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GEORG SCHLEGEL GmbH & Co. KG

"Creating unique selling points with design"

**Max Ottenwälder speaks about the definition of good design and its importance for B2B business**

*Designer Max Ottenwälder is working for renowned companies from different sectors and has been honoured repeatedly with international design and innovation awards.* *Joint projects with GEORG SCHLEGEL have also been honoured with design awards. He is self-employed since 1980 and has founded the design agency Ottenwälder & Ottenwälder in Schwäbisch Gmünd together with Petra Kurz-Ottenwälder in 1990. Max Ottenwälder writes essays about design philosophy and product semantics for books and trade journals and holds speeches and seminars at universities, on fairs as well as in private insitutions. He has been part of the Red Dot Design Award jury several times.*

Mr. Ottenwälder, how important is a good design of products in the B2B sector in general and in the machine building sector in particular?

It´s pretty simple. It is completely irrelevant in this respect whether a production plant or an injection mould produces an ugly, a beautiful or an impractical product. The costs are the same. If this product is well designed, the company owns a unique selling point as a customer will always choose the more appealing design in case two products are technically comparable and of the same price. This is because it has the higher practical value assurance.

This realisation has established itself more and more in the B2B sector, especially in the field of machine building.

Another important reason for the design of industrial goods is the better protectability, especially in international business. A patent is often easier to bypass by competitors than a design protection. Additionally, there is a higher recognition value of the product and brand as well as a clear differentiation from competitors.

What is good design?

To answer this question, I would like to quote my renowned colleague Dieter Rams who has impacted the development of modern industrial design in Germany and internationally significantly with his design for the company Braun. His "ten theses for good design" which he established in the 1970s are still valid to this day and have also always been the basis of our design philosophy at Ottenwälder & Ottenwälder.

Good design is innovative.

Good design makes a product useful.

Good design is aesthetic design.

Good design makes a product understandable.

Good design is honest.

Good design is unobtrusive.

Good design is long-lasting.

Good design is consequent down to the smallest detail.

Good design is eco-friendly.

Good design is as little design as possible.

The appreciation for product design has significantly changed in recent years and decades. Can you describe the evolution in some brief words?

The Bauhaus in Weimar which was established in 1919 by Walter Gropius laid the foundation for a modern understanding of design as it unites art and handcraft. This tradition has been carried on at the University for Design in Ulm in the 50s on a socially democratic level. Since then industrial products are more and more a focal point of "truth to material", clarity of form and simple use. Design creates unique selling points and thus a stronger differentiation from market competitors is possible. Design has become the crucial selling point because technological differentiation has become more difficult for end users. In the age of global supply chains design mainly raises the efficiency and productivity of products.

Design and SCHLEGEL – what is your assessment for this topic?

Thanks to its product design, SCHLEGEL is one of the outstanding suppliers for pushbutton and switches in the eyes of designers. The products are designed to ultimately be integrable into any modern design concept for industrial machines. Schlegel´s design line has been defined very early by the designer Horst Diener, graduate of the Ulm School of Design, in accordance to the "ten theses for good design". What is typically here, apart from the exterior design, is the modularity which offers Schlegel´s customers a maximum of flexibility. The great number of design awards is a witness for the high design quality of the products. The design awards for our joint projects are also proof for this.

**Photo:**



Produktfoto – Bildunterschrift:

Our company has been awarded with the Red Dot Award for the proboxx, the new enclosure for machine control panels that has been developed together with the design agency Ottenwälder & Ottenwälder.

Photo: Ottenwälder & Ottenwälder

 Porträtfoto - Bildunterschrift:



Max Ottenwälder. Photo: O&O

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About Georg Schlegel GmbH & Co. KG

The brand SCHLEGEL stands for innovation, quality and design. Founded in 1945, Schlegel is today a globally operating company with headquarters in Germany, sales offices in Austria and Singapore, and exports to more than 80 countries on all five continents. The core competences: Development and production of control units, pilot lights and terminal blocks. The product portfolio further includes bus systems, enclosures, limit switches, control panels and functional components. When developing new products, Schlegel sets high standards as to the design. More than 100 national and international design awards confirm the company's high level of design expertise, among these prizes are the iF Design Award, the Red Dot Award or the German Design Award.