanding contribution to our success."

– *Senior Director*

 **CLARIOS**



I was fortunate to work with Lola during my recent job search, and I'm incredibly grateful for her guidance and unwavering support throughout the entire process. From our initial conversation, it was evident that Lola took a genuine interest in understanding my career objectives, strengths, and aspirations. I can recommend Lola to anyone seeking a knowledgeable, dedicated recruiter who goes above and beyond to ensure their clients succeed."

– *Senior Engineering Manager*

 **SONATUS**