

Press Release

RATIONAL receives BBDO Consulting Best Marketing Company Award

Study: Market orientation raises each innovative power and customer satisfaction as high as 18% respectively/ BBDO Consulting and the Chair for Innovative Brand Management of the University of Bremen analyse the success factors of market-oriented German companies / The winner is RATIONAL specialised in canteen kitchen technology followed by AUDI ranked 2nd place and SolarWorld ranked 3rd.

Düsseldorf, 25 April 2008 – BBDO Consulting, the international management consulting arm of the German BBDO Group, and the Chair for Innovative Brand Management of the University of Bremen have published an empirical study wherein the success factors of market-oriented companies are examined. The front runner is RATIONAL in Landsberg specialised in canteen kitchen technology followed closely by AUDI. The 3rd place is taken by the SolarWorld group. In the context of the study, the market orientation and the earning & growth power of 282 listed companies were examined and their stock exchange performance of the past five years was evaluated. The results show: Market orientation is measurable and has a value-creating impact on all company sectors. Most recently, the best marketing-oriented companies have been granted the BBDO Consulting Best Marketing Company Award in Düsseldorf. The study is published in media cooperation with absatzwirtschaft.

The key results are:

- Market orientation does not only positively influence customer and employee satisfaction of a company, it also pays off in terms of growth, turnover and yield.
- Market-oriented companies show a high consistency of their marketing, sales and brand strategies.
- Efficient and transparent information management is a prerequisite for market orientation.
- Market-oriented companies transpose their market knowledge into innovative products and services.
- Marketing is a top management issue.
- Each company can be market-oriented – regardless of its size, field of activity and of other external factors.

Top 20 Best Marketing Companies 2008

Rank	Company	Line
1.	RATIONAL AG	Industrial & Investment Goods
2.	AUDI AG	Automotive
3.	SolarWorld AG	Energy, Supply, New Energies
4.	Merck KgaA (partnership limited by shares)	Healthcare, Pharma, Chemical Industry, Biotech
5.	Volkswagen AG	Automotive
6.	Celesio AG	Retail, Consumer Goods
6.	Daimler AG (Mercedes-Benz)	Automotive
7.	Henkel KgaA (partnership limited by shares)	Retail, Consumer Goods
8.	Allianz Lebensversicherungs-AG	Banks, Insurance Companies and Financial Services Providers
9.	Business Media China AG	Media
10.	Bayerische Motoren Werke AG	Automotive
11.	Pulsion Medical Systems AG	Healthcare, Pharma, Chemical Industry, Biotech
12.	TA Triumph-Adler AG	Telco, High Tech, IT
13.	BHS tabletop AG	Retail, Consumer Goods
14.	Amadeus FiRe AG	Service Provider
15.	Oldenburgische Landesbank AG	Banks, Insurance Companies and Financial Services Providers
16.	BIEN-ZENKER AG	Construction Industry, Real Estate
17.	Geratherm Medical AG	Healthcare, Pharma, Chemical Industry, Biotech
18.	aleo solar AG	Energy, Supply, New Energies
19.	DVB Bank AG	Banks, Insurance Companies and Financial Services Providers
20.	Mineralbrunnen Überkingen-Teinach AG	Retail, Consumer Goods

The results in detail

The study starts from the assumption that market orientation is the capacity of immediately receiving, processing and reacting to market information. Accordingly, marketing has to be considered as a consistent market-oriented guidance of the whole company.

The study is based on comparison measurements of the top 30 companies against the last 30 of 282 companies questioned.

The market share of market-oriented companies exceeds the respective value of their competitors by up to 21%.

An important factor is the consistency of the companies' strategies. The 30 best market-oriented companies rated the consistency between their company strategy and their marketing strategy as high as 64% above the average of the least market-oriented companies.

The Winners

The frontrunner RATIONAL scores by clearly focussing on customer benefit. The company-wide general process organisation increases market orientation and defines responsibilities. A clear brand marketing and sales strategy as well as a regular comparison of the product developments against the market requirements raise the innovative power. Products such as the SelfCooking Center® demonstrate technological leadership and innovative power, too. Even the Queen is a RATIONAL fan. The Landsberg canteen kitchen professionals supply the palace and are allowed to decorate their High Tech ovens with the Queen's coat of arms.

AUDI also sets innovative standards continuously. What distinguishes the automotive manufacturer is premium quality, an excellent information management and a high level of innovative power. Further success factors to be pointed out are: a high degree of management involvement, a close cooperation between marketing, sales and research & development as well as a fine-meshed sales and service network. The close contact with the customers leads to a high customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The third-ranked SolarWorld convinces with top technology and quality leadership in all fields of application. The fully-integrated solar value-adding process and the individual product brands strengthen the market position of the group.

“The study proves that market orientation also pays off in hard currency, turnover and yield. However, market orientation is no secret science, but organisable by any good management. Key drivers are consistency of the company strategy and a sustainable brand value management on a long-run basis”, said Udo Klein-Bölting, CEO BBDO Consulting.

„Market-oriented companies listen to the customer and to the market particularly attentively und translate the information into new products and services. The decisive factor is how information is responded to: When this

occurs rapidly on an interfunctional level, a high degree of market orientation is realised”, said Prof Dr Christoph Burmann, holder of the Chair for Innovative Brand Management of Bremen University, commenting on the study results.

Design of the study

The study was carried out in cooperation with the Chair for Innovative Brand Management (LiM®) of the University of Bremen during the calendar weeks 3 to 8 2008. The data collection was carried out in a 15 minutes telephone interview or by means of an online-questioning based on a standardised questionnaire answered by marketing board members and marketing managers of 282 listed companies in Germany. The response rate was as high as 23.5% (sample size: N = 1200 companies questioned). The distribution chosen for the questioned companies was uniform through all company sizes based on DAX30, M-DAX, S-DAX, TecDAX, as well as on the Prime and General Standards. The highest shares had the financial sector, Telco/High Tech/IT, Industry and Healthcare/Pharma/Chemical Industry. The results of the questionnaires were linked to the stock exchange performance, the identified earning power (EBIT margin, yields on turnover) and to the growth power (increase in sales compared to market growth) of the respective company in the last five years. Hence, two thirds of the overall score of market orientation consist of the subjective market orientation and one third consists of earning power, growth and stock exchange performance.

BBDO Consulting

BBDO Consulting is the top international management consultancy for market-oriented business management. Together with its clients, BBDO Consulting develops and implements strategies for market adaptation and translates them into tangible, behaviour-influencing principles and systems. International blue chip clients and market leaders have trusted its unparalleled expertise in the areas of strategic brand and customer management since the company's inception in 2000. BBDO Consulting builds upon the comprehensive know-how of its staff from both consultancy and industry. Excellent knowledge of local markets combined with a global outlook contributes to their success in offices in Düsseldorf, Johannesburg, Madrid, Moscow, Munich, Shanghai, Tel Aviv and Zurich. BBDO Consulting is part of BBDO Worldwide, one of the leading international agency networks with over 290 offices in 77 countries.

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