

How Redheads Engineering Services increased its SAQ score from 47 to 91 with Modularity

Case study



Engineering excellence across Europe and Africa

Founded in Germany, Redheads Engineering Services offers tailored support to international clients across Europe and Africa, including several in the automotive sector. With a substantial presence in South Africa, the team provides diverse services including specialist engineering, project management, quality assurance, and automation and process optimisation.

Redheads also provides engineering secondments to clients requiring specialist skills in-house for a period of time.

The engineering consultancy has several key automotive clients including Continental, focusing on autonomous driving, and BMW, who first invited Redheads to complete the Sustainability

Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ), created and maintained by Drive Sustainability and delivered exclusively through the NQC supply chain risk management platform, back in 2023.



Thanks to the SAQ, we're feeling far more confident about tendering for projects, both with our existing automotive customers and other OEMs and Tier 1s we're yet to work with.



Michael Düvel
Executive Coordinator, Redheads Engineering Services.

RedHeads Engineering Group in numbers



€6.1 M
revenue in 2025



500+
employees

2

Continents supporting clients

SAQ challenges for service providers

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As sustainability is important to Redheads at every level, the company was pleased to have the opportunity to document this for the automotive sector and demonstrate its credentials as a sustainable supplier. Before changes were made to the Drive Sustainability SAQ, Redheads experienced restrictions to achieving a high SAQ Rating due to not being a manufacturer.

Before SAQ Modularity launched, all supplier types, small and large - whether a manufacturer or service provider - answered the same set of questions. As Redheads is a service provider employing around 50 people.

Michael explained: “It felt like the SAQ was primarily aimed at manufacturers because we couldn’t meaningfully respond to several parts of the questionnaire. For example, we don’t source raw materials, so we cannot respond to questions about our ethics around that. And we cannot say how we’re reducing our carbon footprint through power management, as we don’t manufacture anything. We also rent office space, so we can’t influence many sustainability aspects of the building we work in.”

As a result, Redheads had to answer “no” to certain questions that were simply not applicable to its operations, which negatively impacted its SAQ Rating. Michael continued: “We were frustrated that we couldn’t score highly because of certain sections being irrelevant to us as a service provider. We knew our SAQ Rating may influence future project wins, but improving it was beyond our control, even though we were performing sustainably.”

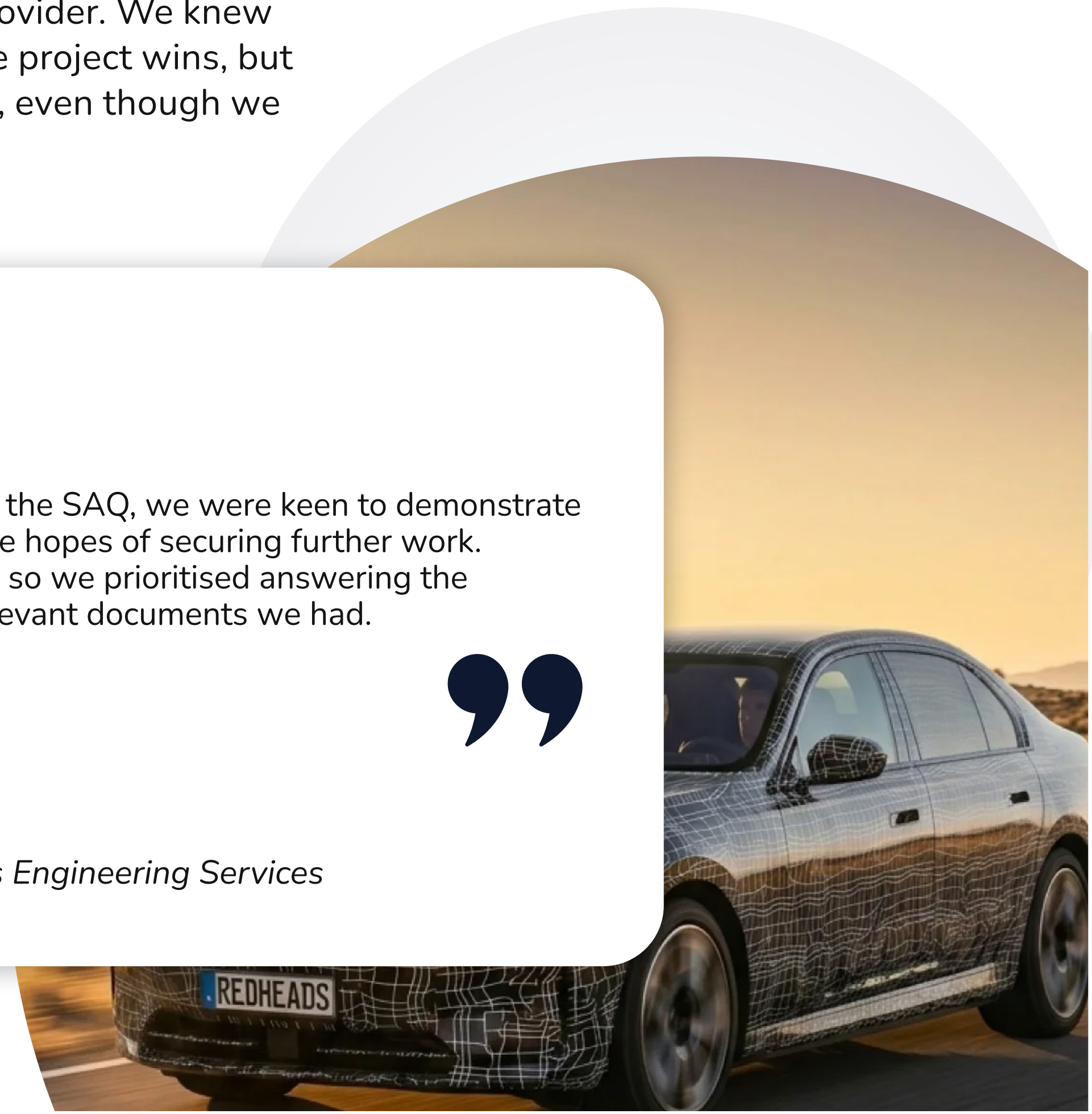
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When BMW invited us to complete the SAQ, we were keen to demonstrate our sustainability performance in the hopes of securing further work. Sustainability matters to Redheads, so we prioritised answering the questionnaire and uploaded any relevant documents we had.

