



Label Guide

Red Dot Award: Product Design 2026

About This Document

This guide provides comprehensive guidance on the correct use of the Red Dot Label and summarises key rules, design specifications and application options. It serves as a binding framework for all laureates who wish to use the label to communicate their success.

You will learn which label variants are available to you, in which contexts they may be used and which licence is required for your intended applications. In addition, the guide offers an overview of the typical areas of use for each licence type. In this way, it establishes a reliable framework for formally correct and brand-compliant communication.

Information included in this guide:

- Binding guidance on the use of the Red Dot Label
- Rules, label variants and areas of application
- Classification of use by licence type and application context

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Red Dot Label

The Red Dot Label is an internationally recognised quality seal for excellent design. As a winner, you may use it in a targeted manner to communicate your design expertise throughout the entire life cycle of your awarded product. It strengthens your international visibility and clearly differentiates your product within the competitive landscape.

Distinction-Specific Labels

Depending on your distinction – “Red Dot” or “Red Dot: Best of the Best” – different label versions are available to you after booking your Winner Package. The use of the label is governed by the respective licence. Further information on available licence options can be found in the section “[Usage Licences](#)”.

All label packages for received distinctions can be downloaded at any time via your My Red Dot account. This also applies to past distinctions.



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Red Dot – the Distinction for High Design Quality

The Red Dot stands for high design quality. Being awarded a Red Dot confirms that a product convinces in terms of form, function or innovation – or a combination of these criteria.



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best of the best

Red Dot: Best of the Best – the Highest Distinction in the Red Dot Award

Granted for pioneering design, the Red Dot: Best of the Best is reserved for the best products within a category. It honours visionary and exceptionally accomplished design.

Sector-Specific Labels

Sector-specific labels are available to communicate your distinction in a differentiated manner. For example, awarded products from the automotive sector receive a label marked "Car Design", while winners from the lighting sector may use the "Lighting Design" label to highlight their design expertise within their market.

Exclusive labels are also available for outstanding achievements in the two metacategories "Sustainable Design" and "Innovative Design". These labels emphasise not only the high design quality of a product, but also its particular strength in sustainability or innovation.



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car design



reddot winner 2026
sustainable design



reddot winner 2026
lighting design



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innovative design



Basic Rules for Use

The use of the Red Dot Label follows a clear and deliberately streamlined set of rules. The label always displays the year of the distinction and may only be used in connection with the awarded product. Its use is permitted worldwide and throughout the entire life cycle of this product, provided that a valid licence is in place. The permitted period of use begins upon receipt of the licence document within the scope of the booked rights. These principles apply to all types of distinctions.

The design guidelines include the permitted variants, ensured legibility on different backgrounds, the selection of the appropriate version for print and digital use, as well as the principle that no modifications to appearance or structure are intended. The transparent variant is permitted, provided that the word-image mark remains clearly recognisable.

The Red Dot Label is provided in various file formats as gradient and solid versions: EPS, SVG and PNG. This ensures that suitable files are available both for professional print production and for digital applications on the web or in presentations.

The basic principles of use:

- Use only for the awarded product
- Worldwide use throughout the product life cycle
- Use only with a valid licence
- Applicable to all types of distinctions
- The year is an integral part of the label

Design specifications:

- Use original files only
- Ensure legibility on all backgrounds
- Transparent variant only if clearly recognisable
- No modifications to structure, form or typography
- Minimum size of the signet: 10 mm in diameter

Application of the Red Dot Label

For all applications of the Red Dot Label, only the original files may be used. Modifications to the files are not permitted. In particular, transformations, changes to proportions, omission of the year, alterations to the arrangement of word and signet, deviations in colour, or the use of outlines, shadows and other graphic effects are not allowed. Interventions in geometry, typography or spelling are likewise prohibited.

Dos

- ✓ Use only the original label files
- ✓ Ensure good legibility and sufficient contrast
- ✓ Always use the label including the year
- ✓ Check before use whether your application is covered by the booked licence

Don'ts

- ✗ Do not distort the label or change its proportions
- ✗ Do not omit the year
- ✗ Do not alter colour, geometry or typography
- ✗ Do not add shadows, outlines or other effects
- ✗ Do not rearrange the word and signet

Examples of permitted label applications



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RedDot winner



reddot
winner

Examples of non-permitted label applications

Usage Licences

The use of the Red Dot Label is only permitted with a valid licence. The scope and type of use depend on the selected licence.

