



FEINMETALL GmbH is one of the 100 most innovative medium-sized enterprises in Germany

Lothar Späth awards *Top 100* seal of approval to testing equipment manufacturer from south-west Germany

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FEINMETALL GmbH is one of the 100 most innovative small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in Germany. The company has been awarded a seal of approval in the 16th *Top 100* corporate benchmarking competition for its systematic, well thought out and successful innovation management. Lothar Späth, former state premier of Baden-Württemberg, will present this prestigious award to FEINMETALL GmbH at an official ceremony in Düsseldorf's Meilenwerk building on Friday, 4 July 2008.

As patron of the SME project he will be recognising FEINMETALL GmbH's achievements in the five key categories of „Innovation-friendly Senior Management“, „Climate of Innovation“, „Innovative Processes and Organisation“, „Innovations Marketing“ and „Successful Innovations“.

This family-owned company, whose revenue totalled around € 28 million euros in 2007, manufactures testing equipment for the electronics industry and it has won this prize primarily for its successful innovation process, which is the result of its extremely strong innovation management skills.

The company's senior managers are actively involved in the innovation process and they attach great importance to new ideas. Two to three



times a year the management team holds strategy workshops which are attended by operational staff from all divisions to develop and drive forward innovations. Once a year there are additional creativity workshops with external advisors from research institutes and technology networks such as the Fraunhofer Institute or the Steinbeis Transfer Centre. The marketing function is also heavily involved in innovation processes, carrying out market acceptance tests, working with pilot customers, running tests at institutes and organisations, carrying out initial sample tests, running evaluation projects and conducting prototype approval tests. „We always provide solutions on the boundaries

of technical feasibility and we are constantly pushing the envelope“, commented managing director Wolfgang Bürkle. This obviously gets results, because innovative enhancements created in the last three years now account for an extremely high 60 per cent of current revenue.

To qualify for the award, the company had to undergo a stringent two-stage process devised by the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration. Professor Nikolaus Franke assesses the innovative capabilities of the entrants and selects the top one hundred, which this year include 49 German market leaders and 17 global market leaders.



The results in other categories also illustrate the exceptional position of the **Top 100** companies, as shown by a benchmarking survey undertaken by Vienna University. This reveals that the top 100 companies are twice as successful in terms of innovation as other SMEs in their peer group. In the past three years they generated 67 per cent of their profits from innovations and innovative improvements – compared with 35 per cent in the sample of similarly structured companies. 58 per cent of the top 100 companies provide „internal venture capital“, i.e. money for employees to pursue their own innovative ideas – compared with just 2 per cent of the average SMEs questioned. „I was very impressed by this figure, but not surprised by it. After all, if you want to launch radically new products and to succeed with them, you have to be willing to take certain risks“ says Professor Franke. With such tough competition, FEINMETALL is even prouder of its place in the **Top 100** as Wolfgang Bürkle confirms „We are now one of the 100 most innovative SMEs in Germany, which proves to us that we are on the right track“.

All 100 companies are featured in the book „**Top 100** – the 100 most innovative companies in Germany's SME sector“ introduced by Lothar Späth and on the website www.top100.de. The **Top 100** project is organised by compamedia GmbH, Überlingen, Germany. Overall, more than 342 companies entered the Top 100 competition this year. The next round of this prestigious competition for SMEs begins in September 2008.

Mentor, partners and coordination

The project's patron is Lothar Späth. Partners in the project are: Fraunhofer Society for the Promotion of Applied Research, the German Centre for

It runs the „**Top 100** - Germany's most innovative medium-sized businesses“ project, the employers' benchmarking award „TOP JOB – the 100 best SME employers“ and „Ethics in Business – pioneers of ethical conduct“.



This text is available in digital format from nakoinz@compamedia.de. Photographs of the awards ceremony will be available in the Press section of www.top100.de from Saturday, 5 July. Your contact can provide pictures of the prize-winning company.

Productivity and Innovation (RKW), the Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies (VDE) and the Association of German Engineers (VDI). Its media partner is the Süddeutsche Zeitung newspaper. The project is coordinated by Professor Nikolaus Franke of the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration.

Organiser: compamedia GmbH
compamedia specialises in organising benchmarking projects for medium-sized German firms and in developing networks of such companies.

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