



Future-Shape wins top innovator award

Überlingen – Cast off the old and embrace the new: innovative mid-sized companies such as Future-Shape GmbH, based in Höhenkirchen-Siegertsbrunn, see change as an opportunity rather than something to be afraid of. It is this mindset that impressed the judges in the TOP 100 competition, now in its 27th year. From 19 June, Future-Shape will officially be able to call itself a TOP 100 company. During the rigorous selection process, the level A company (up to 50 employees) scored particularly highly in the Successful Innovations category.

Future-Shape, a TOP 100 company based near Munich, has developed an innovative floor sensor system called SensFloor, which can detect and warn of potentially risky situations. It sounds the alarm if elderly residents in care homes are walking unsteadily and are at high risk of falling over, for example. The underlay, which is fitted with sensors, is only 2 to 3 millimetres thick and is installed under the flooring. This transforms the floor into a huge touchpad that sends important information such as the presence of people, their number and direction of movement, or even a fall, to a computer terminal or the care staff's mobile devices. "What makes our technology unique is that it remains hidden and neither stigmatises people nor breaches privacy laws, as it only identifies movement, not people," explains CTO Dr Axel Steinhage, who manages the business alongside CEO Christl Lauterbach.

The company has further improved its intelligent floor by adding activity monitoring to its features: How long has the person been sleeping for? How often do they get up? Does the pattern of movement indicate that the person is increasingly confused? "This allows you to observe developments over time and monitor the effect of medication and rehabilitation measures," says production manager Sebastian Stoll. Future-Shape has also created sensor floors for corridors in hospitals and rehabilitation centres. A second pillar of the business alongside healthcare is the retail sector, where intelligent floors capable of analysing customer behaviour are in demand.

The TOP 100 competition

Since 1993, compamedia has been awarding the TOP 100 seal of approval to SMEs with a particular ability to innovate and above-average success rates for innovations. Professor Nikolaus Franke has coordinated the project since 2002, and is the founder and director of the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. The TOP 100 is mentored by science journalist Ranga Yogeshwar and organised in partnership with the Fraunhofer Society for the Promotion of Applied Research and the German Association for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (BVMW). Media support for the company benchmarking competition is provided by manager magazin, impulse, and W&V. Further information is available at www.top100-germany.com.

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