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Michael Düvel

Executive Coordinator at Redheads Engineering Services



Modularity resolves SAQ Rating gap for service providers

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Launched in March 2025, Modularity is a change in SAQ minimum requirements that enables non-manufacturing suppliers to answer questions more meaningfully, giving them the opportunity to improve their SAQ Rating. Modularity also helps OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers evaluate sustainability risks more effectively across a wider range of industries the entire supplier chain – not just manufacturing.

The notion for Modularity came from supplier feedback, which was later supported by SAQ data research Drive Sustainability and NQC completed. They were looking to identify opportunities that could develop the SAQ and ensure suppliers from all sectors could achieve a more meaningful rating.

Analysing 43,000 SAQ responses between 2021 and 2023, the research showed that 65% of suppliers evaluated were manufacturers. Furthermore, non-manufacturers completing the SAQ typically had a smaller headcount and achieved a lower SAQ Rating. With OEMs keen to take a broader, risk-based approach to supplier sustainability, and smaller service providers eager to demonstrate their sustainability performance better, Modularity seemed like the ideal development.

Redheads Engineering Services was one of the first non-manufacturing suppliers to enhance its SAQ response using Modularity. Michael considered his early impressions.

“Modularity has made completing the SAQ much more satisfying for us as a service provider. We can now answer what’s applicable to what we do and avoid questions only relevant to manufacturers. This directly impacts our overall rating. We’d previously completed the SAQ before Modularity, so we jumped back in to enhance certain sections with more relevant documentation and answers. Resubmitting it, our SAQ Rating leapt from 47 to 91 – what a breakthrough!” said Michael.

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In a recent conversation to the SAQ helpdesk, I asked why certain sections had to apply to non-manufacturers, and whether there was a way to get around this. They told me Modularity was about to launch and would solve our frustration. Of course, we weren’t entirely sure what Modularity was then, but felt reassured our answer was coming soon,

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Michael Düvel

Executive Coordinator at Redheads Engineering Services

Confidence to tender

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The global standard for assessing automotive supplier sustainability, the SAQ helps leading manufacturers select long-term partners across all areas of their operations while ensuring their sustainability performance continues to meet ever-growing legislative requirements.

Having resubmitted its SAQ using Modularity, Redheads is in a far better position to develop strong partnerships across the automotive industry.

