



Top, left: Solar energy retainer unit for Phono Solar China. Top, right: Durchlauferhitzer (flow-type calorifier) XG Stiebel Eltron Asia Ltd Thailand

# The pull of German design

Producing award-winning, cutting-edge product design solutions requires knowledge and understanding of a product's potential, and goes hand in hand with the ability to tackle its potential complications. Achieving reliability, usability and a high aesthetic form is a challenge savoured by Schumannsdesign, a strategic design consultancy and industrial and product design company based in Münster.

TEXT: EMMIE COLLINGE | PHOTOS: SCHUMANNDESIGN

Asked where his motivation for constant innovation springs from, Dirk Schumann, who founded Schumannsdesign in 1992, does not hesitate before replying: "From a curiosity for new technology, global social developments, and an interest in the sciences." This curiosity has led his firm to the pinnacle of classic industrial and product design, conceiving projects that have achieved worldwide recognition, and earned the company numerous design awards including multiple Red Dot Awards/Best of the Best, IF-Awards and the Gold Prize awarded by Minister of International Trade and Industry Prize in Osaka.

Dealing with the hurdles that arise during a project's conception can be perplexing but it is partly due to the vast experience held by Schumann, with over 30 years of experience in the field of design, ensuring that his projects are followed through to completion, entering the market in an optimal state. Close cooperation and constant consultation with the client is another reason behind the success of the projects. Schumann explains the process: "Our strengths come from extensive experience in various process technologies, grasping market strategies and possessing the ability to convert my experience into innova-

tion solutions which best suit my client, and provide the user with the highest possible usability and pleasure of use."

With a design philosophy that values ecology and economy, and logic and clarity, without overlooking feasibility, Schu-



Dirk Schumann  
Company founder

mannsdesign is active in multiple branches, amongst others strategic design concepts, product design for investment goods, sanitary engineering and medical goods, communications technology research and metrology. "We take on projects wherever we see a challenge and the potential for innovation and creativity; we can create synergy between the branches we work in," says Schumann with a nod of his head. Drawing on an intimate team with Schumann himself at the helm of each project, he consults experts from specific fields and works in close proximity to the client's own project managers and engineers.

One of Schumann's most significant creations is a family of sanitation and heating units devised and developed together for Stiebel Eltron, the world leading manufacturer of green heating technologies. The collection is a prime example of design that is elegant and timeless yet functional. The cooperation with Stiebel Eltron goes back many years and includes hand driers, heating units and shower panels. The individual products have received numerous accolades since their conception, including, but not limited to, the 2005 Red Dot Award for the instantaneous water heater and the highly competitive and sought-after 2012 ddc design award.

Unveiled at Intersolar in Munich in 2012, Phono Solar's Phonocube Storage System is another collaboration of which Schumann is understandably proud. A sleek, minimalist energy storage unit, billed as "an easy-to-install energy storage and inverter solution that is capable of intelligently storing and distributing electricity produced from a solar PV system." Both functional and environmentally-friendly, the Enercube embodies the philosophy of Schumannsdesign.

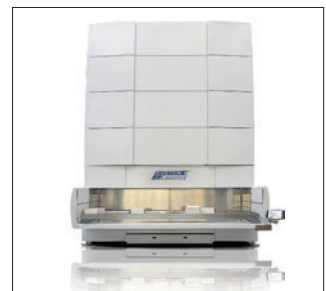
In the future Schumannsdesign plan to work more on a global scale, building equally as strong relationships with foreign clients as they have with their German clients. Their client base already includes a number of Italian, Chinese and Indian firms to name but a few. Schumann explains the pull of international cooperation: "My work enables me to combine my two passions: design and travel. I'm particularly interested in specialist markets and the direction they choose on the global market." Does Schumann consider his work to have been enriched by such extensive travel? "Certainly.

The cultural aspects, and of course the human experiences and the discovery of other people's perspectives, gives me insight which I can incorporate into my work."

German design has a worldwide reputation for being amongst the highest in the world, and this reputation travels with Schumann. For Stiebel Eltron he designed a special appliance for the Asian market, which was designed specifically to meet German standards – such is the pull of the German design aesthetics. Schumann muses on this desire for German design as he explains how the Italian company Immergas, with whom he has worked for almost two decades, consciously choose German style for its quality.

Schumann loves to travel, and since 2006 has annually appeared in the jury of the Red Dot Award. An honour for him as it signifies his relevance in the design world, guarantees his good taste, and also provides a further chance for travel.

[www.schumannsdesign.de](http://www.schumannsdesign.de)



From left to right:  
 Wind turbine for Nordwind  
 Electronic hand dryer for Stiebel Eltron  
 Water heater for Stiebel Eltron.  
 Bottom, from left to right:  
 Electronic plumbing system for Schell  
 Microscope Magnus Olympus India  
 Logistics system for an Italian client