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10 Years of the German Brand Awards: Record Convention, Renowned Award Winners and Presentation of the Ipsos Study on the EU AI Act

On **25 June 2026**, around 800 guests gathered at the **Uber Eats Music Hall in Berlin** for the Awards Show of the German Brand Awards to honour outstanding brand work. Beforehand, 39 speakers discussed future topics in brand practice across three stages as part of the **German Brand Convention**. Ipsos also presented its study “Zwischen Effizienz und Vertrauensverlust – Wie viel KI verträgt eine Marke?” (“Between Efficiency and Loss of Trust – How Much AI Can a Brand Bear?”) for the first time.

“In times of global crises, economic uncertainty and the boom in AI and automation processes, brands are needed that convey vision and take a stand. Our motto for this year, 'Brand Forward', captures this necessity precisely,” says Lutz Dietzold (CEO, German Design Council).

10 Years of the German Brand Awards: To mark this anniversary, the Awards position themselves as the largest platform for holistic brand management in the DACH region and beyond. With **1,676 entries from 18 countries**, the awards – organised by the German Design Council – recorded a high level of international participation. Alongside the broad response from Germany (85%), the strong participation from Switzerland and Austria, as well as from China, demonstrates the growing international interest in the Awards.

Entries reflect notable trends

The German Brand Awards recognise individuals, companies and teams who set new standards through innovative brand strategies. By the submission deadline, 1,287 projects had entered the running in the Excellent Brands and Excellence in Brand Strategy and Creation disciplines. A further 389 entries were submitted across 16 additional categories. Growth was particularly evident in economically strong sectors: Health & Pharmaceuticals, Transport & Mobility, and Industry, Machines & Engineering were among the categories with the highest participation.

The Best of Best and Honorary Award Winners

Among the 569 projects, 488 **Winner**, 68 **Gold** and 13 **Best of Best** Awards were presented.

Best AI Project of the Year: „Flatex“ von Cash Cow Farmers Werbeagentur GmbH
Best AI Project of the Year: „Emmie: Wie die Marke zur Dialog-Plattform wird“ von R+V Allgemeine Versicherung AG
Brand Efficiency of the Year: „Liquid Images – AI image generator“ von Merck KGaA
Brand Experience of the Year: „Telekoms digital Brand Experience: electronicbeats.net“ von WAF GMBH
Brand Innovation of the Year: „Brand Relaunch SUITX“ von Ottobock SE & Co KGaA
Brand Revival of the Year: „From B·A·D to great“ von BG prevent GmbH
Brand Strategy of the Year: „Pioneering WATER AI for You“ von WILO SE
Corporate Brand of the Year: „Swisscom: Monsterprinzessin“ von Swisscom (Schweiz) AG
Employer Brand of the Year: „Privatmolkerei Bechtel“ von schmid und kreative
Lighthouse Project of the Year: „WAGO Darts Challenge 2025 - ein echter Volltreffer!“ von WAGO GmbH & Co. KG
Newcomer Brand of the Year: „AUMOVIO – The Adaptive Powerhouse for Future Mobility“ von Peter Schmidt Group GmbH
Product Brand of the Year: „GimCat Near Nature“ von H. von Gimborn GmbH
Sustainable Brand of the Year: „EcoFlow“ von EcoFlow Europe s.r.o.

Brand Manager of the Year: Philip Hitschler-Becker, CEO hitschler International GmbH & Co. KG

Best Purpose of the Year: LifeTeachUs gGmbH

Creative of the Year (Publikumspreis mit PAGE): Henning Klimczak, Co-Founder and CEO Sherpa Design

Startup of the Year (Publikumspreis): Super Pop GmbH

Ipsos study reveals surprising insights

Exclusively for the German Brand Awards, Gunther Theophile (Director Brand Health Tracking and Creative Excellence, Ipsos) presented the study “Zwischen Effizienz und Vertrauensverlust – Wie viel KI verträgt eine Marke?” (“Between Efficiency and Loss of Trust – How Much AI Can a Brand Bear?”) for the first time at the German Brand Convention. Initial findings include:

- An overwhelming **majority of consumers call for AI-generated products**, services and campaigns to be labelled as such. At the same time, the **use of AI significantly improves** how campaigns are perceived – they come across as more likeable and more emotional, and generate stronger activation.
- Content produced with AI is now so authentic-looking that **consumers are no longer able to identify** it as such.
- What determines a campaign's impact is not whether AI was actually used, but **how consumers perceive the campaign** to have been produced. In areas considered sensitive – such as NGOs, political parties or lifestyle categories (organic food, travel, beauty) – labelling AI use can even have a positive effect on campaign performance.
- The full results report sets out the **concrete recommendations** for action that brand managers can draw from these findings. [Free to download.](#)

The largest German Brand Convention in the Awards' history

With 39 speakers, three stages and 10 panels, this year's German Brand Convention sets new records in the Awards' history. It also ranks among the largest exclusive networking events for brand work in Germany. At the heart of the programme is the Ipsos keynote on the study's findings. Immediately afterwards, Katrin Menne (Head of Brand & Content Marketing, Merck

Group) discusses the role AI should play in brand management going forward with Dr Markus Eberl (Chief Analytics Officer, Ipsos), Stefan Lara Torres (PAGE) and Ivana Radovanovic (12ft), in a session entitled “Brand or Machine? Who Should Really Be Leading?”

Further programme items address brand management in times of crisis – with Matthias Oetting (Hettich Group), Dirk Huesmann (wirDesign AG) and Manuel Wolf (KfW) – as well as the question of how brands can use anniversaries as an opportunity for renewal, discussed by Torsten Raak (Weidmüller Group) and Sarah Tegeler (WAGO GmbH & Co. KG). The programme opens with live pitches from the Startup of the Year nominees, including the teams from SUPER POP, ATMOS Space Cargo and Moelk GmbH. [View the full programme](#)

10 Years of the German Brand Awards

In 2026, the German Brand Awards celebrate their anniversary. Since its launch ten years ago, the award has grown from an industry get-together into a cross-sector platform for successful brand management. What began with 250 guests now brings together more than 750 brand professionals from companies of all sizes at the Award Show. “We look back with pride on every single Award Show and the unique mix of knowledge-sharing, networking and celebrating team success together,” says Stefan Anderl (Vice President Awards, German Design Council), who has led the project since its inception.

About the German Brand Awards

Initiated by the German Design Council and GMK Markenberatung. Judged by an independent panel of experts: as one of the highest-reach marketing awards, the German Brand Awards set international standards and provide answers to current challenges in brand management. They give visibility to strong brands, campaigns and strategies, as well as to the people who shape them.

About the German Design Council

The German Design Council is the authority on design in Germany. Since 1953. As a thought leader, it bears a particular responsibility to unlock the potential of design for a sustainable future. To this end, it brings business and design together – for circular design, transformation and economic success.

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