Basic Licence

The Basic licence entitles the laureate, as the licensee, to use the Red Dot Label worldwide exclusively in connection with the awarded product within the scope of the licensee's corporate and marketing communication. The Basic licence is included in the Winner Package by default.

Worldwide use

The Basic licence permits unrestricted use throughout the entire life cycle of the awarded product.

Use by third parties

The Basic licence entitles the companies named in the registration for the Red Dot Award: Product Design that are involved in the development, manufacture or design of the awarded product to use the label. The granting of sublicences or the transfer of the licence is not permitted.

Use in communication media

The Basic licence permits use in digital and printed corporate media, including websites, social media, press relations, presentations, annual reports, trade fair appearances and showrooms.

The use of the label is subject to the brand usage guidelines, which the licensee is obliged to comply with. Any use of the label that is not in accordance with the licence confirmation may result in the immediate withdrawal of the licence.

Basic licence at a glance:

- Corporate communication, PR, marketing, own product communication

Advanced Licence

The Advanced licence entitles the laureate, as the licensee, to use the Red Dot Label worldwide exclusively in connection with the awarded product. The Advanced licence can be purchased as part of a Winner Package or as an extension of the Basic licence.

Brand extension

Use of the label for additional brands within the company or for private labels.

Point of sale

Use of the label to identify and promote the product directly at the point of sale (e.g. packaging, displays, promotional materials).

External sales channels

Use of the label by authorised distribution partners and retailers of the licensee for the marketing of the product.

The granting of sublicences or the transfer of the licence is otherwise not permitted. The use of the Red Dot Label is subject to the brand usage guidelines, which the licensee is obliged to comply with. Any use of the label that is not in accordance with this licence confirmation may result in the immediate withdrawal of the licence.

Advanced licence at a glance:

- Packaging, product labelling, point of sale, retailers, distribution partners, private labels

Comparison of Usage Licences

| Where to use the Red Dot Label | Basic licence | Advanced licence |
|---|---------------|------------------|
| Corporate communications Corporate brochures, annual reports, presentations, employee magazines | ✓ | ✓ |
| Website & social media Blog articles, corporate websites, landing pages, microsites, organic and paid (video) content | ✓ | ✓ |
| Press relations & PR Press kits (digital and print), press releases & conferences | ✓ | ✓ |
| Product packaging Boxes, labels, sleeves, instruction leaflets/user manuals, swing tags | | ✓ |
| Sales & promotional materials Product catalogues, price lists, sales brochures, promotional merchandise, sales presentations | | ✓ |
| Use by retailers & partners POS materials, co-branding materials, digital product images for third-party online shops | | ✓ |
| Use for trademarks Products, merchandise, slogans, brand collaborations | | ✓ |

Areas of Application

The Red Dot Label can be used in a variety of communication and application contexts. The following pages show the areas in which the Red Dot Label is typically used and how these applications are assigned to the Basic and Advanced licences.

Corporate Communication

Corporate communication represents the most obvious and at the same time most important area of application for the Red Dot Label. Here, the distinction is integrated into the overall brand context and presented as a visible expression of outstanding design quality.

This area includes, among others, the corporate website, landing pages, intranet, annual reports, corporate brochures, corporate presentations, social media channels and corporate publishing. These uses are assigned to both licence types and form the typical framework for brand- and company-related communication.

Usage rights of both licences:

- Corporate website and landing pages
- Intranet and corporate presentations
- Annual reports and corporate brochures
- Social media channels and corporate publishing



PR, Media and Marketing

Press and marketing activities are among the classic areas of application for the Red Dot Label. These include, among others, press relations, press releases, specialist articles, media coverage, interviews, company news as well as paid or actively managed advertising measures such as print and digital advertisements, online banners, campaigns, TV and cinema spots or large-scale outdoor advertising.

Such measures are generally permitted under the Basic licence, provided that no third-party use takes place. The Red Dot Label is used here as part of the company's own communication and marketing activities.

Usage rights of both licences:

- Press releases and media relations
- Specialist articles, interviews and company news
- Print and digital advertisements
- Online banners, campaigns as well as TV and cinema spots



Packaging and Product Labelling

As soon as the Red Dot Label appears directly on the product or its packaging, its communicative role changes. It no longer accompanies the distinction solely within overarching communication but becomes part of the immediate product perception.