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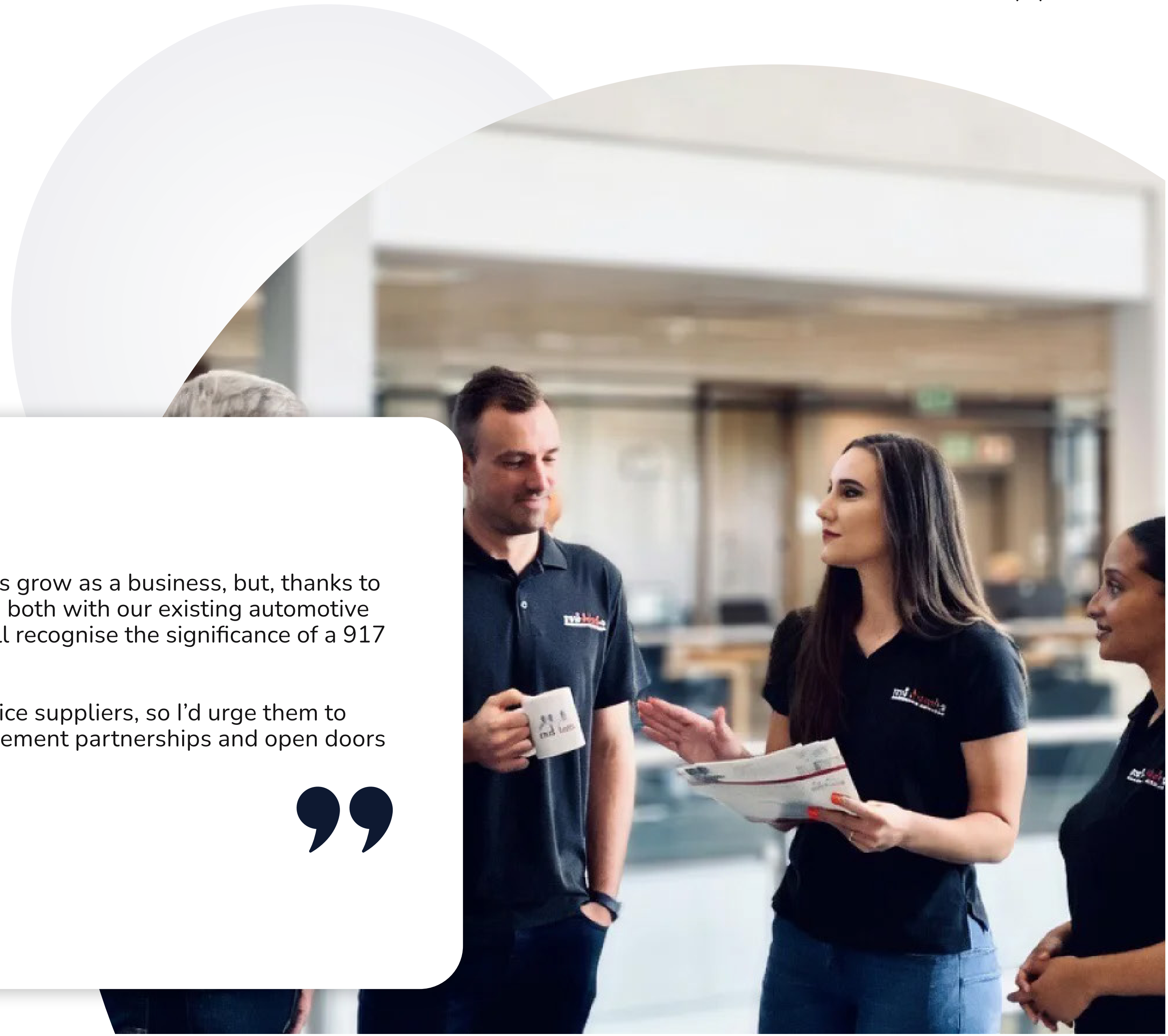
It's too early to say how having a B917 SAQ Rating will help Redheads grow as a business, but, thanks to the SAQ, we're feeling far more confident about tendering for projects, both with our existing automotive customers and other OEMs and Tier 1s we're yet to work with. They all recognise the significance of a 917 SAQ Rating so we feel optimistic about our future opportunities.

