

Guven Bircan

Strategic Operations & Cost Transformation Leader

Lean, TPS & Continuous Improvement | Production · R&D · Cost Optimisation | Automotive & Manufacturing
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€20M+

annual savings at peak (4× historical average)

20+ yrs

international experience, 19+ at Toyota

4

countries launched in (UK, Türkiye, Czechia, Japan)

€4M+

Corolla launch savings

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Operations transformation leader with **20+ years of international experience** across R&D, production and supply chain, including **19+ years at Toyota Motor Europe**. Delivers measurable **EBITDA and cost performance improvements**: scaled annual cost optimisation from ~€5M to **€20M+** across Aygo, Yaris, Corolla and C-HR, a 4× increase on the historical average.

Proven at **stabilising underperforming operations, aligning fragmented functions and converting strategic targets into executable roadmaps**. Combines TPS learned at source in Japan with data-driven governance (Power BI, Power Platform), root-cause problem solving and disciplined implementation, leading **multi-country, cross-functional teams (50+)** across Engineering, Purchasing, Manufacturing and Tier-1 suppliers.

Today works as an **independent Operational Excellence & Lean consultant** and as an engineering and manufacturing expert contributing to AI model evaluation.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Lean & TPS: Operational Excellence, Kaizen, Value Stream Mapping, PDCA/A3, 5S, Standard Work, Waste Elimination, Nemawashi

Cost & Value Engineering: Strategic Cost Reduction, VAVE, Cost Engineering, Margin/EBITDA Support, CapEx/OpEx Analysis, Supplier Collaboration

Production & R&D Engineering: New Vehicle Industrialisation, Stamping & Quality Frameworks, APQP/PPAP, Launch Stabilisation, Engineering Changes, Homologation

Digital & Automation: Power BI, Power Automate, Power Apps, Process Automation, Data-Driven Decision Making, Automation & AI Workflows

Leadership: Cross-Functional & Multi-Country Team Leadership, Programme/Project Management, Stakeholder Alignment, Cross-Cultural Collaboration

TOOLS

Technical: CATIA V5, Python

Project management & analytics: Microsoft 365 (Power BI / Power Apps / Power Automate); company-specific manufacturing systems

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Management Consultant: Operational Excellence & Lean

Jan 2026 – Present

Independent Practice, Belgium

Role description

Apply two decades of Toyota TPS and Kaizen experience to cost-reduction and process-improvement work for manufacturing clients.

Key achievements

- Applied **Lean and TPS methodologies** to structured cost-reduction and process-improvement work for manufacturing clients.
- Built **Power Automate and Power Apps workflows** that cut manual admin effort and improve operational data visibility.
- Developed practical **problem-solving frameworks** to build continuous-improvement capability within client teams, and expanding into automation and AI tooling.

Evaluator & Generalist Expert

2026 – Present

Mercor Intelligence (remote)

- Provide management, consulting, engineering and manufacturing expertise to **improve models for a top AI lab**.
- Ensure **high-quality training data** for AI optimisation.

Cost Reduction Leader (Strategic Cost Transformation)

07/2021 – 12/2025

Toyota Motor Europe, Brussels / Zaventem, Belgium

Role description

Built and scaled a cross-functional cost transformation function aligning Engineering and Purchasing to deliver structural cost reduction on European vehicle lines (Aygo, Yaris, Corolla, C-HR).

Key achievements

- Scaled annual cost optimisation from **~€5M to €20M+**, a record and 4× the historical average, by aligning **50+ engineers** across design and procurement and running joint Kaizen with Tier-1 suppliers.
- Established **real-time cost governance (Power BI)**, accelerating decisions and **reducing execution delays by 20%**.
- Eliminated non-value-added engineering activities through **workflow automation** and R&D workflow mapping, reallocating capacity to high-impact cost work.
- Generated **€4M+ savings on the Corolla launch** via supplier workshops and on-site plant interventions.
- Took the European cost-reduction framework to **Toyota Japan** and secured leadership buy-in through nemawashi, enabling global adoption.
- Acted as interface between senior leadership, engineering and suppliers, resolving structural misalignment that affected financial targets.



