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What are the main updates in this year's awards?
We have eliminated some categories and adjusted the naming of others, such as 'Automation,' which is now called 'Robotics and Quality Control.' These changes allow us to follow market developments, making it easier for companies to choose the category that best fits their product.

What criteria do you consider most important when evaluating entries?

The EDP Awards are first and foremost about innovation. While technological developments play a key role—as our industry remains highly technology-driven—innovation is not solely derived from them. The emphasis now is often on software, whereas previously, it was mainly on hardware. It is this progress in technology that moves us forward concerning the applicability of digital production resources in print production.

However, it's not just about technology. Market approach and pricing can also be reasons for granting an EDP Award. For example, a different pricing structure or market approach can make a product applicable in markets other than those for which it was originally developed. We also classify this as innovation. It is important that enough factual information is provided regarding these aspects.

How does the jury define and recognize innovation when evaluating submissions?

It is important for the jury to base its judgment on as much factual information as possible. It is not enough for a product to be "distinguished" according to the manufacturer. What exactly makes it distinct must be recognizable, as well as the impact this has on the users who invest in the product. Ultimately, the EDP Awards granted are a recommendation for the readers of our trade publications to explore the product in question.

Can you share an example of a past entry that particularly impressed the jury, and why?

That is quite a challenging question. The only possible answer is that I have been involved in the judging process in various roles almost since the beginning. I would surely be doing someone a disservice if I were to name just one product here. What personally makes me happy is that, from time to time, new companies come forward with a product that adds value to the sector. These are often niche players at that moment. The fact that such companies and their offerings subsequently grow over time and become mainstream confirms the early decision to grant an Award. In line with market developments, it is relatively often software companies that conquer their own space in our market this way. I also still get excited when a company, through good old-fashioned engineering, presents a completely new way of utilizing hardware.

Sometimes I think companies are too modest. For instance, in finishing, for both commercial and large-format print, we see that the automation around machines makes them much more productive and reduces the need for staff deployment. In the field of supplies, too, we find that suppliers are sometimes too modest, even though advancements in the sustainability of production and the product itself, as well as recycling possibilities, are increasingly important and lead to product innovation that certainly warrants an Award. Here, too, it often involves more than just the product itself.

If you could give one piece of advice to participants submitting this year, what would it be?

Most of what needs to be said has been covered already: don't be too modest when submitting products for EDP assessment, but at the same time, ensure you provide enough factual information to make that assessment possible. Unfortunately, we sometimes see that the form is primarily filled with buzzwords. Something can be 'unique,' but please substantiate *why* that is the case.

It should be clear that we prefer to become familiar with the product ourselves to make a better judgment. If necessary, the jury can also use a stream to learn more about a product or consider a visit to the manufacturer or users if that is logistically feasible.