

DEVELOPMENT

IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

NCAP - Reaching for the stars.



KBC

KEMÉNY BOEHME & COMPANY

„5 stars in the Euro NCAP“

Often, according to advertising slogans such as „Joy of driving“ or „Vorsprung durch Technik“ you hear the sentence: „5 stars - test winner in the Euro NCAP crash test“. But what lies behind the abbreviation NCAP? And what makes these letters so important that they are mentioned in advertising?

What does NCAP stand for and what is behind it?

The abbreviation NCAP means New Car Assessment Programme (European), behind which stands an association of European transport ministries, automobile clubs and insurance associations. The seat of this association is in Brussels. It could be concluded from the close proximity to the European Parliament that NCAP has something to do with legislation and politics. A not entirely false assumption...

The association of various interest groups from the automotive world has set itself the goal of testing new car models from different manufacturers that come onto the market objectively and independently. The focus is on the evaluation from the customer's point of view. Safety and assistance systems are tested and crash tests are carried out. The tests are always carried out on the basis of uniform criteria, which are defined in the so-called NCAP protocol. If a vehicle model successfully completes these tests, it will receive a star rating depending on the result. Reaching 5 stars represents the highest possible award, which is then often used in an effective way in advertising.

Challenges for the automotive industry

In order to be able to ensure that the 5-star rating is also very likely to be achieved, automotive OEMs are already putting their new models to the acid test in advance. In this way, possible errors and weak points can be eliminated before the tests. The effort behind these tests has grown rapidly over the last few years. Whereas car manufacturers launched about 100 models 30 years ago, today almost five times as many models and variants are offered.

However, it is not only the massive increase in model diversity that is causing problems for companies, but also the growing demands and associated functions that are being tested within the scope of the NCAP protocol. Due to more and more individual customer requirements and technology leaps, the product „automobile“ is becoming increasingly complex. Whereas a handful of control units were still sufficient in a vehicle years ago in order to move a vehicle, today more than 100 control units have to interact in order to implement modern assistance systems. Customer functions in the field of automated driving also require vehicles to recognise and respond appropriately to a variety of environmental and traffic situations in the future. The correct behaviour of security and assistance systems is therefore becoming an increasingly important part of NCAP test protocols. Suitable infrastructures in the form of test sites and technical equipment are required in order to be able to develop and test the vehicle functions.

For example, a large number of scenarios from public transport must be illustrated reproducibly. For this purpose, driving robots are used, which in turn have to be prepared, installed, programmed and calibrated for the specific use. Driving robots replace the human driver and are used for testing reproducibly. Special know-how is required for these tests, which is hardly available on the labour market for car manufacturers, not least due to attractive competition from the IT industry.

In order to meet these increasing infrastructure and personnel challenges, long-term planning and forecasting of test requirements in constant comparison with existing resources is required. Rapidly increasing requirements and specifications are increasing the risk for the automotive industry of not being able to provide the much-needed resources to a sufficient extent.

At KBC, we have decades of experience right here and accompany our customers very successfully with their challenges in the automotive industry. This joint success allows both car manufacturers and their customers to reach for the stars...

**Curious?
Please contact us.**



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