Leading a cost-engineering training seminar

R&D Project Manager

03/2015 – 07/2021

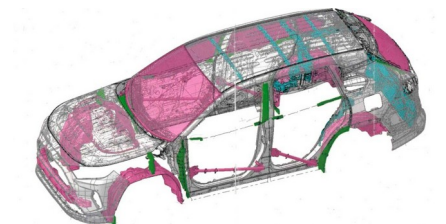
Toyota Motor Europe, Brussels / Zaventem, Belgium

Role description

Delivered cost, quality and regulatory targets across multiple European vehicle programmes.

Key achievements

- Delivered **€6M annual cost optimisation** across two major vehicle programmes while maintaining **100% regulatory compliance**.
- Resolved **10+ major technical quality issues per year** through PDCA root-cause analysis and permanent engineering changes with zero recurrence, including a roof-moulding pull-test investigation.
- Managed the end-to-end R&D lifecycle (engineering changes, quality, homologation), aligning engineering, manufacturing and supplier capabilities.
- Chaired operational alignment between **Chief Engineering, Manufacturing and Tier-1 suppliers** (Magna, AGC, Autoneum).
- Won **3 Toyota VA (Value Analysis) Awards** for engineering innovation and cost performance.



Exterior components responsibility for RAV4 production in Russia

Production Engineer: International Industrialisation

07/2006 – 03/2015

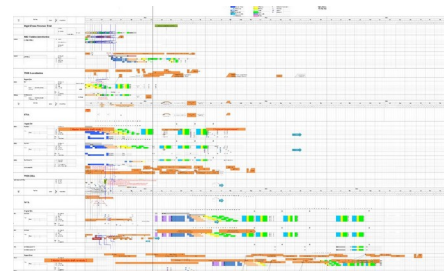
Toyota Motor Europe, UK / Türkiye / Czech Republic / Japan

Role description

Led production engineering for new vehicle launches across multiple plants, starting in stamping engineering for major body parts.

Key achievements

- **Led cross-functional, cross-cultural teams of 20+** across the UK, Türkiye, Czech Republic and Japan for industrialisation of new models.
- Embedded Lean standards and built **continuous-improvement capability at four plant locations**, achieving stable production through high-risk launch phases.
- Designed standardised **quality-assurance frameworks and Stamping Process Form checklists**, reducing production risk and ensuring launch readiness.
- Gained **hands-on TPS experience** working directly within Toyota's Japanese manufacturing operations.



Managing stamping die development across international plants

Sergeant

2005 – 2006

Turkish Armed Forces (military service)

- Managed operations and a team of 10+ in a structured, high-pressure environment; early foundation for later cross-functional leadership.

Head of Product Design

11/2003 – 07/2005

Venüs Kalıp San. ve Tic. A.Ş., İstanbul, Türkiye

Company context

Venüs Kalıp is a specialised engineering firm providing design support and prototype manufacturing services using CNC and SLA technologies.

Key achievements

- **Founded and led the Product Design department** from inception, building it into a high-throughput rapid-prototyping centre serving leading industrial and medical clients (e.g. Arçelik).
- Engineered life-critical medical components (**mandible implants**) using CATIA V5, advanced stress analysis and tomography-to-model conversion, achieving **100% anatomical accuracy**.



3D-printed mandible from a tomography scan

EDUCATION

- **MBA (Honours), Global Leader Program** | Nagoya University of Commerce & Business (NUCB), Japan (2011 – 2012)
- **MSc Mechanical Engineering** | Istanbul Technical University, Türkiye (2002 – 2005)
- **BSc Mechanical Engineering** | Yıldız Technical University, Türkiye (1998 – 2002)

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Toyota Business Practices (TBP), full programme · PDCA & A3 Report Writing · TPS in the Office / TPS Tools · Power BI Basic Training (instructor-led) · DRBFM Basic Training

Full record of 140+ internal Toyota courses available on request.

LANGUAGES & NATIONALITY

Languages: Turkish (native), English (fluent), Dutch (intermediate), Japanese (intermediate), French (elementary)

Nationality: Belgian national (dual Belgian & Turkish); full EU work authorisation