

## **Floats, glides, is light, sustainable and intelligent: Grammer reinventing the center console**

- *From a “framed gearshift lever” to a design highlight for modern interiors*
- *Multivariable module for controls, stowage, and comfort*
- *With 30 years of expertise, Grammer a sought-after partner to OEMs worldwide*

**Grammer AG, July 28, 2022 – Lounge tables that glide silently through the interior, a seamless design featuring shy tech, stylish boxes for passengers in self-driving shuttles: These applications no longer have much in common with the classic center console as a collection tray for coins, glasses and the like. Grammer, one of the leading players in center console business and a globally sought-after OEM partner for more than 30 years, is making the product sustainable, lightweight, multifunctional, and digital in preparation for the future.**

The space between the driver and passenger seat reflects the changes in automotive trends and user preferences like few other interior assemblies: “When we entered center console business in the early 1990s with the first high-volume order for the VW Passat, the product was undergoing one of its first innovation thrusts,” says Jürgen Gerl, President Automotive Division at Grammer AG. In its metamorphosis from a “framed gearshift lever with a shelf” to a **high-quality interior element**, the center console became the prime location for control panels, lighting effects, stowage compartments, cup holders and HVAC outlets. “Plastic replaced metal as the substrate material, and air ducts for thermal management were integrated. Especially in the premium segment, high-quality materials and surfaces played an increasingly important role for competitive differentiation purposes. Product diversity grew. Grammer developed a **modular product kit for center consoles** that included different lid versions, new mechanical and kinematic solutions, and clever storage space options among other things.

Currently, the next evolutionary step is already emerging with the shift towards **electromobility, autonomous driving** and the **macro trends in automotive interiors** – living space, user experience, sustainability, simplification: “Many OEMs are focusing on a homely, lounge-like atmosphere, style, comfort, intelligent design and visibly sustainable surfaces in their new E-generations,” explains Gerl. The center console has thus moved even further into the **core of this new living**

**Media contact:**  
Günter Krämer  
Phone: +49 9621/66-2171  
[Guenter.Kraemer@grammer.com](mailto:Guenter.Kraemer@grammer.com)

**Published by:**  
Grammer AG  
Grammer-Allee 2  
92289 Ursensollen  
[www.grammer.com](http://www.grammer.com)

**space**, offering controls, connectivity and space for personal items, drinks, and snacks within easy reach – and featuring brand-specific design worlds. One example is the **free-standing center console** in the new BMW iX, which Grammer engineered together with BMW Group designers and interior experts as a partner from the very beginning: Thanks to the lack of any center tunnel, it appears to **float** above the flat floor. Systematic **noise reduction** and a **sustainable approach** were priorities during development, for example to save weight and – to maximize the range – energy using recycled plastics and consistent **lightweight construction**.

But the latest-generation center console not only floats but can also **glide** through the interior. Grammer achieved this with the center table fitted to the new Multivan from VW Commercial Vehicles: It can be **moved freely on** a rail system **across three rows of seats** and can also be used at different **heights**: as a classic low shelf and armrest between the front seats or in a higher position as a desk in the rear with generously dimensioned table surfaces that can be folded out. “Here we were able to contribute our expertise, among other things, with an **innovative self-locking spring concept** that we patented for our customer,” says Gerl.

The changing architecture of vehicle interiors offers Grammer’s experts the perfect setting to **think ahead and anticipate new developments**: “Our modular system for the center console of the future places an even greater focus on the **user**,” adds Jürgen Gerl. “In the process, we’re seeing a move away from highly complex operating concepts in favor of **simplification**, which is reflected in both design and functionality.” **Shy tech** is the name applied to this minimalism, in which controls are integrated in **intelligent surfaces** and only appear when needed. The focus is on maximally flexible concepts that can be used even more variably and individually thanks to innovative **kinematics and mechanisms** for moving, locking, stowing, opening, closing and so on, depending on the application scenario: “In shared mobility vehicles, the **hygiene aspect** will play an important role, which we address with smooth, easy-to-clean **surfaces** and **seamless designs**.” Grammer is also working on additional **comfort features** such as heated armrests or cooled compartments for drinks, as well as new charging options. In self-driving shuttles, passengers could use a box at the seat that provides storage space and work surfaces in the future.

Grammer's global OEM customers appreciate its **package** of innovative strength, modular platforms, acknowledged high-quality consulting, development and integration expertise as a project partner and success factors such as quality and availability. Says Gerl: "We supply center consoles to our customers in **Europe, America, and Asia**. Production facilities in Germany, the Czech Republic, China, the United States and Mexico handle local manufacturing to take **advantage** of local resources, short transportation distances and fast response times." These are ideal conditions for further **growth** with a product that will play a central role in the **mobility of the future**.



*Jürgen Gerl, President Division Automotive at Grammer AG.*

*Source: GRAMMER AG*



*Sliding center table  
in the VW Multivan.  
Source: GRAMMER AG*



*Free standing design of the center console  
in the BMW iX.  
Source: GRAMMER AG*



*Focus on users: In the test cube of the Grammer ErgoLab, center consoles are  
evaluated in terms of ergonomics, haptics and operating comfort under a wide  
range of different lighting conditions.  
Source: GRAMMER AG*

**Company profile**

Grammer AG, headquartered in Ursensollen, Germany, is active in two business segments: Grammer develops and supplies high-quality interior and operating systems as well as innovative thermoplastic components for the global automotive industry. For trucks, trains, buses, and off-road vehicles, Grammer is a full-service provider of driver and passenger seats. Currently, Grammer AG employs around 14,000 people in 19 countries worldwide, with sales of around 1.9 billion euros in 2021. Grammer shares are listed in the Prime Standard and traded on the Munich and Frankfurt stock exchanges as well as via the Xetra electronic trading system.