



reddot design award

Press release

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Design as a way out of the crisis – the industry braces itself

Our economy is unwell; in fact extremely unwell as we can tell from the insolvency proceedings of numerous traditional businesses which are currently dominating the newspaper headlines. But is there a long-term way out of the crisis at all? In the long run, first aid packages do not help to eliminate the root cause. The economy has to find a way to help itself. Baron Münchhausen has shown us how to do it; and one man sees a way how companies can, in a similar fashion, pull themselves out of the crisis by their own hair: Professor Dr. Peter Zec, initiator of the successful red dot design award, has observed that companies are increasingly investing in design to strengthen their market positions. As evidence of these developments, Zec refers to the current number of entries to the design competition. "In this year's 'red dot award: product design' we have noticed that the number of entries has increased by only two percent compared to the previous year. It is, however, interesting to note that the number of participating companies has increased by approximately 16 percent," says Peter Zec. This is a clear development showing that a growing number of companies have recognised that they have to invest in creativity in order to survive in the global competition in spite of the crisis.

With targeted investments in creative achievements a well-positioned company could be much more successful in the market than its competitors and evoke customers' willingness to purchase, says Zec. This sounds good, but what to do if there is not enough money? The financial crisis was not a reason behind which one could hide but a motivation to swim to the surface with an effective use of creativity. "Design is added value," says Zec. The question "What holds its value in times of crisis?" is answered with "Quality" by companies and consumers. "The design affinity of the individual industries is higher than ever before," says Zec. "From a technological point of view we have made top achievements in recent years. Now the task is to



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separate the wheat from the chaff and this is where design quality comes into play."

Design quality as a way out of the crisis – this is a thesis that requires courage; courage and perseverance. An investment in this area could only be advantageous in any case, but "of course it will be difficult to properly implement the best ideas without the necessary funds," summarises the design expert. "However, for those companies that take advantage of the red dot design award and face a tough international comparison it will also be easier to find suitable investors." Especially in times of crisis, people again and again trust the value of renowned and familiar products. This particularly includes the trust in good product quality. It goes without saying that this is evoked to a large extent by the products' design. The companies that offer the highest added value through design during the crisis thus also have much better chances of surviving, compared to their less creative competitors. Those who are able to offer products with better design now will in the end survive the crisis and emerge as a winner.

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