With Modularity, the SAQ has got so much better for automotive service suppliers, so I'd urge them to complete it now. Far from a box-ticking exercise, I believe it can help cement partnerships and open doors

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Michael Düvel

Executive Coordinator at Redheads Engineering Services





About Drive Sustainability

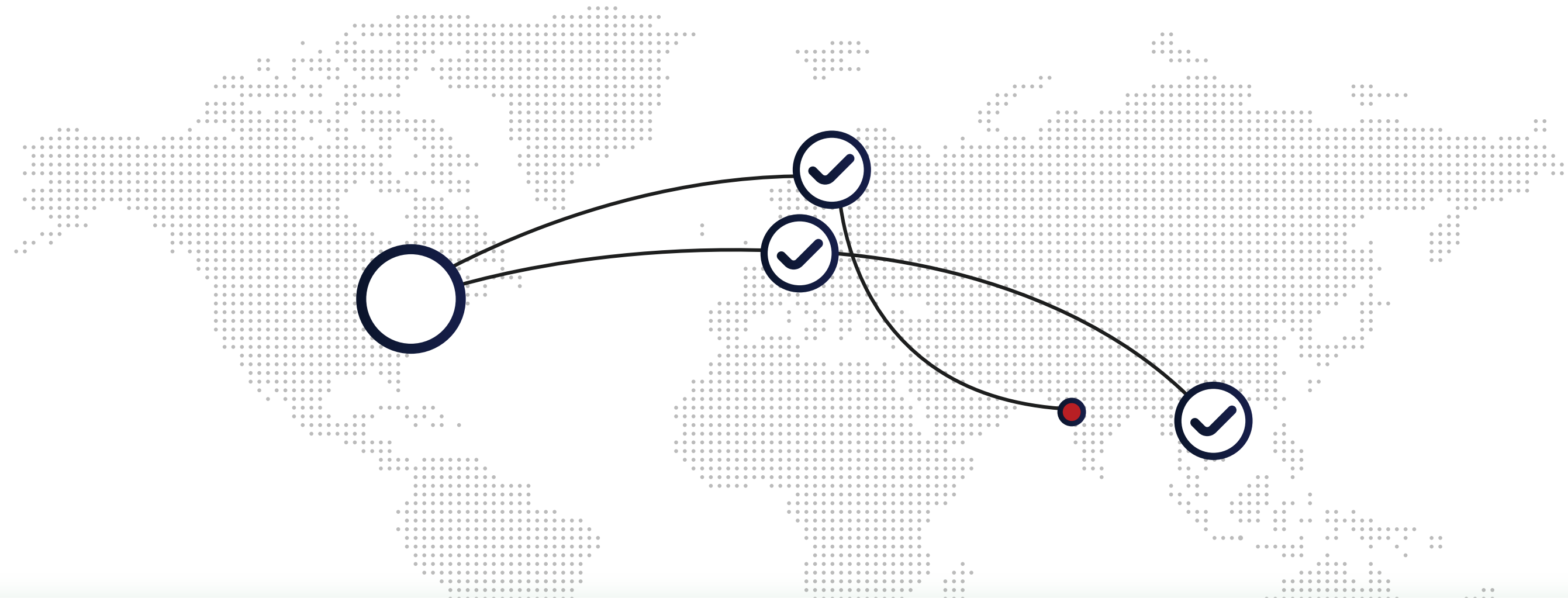
Drive Sustainability is an automotive Partnership between 18 automotive manufacturers, facilitated by CSR Europe.

Our mission is to work together to improve the social, ethical, and environmental performance of automotive supply chains. It is of great importance to this partnership of responsible automotive manufacturers that the individuals making vehicles, components, or providing services, are afforded decent working conditions and are treated with dignity and respect, while minimising the environmental impact of their industry.



About NQC

For more than two decades, NQC has pioneered supply chain mapping and due diligence technology. Our supply chain risk management platform is trusted by some of the world's largest manufacturers to uncover hidden risks, track compliance and strengthen resilience across complex, multi-tier supply chains. By combining expert data feeds with supplier-led assessments, we provide organisations with an intuitive, action-focused view of risk that supports both regulatory compliance and strategic goals.



Assuring global supply chains. Link by link

NQC secures global supply chains, empowering organisations to meet the highest standards of sustainability, ethics, and compliance. Our Supply Chain Risk Management Platform maps supply chains to tier n, reveals and profiles ESG risks, providing actionable insights for scalable risk remediation with our proven supplier assurance framework. Trusted by global automotive OEMs and used across 129,000+ supplier locations, we combine innovation with proven expertise to protect and enhance global supply chains.