

## EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ 2014: the winners



Hans R. Rüegg and Thomas H. Rüegg

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The Swiss prizewinners of the Entrepreneur Of The Year 2014 competition have been determined. The sought-after awards were granted for the 17th time in a row today in Switzerland. This year, the categories were "Service/Trade", "Industry/High Tech/Life Sciences", "Emerging Entrepreneur" and "Family Business". About 300 guests from the worlds of business, politics and culture celebrated the success of the award winners in the *Stadttheater St. Gallen* (theatre).

### The following Swiss entrepreneurs won an Entrepreneur Of The Year Award 2014:

- Martin Jucker and Beat Jucker, Jucker Farm AG, Seegräben, in the "Service/Trade" category
- Otto Hofstetter, Otto Hofstetter AG, Uznach, in the "Industry/High Tech/Life Sciences" category
- Viktor Calabrò, STAFF FINDER AG, Zurich, in the "Emerging Entrepreneur" category
- **Hans R. Rüegg and Thomas H. Rüegg**, Baumann Federn AG, Rüti, in the "Family Business" category

### The Family Business of the Year belongs to Hans R. and Thomas H. Rüegg

Hans R. Rüegg, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and his son, Thomas H. Rüegg, Member of the Board of Directors and CEO of Baumann Federn AG from Rüti, were granted the award in the "Family Business" category. As representatives of the fourth and fifth generations respectively, they are responsible for the fate of a secret gem of the Swiss economy. The Baumann Springs Group develops, produces and sells technical springs, pressings and stampings as well as the specialist tools and equipment required for this purpose. Every year, four billion Baumann springs are used. The automobile industry is currently the biggest customer group. The company has branches in 11 locations on three continents and employs a total of 1,400 staff, 450 of whom in Switzerland.

Hans R. Rüegg and Thomas H. Rüegg share the conviction that whoever manages the Baumann Group has to be an entrepreneur with a highly developed sense of social responsibility. The company has strong local ties. The two entrepreneurs reject short-term economic thinking. The focus is on establishing long-term partnerships with customers and suppliers. Baumann's fundamental principles include sustainability, reliability and fairness. However, this does not mean that there is no room for change: it is only thanks to the its managers' unwavering desire to keep instigating changes that the company was able and will in future be able to be successful on the world market. Whereas Hans R. Rüegg focuses his entrepreneurial skills on expanding the Group's geographic reach, his son is currently primarily concentrating on process optimisation. According to his father, Thomas has the gift of being able to quickly identify any weaknesses in a work process and take appropriate corrective action. For his part, Hans R. Rüegg's son admires his father's in-depth technical knowledge. However, it is clear to both members of the Rüegg family that every generation has to steer the company in a direction which suits it personally. Thanks to their mutual respect, they succeeded in completing the management succession without causing any unnecessary upheaval for the company. And in any case, it is clear to Thomas H. Rüegg that: "Nobody is more important than the company, because over 1,400 families are affiliated with it."

## Triply convincing

Anyone who is voted an Entrepreneur Of The Year has convinced the judges in three selection rounds. The first barrier to overcome is eligibility and thus nomination. To qualify people must meet the criteria relating to the harsh reality of being an entrepreneur. The next step involves interviewers from EY putting entrepreneurs and their companies through their paces. The panel of judges determines the finalists based on these observations. In 2014, 10 finalists were selected from a total of 33 nominees. The judges are also responsible for voting for the award winners. To that end, the judges talk to the finalists and visit their respective companies to form their own impressions. They evaluate the entrepreneurial performance, business development, innovation, staff management, future viability and overall impact on society of candidates and their companies. The final decision on who to give the Entrepreneur Of The Year Award to is based on the subsequent discussions, which are certainly not without controversy.