

Q.ANT Appoints IBM Veteran Joerg Behrend to Lead Photonic Processor Hardware Development

15 years at IBM at the hardware-software boundary: Behrend takes ownership of the next generations of Q.ANT's photonic AI processors, from chip technology to volume readiness

Stuttgart, Germany, September 09, 2026 – [Q.ANT](#), a leading provider of photonic processors for energy-efficient high-performance computing and artificial intelligence, is strengthening its leadership team with the addition of Joerg Behrend, who joined the company as Vice President Hardware. In this role, he will be responsible for advancing the next generations of Q.ANT's photonic processors – from the underlying chip technology and processor architecture through to production readiness of the Native Processing Units (NPUs). Behrend reports to CTO Bruno Spruth and works across Q.ANT's Stuttgart and Austin, Texas, sites.

Behrend's technical background spans processor development, high-performance computing, and parallel and distributed systems. Joerg Behrend brings more than two decades of experience in developing processor and system technologies. Most recently, he served as Senior Software Engineering Manager at IBM, where he led development teams at the intersection of hardware and software. His technical background spans processor development, high-performance computing, and parallel and distributed systems. At IBM, he most recently served as Senior Manager for IBM Quantum at IBM Research & Development in Böblingen, where he was responsible for several R&D departments with up to 30 employees, focusing on cloud backend development, compilers, tooling, and runtime engineering for quantum computing – a role at the intersection of quantum hardware and software.

"Photonic processors are running in data centers today. The harder part starts now: building them reproducibly, at volume, and across multiple generations," says Dr. Michael Förtsch, Founder and CEO of Q.ANT. "Throughout his career, Joerg Behrend has seen what that takes: engineering hardware and software together until the result is a system a data center can rely on. That discipline is what separates a working prototype from a product."

"For two decades, I have worked on systems that all ran into the same ceiling in the end: energy per operation," says Joerg Behrend. "Photonics moves that ceiling rather than managing it. What drew me to Q.ANT is how rare the assignment is - shaping an entirely new class of processor across multiple generations, from architecture through to operation in the data center."

"The U.S. market determines how quickly a new computing architecture gains traction," says Bruno Spruth, CTO of Q.ANT and head of the Austin office. "Q.ANT is developing an entirely new class of processors. This requires leaders who can guide complex, cross-location teams through uncharted technical territory, especially as we expand to keep pace with the dynamic growth in the U.S. With Joerg Behrend, we've been able to bring on board the perfect candidate for us."

Behrend is the fifth leadership position Q.ANT has filled within twelve months. In early 2026, Utz Bacher (previously IBM) joined as Vice President Software and Lars Bach as Vice

President Operations. In April, Michael Krueger (previously Intel) joined as Vice President Commercials and Bruno Spruth (previously IBM) as Chief Technology Officer, who also leads the U.S. headquarters in Austin, Texas. The leadership team now combines experience from IBM, Intel and semiconductor manufacturing as the company moves from technology developer to product supplier: Q.ANT's photonic systems are in use at, among others, the Leibniz Supercomputing Centre, the Jülich Supercomputing Centre (Forschungszentrum Jülich), and IONOS.

About Q.ANT

Q.ANT is commercializing photonic accelerators for AI and high-performance computing, offering a scalable alternative to transistor-based systems. Its Native Processing Units (NPUs) perform mathematical operations directly on Thin-Film Lithium Niobate (TFLN) based photonic integrated circuits, enabling energy-efficient, high-performance co-processing for complex computational tasks.

Q.ANT was founded in 2018. Its European headquarters is in Stuttgart, Germany, where it operates its own TFLN chip pilot line with IMS CHIPS, and it maintains a U.S. office in Austin, Texas. The company secured Europe's largest Series A for photonic computing in 2025 and introduced its second-generation processor the same year, now installed and running at leading scientific computing centers with its first commercial deployment planned for 2026. www.qant.com

Pictures



Joerg Behrend, Vice President Hardware at Q.ANT

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