

Muhamad Shahrman Munit

His family comes first. And second too.

Muhamad Shahrman Munit has only just taken a seat when he stops for a minute and pulls his cell phone out of his pants pocket. It's showing a new SMS. He uses this phone so often that the letters and numbers are already completely worn off the buttons. Munit apologizes, opens the SMS, stands up again and hurries away, still reading. It is 35 degrees in the shade in Petaling Jaya, a city just outside the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. In the gardens all over the Continental site, between the buildings, there are numerous orchids and trees of all different colors blooming in the sultry heat. But Munit has no time to stop and admire the view. The Quality Manager strides off to the production hall at the other end of the site and disappears into one of the long corridors. In here, things hiss, rumble, whistle and crackle. And it is here that the 39 year old feels at home. "In my job," he explains later, "it is important to really get to know the precise processes and procedures in the plant, because it's down to me to ensure the consistent quality of our products. Of course, questions and problems are always going to come up. And finding a solution to these is more than just my job." His face lights up, as he adds, "it's my great passion."

This enthusiasm for his job and his surroundings was not immediately apparent when Munit embarked on his career all those years ago. Shortly after completing his studies at the Universiti Sains Malaysia in 1999, he began working for Continental Sime Tyres in Petaling Jaya. "I was so nervous on my first day of work," he explains. "Of course, I'd just left university and straight away got my first job with a large international corporation. And then I didn't understand a word of what my new colleagues were talking about!" he laughs. It wasn't easy to get familiar with the processes and technical concepts of tire technology. At that time, Munit wasn't even sure whether he would stick at it for long. But twelve years later, he's still there.

"And I love my job," he says. "It might sound clichéd, but it's true."

There are two reasons for this: "Firstly, it's down to the company—Continental looks after me, I'm treated well here. That is something really special. Secondly, it's the strong team spirit among my colleagues in the radial tire factory, whether they work in management or in production. It's this teamwork that motivates me the most. There is never the one person who solves all the problems; our work is only effective if we are a good team." He draws on a particular metaphor to explain why that is so important: "In soccer, you need all eleven players to score a goal. One striker on his own cannot accomplish anything."

Soccer is a subject he is well versed in. He gets most of his information via satellite TV—not only about the Malaysian soccer league, but also the German Bundesliga, the Spanish Primera División and, in particular, the English Premier League.

"Bayern Munich is very popular here in Malaysia, it's true!" he says, laughing. "The best German player, in my opinion, is Mesut Özil, but my favorite is always Ryan Giggs of Manchester United."

And occasionally, depending on which team is playing, Munit has been known to stay up until two in the morning to watch a European soccer game. Soccer and the rules of the game have further-reaching consequences for this family man—when "his" team, Manchester United, play their arch-rivals Chelsea F.C. "We have a strict rule at home," he explains with a laugh. "My eight-year-old son is a huge Chelsea fan. If Chelsea lose to Manchester United,



then he has to help his mother with any chores. And yes," he sighs, "if Manchester United lose, I have to hang out with my son." But it is not as if he needs an incentive to do this anyway. He loves spending time with his wife and two children, and he is happy that his work leaves enough space for this, because quality time with his family is extremely important to him.

His cell phone only sometimes rings on his days off. "It happens every now and then," he says. "Usually I can delegate whatever it is to a colleague, but sometimes I have to go into work briefly myself." His family accepts this and he is extremely grateful to them for that. "Fortunately I have the full support of my wife Sarinah and my two children Hafiz and Arina. They can see that I find my work really fulfilling and that I enjoy it."

In his twelve years at Continental Sime Tyre, Muhamad Shahrman Munit has held several roles, including Technical Executive, Production Executive, and Industrial Engineer. His line managers have always advised him to move on after a short time. "To start with I worried that it was because they thought I wasn't good enough in my current position. But then I understood that they wanted to help me progress. And I'm very grateful for that."

Today he heads up quality management for truck and bus radial tires and tire uniformity. "I really like this area," he says. "I like to solve problems. It's a bit like a math exercise, and sometimes it's so tricky that I can't see how or where to start. But that is exactly the sort of challenge that I relish." It is also a challenge that he is well equipped to face. "The training courses that Continental has sent me on have been a lot of help," he says. "In 2005, for example, I was lucky enough to get some advanced training at a Continental factory in Europe. That was incredible—it's hard to put it into words. It was really exciting to see how our brothers and sisters in Europe work. There is a completely different mentality there to in Malaysia. Some of what I learned there was so impressive that I agreed with my bosses here in Petaling Jaya that I could integrate this into our local working methods. This has allowed us to improve our results."

Munit looks back very fondly on his twelve years at Continental. As well as his training in Otrokovice, Puchov, and Hanover, there was one other extra special highlight. In 2011, he was nominated for the ContiTireAward. This prize is awarded each year for outstanding performances by employees within the global tire division. "Getting to the final round of the ContiTireAward 2011 was a great achievement for me," he says. And you can still sense how proud he is that he was put forward for this honor. "It's something I'll never forget."