Typical applications include direct labelling on the product itself, on packaging, product boxes and sleeves. This marks the beginning of an extended area of use in which the label moves closer to the actual moment of purchase and use. The Advanced licence is required for these applications.

Usage rights of the Advanced licence:

- Directly on the product
- On packaging and product boxes
- On sleeves
- On additional labelling elements



Point of Sale

At the point of sale, the Red Dot Label unfolds its most immediate market impact. It appears where orientation, differentiation and purchasing decisions are closely linked.

Typical applications include displays, standees, signage, shelf stoppers, shop windows, bags, labels and sales brochures in a retail context. In all these cases, the label is integrated into a specific sales moment. The Advanced licence is required for these applications.

Usage rights of the Advanced licence:

- Displays and standees
- Signage and shelf stoppers
- Shop windows, bags and labels
- Sales brochures in a retail context



Retailers, Distribution Partners and Private Labels

As soon as the Red Dot Label is used by external parties, a particularly clear framework is required. Retailers, distribution partners and private labels are explicitly covered by the Advanced licence.

In the case of external use, it is no longer the medium alone that is decisive, but the involvement of third parties. A retailer catalogue, for example, is therefore considered third-party use and is only permitted with the Advanced licence. At the same time, the extended licence enables the awarded product to be labelled consistently across more complex distribution structures.

For multiple brands or subsidiaries, no separate licence per brand or entity is required. International branches or affiliated companies may also use the label, provided that the use is in connection with the awarded product and remains within the scope of the booked licence.

Usage rights of the Advanced licence:

- Retailers and distribution partners
- Private labels and OEM contexts
- Multiple brands or affiliated companies
- International locations within the scope of the awarded brand

Product Development and Relaunch

The Red Dot Label may generally only be used for the awarded product. If a product is further developed, adapted or relaunched, it must therefore be assessed whether continued use is still permitted.

Without prior consultation, only colour changes and purely superficial adjustments that do not affect design or function are permitted. However, as soon as there are design changes, functional developments, structural modifications or other significant design alterations, consultation with Red Dot is required.

In such cases, a transparent presentation of the differences between the awarded product and the current version is necessary. This ensures that the distinction is not applied to a product version that no longer corresponds in its relevant design to the awarded state.

Permitted without prior consultation:

- Colour changes
- Adjustments without impact on the design,
e.g. software updates

Consultation required:

- Design changes
- Functional developments
- Structural modifications
- Other significant design alterations

Product and Retailer Catalogues

When using the Red Dot Label in catalogues, it is not the name of the medium that is decisive, but its publisher and context of use. The key factor is who publishes the catalogue and whether third parties are involved.

A product catalogue is published by the manufacturer or brand owner and exclusively presents products of the company's own brand. It serves information and brand communication purposes and may be digital or printed. In this case, the use of the Red Dot Label is considered internal use and is permitted under the Basic licence, provided that no third-party brands or retailers are involved.

A retailer catalogue, on the other hand, is published by a retailer, distributor or sales partner, typically includes products from multiple manufacturers and often serves a sales- or price-oriented purpose. This constitutes third-party use and is only permitted with the Advanced licence.

| Criterion | Product catalogue | Retailer catalogue |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Publisher | Manufacturer or brand owner | Retailer, distributor or sales partner |
| Content | Only products of the manufacturer/brand | Products from different manufacturers/brands |
| Function | Information and brand communication | Sales- and price-oriented communication |
| Required Licence | Basic licence or Advanced licence | Advanced licence |

International Locations and Affiliated Companies

The use of the Red Dot Label is not limited to a single legal entity, provided that the connection to the awarded product and the scope of the booked licence is maintained. International branches or subsidiaries may use the label if they act on behalf of or within the framework of the awarded brand.

In addition, the label may also be used by affiliated companies or marketing units, provided that two conditions are met: first, the use must be related to the awarded product; second, it must remain within the scope of the booked licence. This dual requirement ensures clarity for use within international and affiliated structures.

Permitted use for international locations and affiliated companies:

- International branches
- Subsidiaries
- Affiliated companies
- Marketing units
- Always only in connection with the awarded product and within the scope of the booked licence



Further information on the Red Dot Label can be found on our [Website](#).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to support you in communicating your success.

Your Red Dot Team

Contact

Red Dot Team

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