

## Interview with Leon Kierkels

Channels: TF page on myASML (after April 1) and TF newsletter at the end of April  
for extra awareness

---

### **Meet Leon Kierkels, new Head of TWINSCAN FAB NXT**

Leon joined our factory recently. Not new to ASML, he brings a lot of experience to this role, including welding with his grandfather and building furniture with his father. Having spent a lot of time on factory floors, he brings real hands-on experience to the NXT team; he also spent a year-and-a-half with Hella in Changchun, China, which changed his life. How? Keep reading!

### **Leon, what will you be doing in your new role at TWINSCAN Factory as of April 1?**

I'm joining as head of TWINSCAN FAB NXT, with achieving our growing NXT output for the years to come my main focus. The people in TF are our most important asset, and they are currently under intense pressure; it's impressive to see everybody going the extra mile, and how help from other sectors and within TF, from different teams, is helping TF make tremendous progress. We have to find a sustainable way to cope with the output challenge going forward, and I look forward to hearing ideas from the teams as to how we should manage this growth. I believe the wellbeing and engagement of our teams is key, and I want to understand what our teams need to stay or become so-called 'high performing teams,' teams that can achieve results independently while still having fun together.

### **What do you bring along from your background in other companies and at ASML?**

During my career I have learned what it means to be (end) responsible, the value of making decisions, how to deal with setbacks, how to improve cross sector processes – and how difficult this can be – and how to lead teams.

During my time at Hella I learned how to run and improve the injection molding production tools and how speed, uptime, quality and underlying aspect are all necessary for real progress. As the owner of my own trading company, I learned how to close international business deals, improve my suppliers' production processes and respond to customer service requests, all while working in a fiercely competitive marketplace.

As consultant at the Geo Group, I gained in-depth data analysis skill and learned how to manage customer relationships, make deals and manage projects. When I joined ASML in 2008 as Improvement Lead in New Product Logistics, the combination of skills I acquired at Geo Group helped me make a great start: I was able to start up and manage multiple improvement projects simultaneously, all supported with data from our IT tools and in close cooperation with internal stakeholders. I had fun, and my sponsors also enjoyed my progress. When the credit crunch kicked in in 2009, I was asked to take on an operational role instead of focusing on improvements.

I was actually planning the materials for proto & pilot systems across Apps, DUV and EUV, and I gained a lot of relevant insights into the processes; I also came to understand how difficult it can be for 'working level' to deliver in the setting of processes and IT tools (which can sometimes be cumbersome).

Over the following years I grew into team lead, program manager, ONE project lead configuration change and department head of S&SC Product Lifecycle Management EUV. In the middle of D&E and operations, with a seat in the business line program team, this department delivers supply chain product readiness, including supply chain set-up, material availability, Cost of Goods & industrialization ahead of ramp-up. During my tenure at ASML I have visited the production facilities of many suppliers, the ASML factories and some of our customers. I've also taken on several short-term assignments at ASML. One I enjoyed immensely, and where I learned a lot about both the production of our EUV light source and about how two companies are merged, was during my time at Cymer San Diego, a former supplier which became an ASML company in 2013.

Finally, two other 'short' assignments, at Wilton Factory after the ONE go-live in 2019, and supporting 5L Warehouse in 2021, gave me valuable opportunities to study factory operations.

### **Why did you decide to change role?**

I always liked 'production environments.' My grandfather was a welder, and I spent a lot of time at his side long before I started my career, and I also made furniture with my father. Once I started working, I spent a lot of time on the factory floor at a number of industrial companies. When I came to ASML I was supposed to start in manufacturing, and it was just by chance I landed in what is today Sourcing & Supply Chain. I took on a number of roles here and had a great time, though manufacturing was always in my 'development action plan.' During the past decade I had several opportunities to switch to manufacturing, but it was never the right moment until a few months ago, when the Head of FAB NXT role opened – at that point it seemed the time was perfect to make the switch, especially given the additional challenge of unprecedented growth in DUV and an opportunity to lead the NXT team through this ramp-up. Also, my former team in S&SC EUV High-NA is in good shape, the first High-NA proto builds are in progress at ASML, and my successor has been selected. These are all great reasons to handover my S&SC EUV High-NA responsibilities and move to FAB NXT.

### **What do you expect of this role? What is your ambition?**

My main ambition is to do well. This means meeting the output targets while leading the NXT team and ensuring its wellbeing. To achieve all of this, I expect I'll need to learn a lot about manufacturing at ASML and a lot about what makes the NXT team tick – to this end I'm going to actually join several shifts during the coming period, so I can get to know our people and our stakeholders. I also plan to visit a number of customer sites for install and learn from their input how I NXT can do even better.

### **Something about your personal life?**

I grew up in a small village in the south of the Netherlands, Baexem, then I moved to Eindhoven to begin my studies. Toward the end of my studies I spent a year and a half in Changchun, China, with Hella. I really enjoyed my time at Hella Changchun, especially as my office was on the production floor where we produced the automotive lighting. Living in China certainly changed my life. I had way more spare time in China than I'd had in the Netherlands, during school, and I used my free time to discover Changchun and its surroundings; I also made some international friends. My time in China also got me interested in international business, and I began to wonder what it would be like to be an entrepreneur. Once I returned to the Netherlands, I started my own company to import goods from China, mostly design furniture. I ran this company 'on the side' for several years, until I decided to commit to my career at ASML.

The biggest thing that happened to me in China, however, was when I met the love of my life, Manhua, in 2004. After three years travelling up and down between here and there, Manhua moved to the Netherlands, and since she arrived we've been blessed with two kids, Lucia (2008) and Michael (2010). COVID put our yearly family trip to China on hold, unfortunately, but I'm hoping things will finally calm down and we can restart this tradition. We live in Eindhoven now, just ten minutes by bike from the TWINSCAN Factory. Besides spending time with my family, I enjoy travelling, skiing and playing field hockey with friends.

**Thanks Leon! We wish you a great time at TF!**