

PRESS RELEASE

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Clearaudio Electronic GmbH receives Germany's most prestigious innovation award for SMEs

Clearaudio Electronic GmbH is thrilled to be recognized in Compamedia GmbH's celebrated TOP 100® listing of innovative SMEs for 2013. The TOP 100® seal of approval is awarded annually to the most innovative small and medium-sized enterprises throughout the whole of Germany.

Now in their twentieth year, the TOP 100® awards are organised by Compamedia GmbH in conjunction with Dr Nikolaus Franke, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration. For entrants to be selected as TOP 100® firms they must demonstrate excellent performance in four different categories: innovation-friendly senior management, climate of innovation, innovative processes and organisation, and innovations marketing.

"The innovative ability of a TOP 100® company should focus on the future; it should be sustainable - both in-house and in the outside world. This requires a rounded, well-balanced innovation strategy", explains Professor Franke.

Clearaudio: "What matters most is what the customer wants"

Clearaudio Electronic GmbH operate in a small but important niche which, at first glance, may seem like the very antithesis of innovation: high-end analogue audio. While many market commentators had predicted the downfall of the sector, demand continues to grow, spurred by the resurgence of vinyl records and undeterred by the rapid expansion of digital alternatives.

Equally undeterred, over in Erlangen Clearaudio's team of 36 employees has developed a worldwide reputation for innovation as they pursue their single-minded goal of "Loving Music" and do everything in their power to ensure that the vivid detail of the live music experience is reproduced as faithfully as possible through their turntables, phonostages, amplifiers and related products.

Every month, this family business will be hard at work seeking continuous product and process enhancements: modifying and optimizing existing materials, further refining a proven technique or inventing and patenting a new one. The topic of innovation is never off the agenda and is woven into all areas of the company's operations, from management to marketing. This was the ethos of company founder Peter Suchy and has been carried forward by his three children, Robert, Patrick and Veronika, who now manage the business.

Patrick Suchy works meticulously with highly qualified engineers in the development department to explore and adapt new materials and technologies, while Robert Suchy discusses ideas for innovations with customers in Germany, Russia, China and the US. Veronika Suchy ensures an open

and creative atmosphere throughout the company and stresses that, despite the company's clear thought leadership in high-end audio design and engineering, "We're not trying to push through our own ideas for better or for worse. What matters most, what drives us, is what the customer wants."

"Companies recognised in previous awards have been among the fastest growing firms in the country"

Four key benefits make the TOP 100® project exceptionally rewarding for its winners. A benchmarking report provides a reliable SWOT analysis of innovations management and reveals any hidden potential for innovation. National-level media activity generates publicity throughout Germany and enhances the winning companies' appeal as business partners. The process of bringing together 100 top-class companies creates excellent networking opportunities and enables winners to connect with each other and explore mutual benefits. And finally, the TOP 100® seal of approval gives winners credible third party acknowledgement and effectively raises their profile in the market.

As a result, the companies recognised in previous awards have been among the fastest growing firms in the country. Many have become market leaders in Germany and some have achieved world market leadership in their sector.

The project culminates in an annual awards ceremony, a summit meeting of the TOP 100® companies. Clearaudio joined a host of Germany's top SMEs at the exclusive 2013 ceremony in Berlin's Axel Springer Passage on 5th July, where the award was presented by the TOP 100® project's mentor, Ranga Yogeshwar, a physicist and well-known radio and television presenter in Germany.

Clearaudio's Veronika Suchy says, "This success is the result of a dedicated management and staff team working closely together towards a shared goal: excellent performance. The award shows us that we are moving in the right direction. We will now use the results to further optimize our innovation management."

About the TOP 100® project / Compamedia GmbH

TOP 100® is a project organised by Compamedia GmbH in conjunction with Dr Nikolaus Franke, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration. Its project partners are the Fraunhofer Society for the Promotion of Applied Research and the renowned German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Compamedia also coordinates *Top Job* (Germany's best SME employers), *Top Consultant* (Germany's best SME consultants) and *Ethics in Business* (an initiative promoting corporate responsibility).

Founded in 1993, Compamedia GmbH organises benchmarking projects for small and medium-sized enterprises. With our partners, we use objective criteria and rigorous academic research to identify the best firms in various management spheres. Compamedia passionately supports these outstanding companies to help them become even better and measurably increase their value.

Key to abbreviations

SME Small to medium sized enterprises

SWOT Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

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