



Press release

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Gutekunst Formfedern to receive TOP 100 award

Überlingen – The company Gutekunst Formfedern GmbH, based in Pfalzgrafenweiler, has made it into the TOP 100 in the 26th year of the innovation competition. It will receive its award on 28 June from competition mentor Ranga Yogeshwar, TOP 100 coordinator Professor Nikolaus Franke and compamedia at Frankfurt's Jahrhunderthalle events venue. TOP 100 uses a rigorous process of analysis to assess how SMEs manage innovation and how successful they are in bringing these innovations to market. Gutekunst Formfedern, which has 121 employees, impressed the independent panel of judges with its innovation-focused senior management team and its innovation climate. This is the 13th time that the company has joined this elite group.

Gutekunst Formfedern develops and manufactures springs made from strip material as well as bent wire parts and box springs. Most of its customers are in the automotive and mechanical engineering industries. The Black Forest-based TOP 100 company is renowned for its spirit of innovation, which is complemented by strong internal communications. "Effective communication that transcends hierarchies and departments is our number one priority," says managing director Hagen Gutekunst. This principle lays the foundation for a climate of innovation that unlocks the full creativity of the 121 employees. Even the smallest flash of inspiration can be sent via the intranet to the ideas managers, who in turn nurture the creative potential in the various departments. Employees who don't have access to a computer can note down and submit their suggestions on innovation postcards that are left in various places around the building.

Compared with some of its bigger competitors, Gutekunst Formfedern is very flexibly structured. It is able to cover the entire spectrum from single-piece fabrication to medium-sized production runs of up to 100,000 units. This structure has a key advantage: even the company's biggest customers account for only 5 per cent of its revenue. "Should one of them suddenly decide they no longer wish to work with us, we'd be able to cope with that without any problems," explains Gutekunst.

The TOP 100 competition

Since 1993, compamedia has been awarding the Top 100 seal of approval to SMEs with a particular ability to innovate and above-average success rates for innovations. Professor Nikolaus Franke has coordinated the project since 2002, and is the founder and director of the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. The TOP 100 is mentored by science journalist Ranga Yogeshwar and organised in partnership with the Fraunhofer Society for the Promotion of Applied Research and the German Association for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (BVMW). Media support for the company benchmarking competition is provided by manager magazin, Impulse, and W&V. Further information is available at www.top100-germany.com.

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