

## EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ 2017: Award Winners

- **The four winners have been announced: Thomas Hanan, Webrepublic AG; Paul J. Wyser, Wyon AG; Dr. Jurgi Camblong, Sophia Genetics SA and Max Renggli, Renggli AG**
- **EY has presented the business award for the 20th time – in the presence of Federal Councilor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann**
- **Hansjörg Wyss received the Master Entrepreneur award at the gala in Interlaken.**

*ZURICH, 27 OCTOBER 2017* – A long tradition: EY in Switzerland today presented the Entrepreneur Of The Year awards for the 20th consecutive year, in the “Trade/Services,” “Industry/High-Tech/Life Sciences,” “Emerging Entrepreneur” and “Family Business” categories. Around 400 guests from the business, political and cultural arenas, including many former winners, were in attendance at the gala in the Kursaal, Interlaken.

The 20-year anniversary of the Swiss edition of the business award coincided with EY’s 100-year anniversary here, lending additional sparkle to the gala evening. The attendance of Federal Councilor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, a successful entrepreneur himself, was a very special honor for both the award and the competition entrants: “Digitization presents great opportunities for Switzerland. We want to remain champions of innovation, which is why we need courageous and successful entrepreneurs. Prizes like the Entrepreneur of the Year award promote an appreciation for entrepreneurship and embolden people. I would like to congratulate all the award winners and thank the organizers and sponsors for their 20-year commitment.”

Also present as a guest of honor was Dr. José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former President of East Timor. From his impressive experience and as the face of the world-famous Timor Foundation, he spoke about the importance of entrepreneurship for one of the poorest countries in the world.

Marcel Stalder, CEO of EY in Switzerland, was delighted for the winners: “For me, the commitment of the participating entrepreneurs is a demonstration of what makes Switzerland a strong location for innovation, even in times of digital disruption: first-class expertise and a great deal of passion. The Entrepreneur Of The Year award stands for exactly these virtues and is our commitment to Swiss enterprise.”

Individual Entrepreneur Of The Year awards for 2017 in Switzerland went to:

- **Thomas Hanan**, Webrepublic AG, Zurich, “Trade/Services” category
- **Paul J. Wyser**, Wyon AG, Appenzell Steinegg, “Industry/High-Tech/Life Sciences” category
- **Dr. Jurgi Camblong**, Sophia Genetics SA, Saint-Sulpice, “Emerging Entrepreneur” category
- **Max Renggli**, Renggli AG, Schötz, “Family Business” category

**Hansjörg Wyss**, entrepreneur, patron and philanthropist, was honored with the “Master Entrepreneur” award.

### **Thomas Hanan: Digital marketing pioneer**

Thomas Hanan, founder, co-owner and Managing Director of Zürcher Webrepublic AG, received the Entrepreneur Of The Year 2017 award in the “Services/Trade” category. Hanan, a qualified marketing specialist, was an early believer in the potential of scientifically based digital marketing and in 2009, after spells at Yahoo and Google, focused his entrepreneurial endeavors in this area. Today, he is the number-one choice in this field and in the space of just a few years he has turned his company into the largest owner-managed agency for intelligent digital marketing. The jury said: “Thomas Hanan has impressed as an entrepreneur with a sense of what is essential in the digital world. His understanding of social responsibility as an employer is exemplary. The total package is absolutely superb and, for us, worthy of an award.”

### **Paul J. Wyser: Maestro of the mini-battery**

In Paul J. Wyser, a founder and long-standing director of Wyon AG, the jury honored an entrepreneur, developer and a man of conviction in the “Industry/High-Tech/Life Sciences” category. He established himself in the medical instruments market with his ultra-small lithium-ion batteries. He is the undisputed global market leader when it comes to cochlear implants. In the not-too-distant future, Wyser wants to revolutionize another market by replacing standard, non-rechargeable zinc-air batteries in hearing aids with rechargeable batteries. He continues to engage with society at other levels. As treasurer of the canton of Innerrhoden, he shook up tax policy there. His Wyon foundation offers a prize for the best Swiss vocational baccalaureate in the canton. The jury said: “Paul J. Wyser is made for the Entrepreneur Of The Year. Modest, persistent, with strong leadership skills, proactive, prepared to take risks, authentic and possessing integrity, he actively changes his immediate and more distant environment for the better.”

### **Dr. Jurgi Camblong: Profiler of genetic diseases**

In the “Emerging Entrepreneur” category, the jury bestowed the Entrepreneur Of The Year 2017 award on molecular biologist Dr. Jurgi Camblong. He and his company Sophia Genetics SA are becoming the most important player in the field of DNA sequencing. His AI technology for clinical genome research is already being used in 330 clinics throughout the world for rapid and inexpensive fully automated analyses, identifying characteristic mutations for genetic diseases and speeding up diagnostics. Sophia Genetics is being hailed as the next billion-dollar start-up from Switzerland. Camblong also sits on the Swiss government’s digital transformation advisory board. The jury said: “Jurgi Camblong brings both scientific excellence and commercial expertise. This combination promises a great future for Sophia Genetics and a huge step forward in the successful treatment of genetic diseases.”

### **Max Renggli: Sustainable systems construction pioneer**

Renggli AG from Schötz won the 2017 award in the “Family Business” category. Within four generations, the company has grown from local carpenters to nationally sought-after specialists in timber construction systems. The main driver of this development is the current owner and longtime CEO, Max Renggli. He is regarded as a pioneer of sustainable building in Switzerland and has made a name for himself outside Switzerland as a trailblazer for Minergie homes. The components of a Renggli building, the individual room modules, are produced in the new plant in Schötz. This is where Renggli confirmed his pioneering role in the industry with the integration of BIM (building information modeling). The jury said: “Max Renggli shows what is possible in Switzerland. Against all the odds, in a very conservative industry, he turned himself into a strong player with uncompromising, consistent and sustained innovation and industrialization. The many enemies he made in this process have long since become secret admirers.”

### **Hansjörg Wyss is Master Entrepreneur**

The Master Entrepreneur Award is an opportunity for the jury to honor outstanding personalities for their life’s work. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the competition in Switzerland, it has made use of this opportunity and presented the award to Hansjörg Wyss, the former co-owner, president and longstanding CEO of medical device manufacturer Synthes. Wyss’ entrepreneurial flair is widely known. He started out with a sales firm and a handful of employees, eventually turning it into company with 12,000 staff and an annual turnover of USD 4 billion, which he sold to the Johnson & Johnson group. Even more significant over the long term, however, is Wyss’ role as a patron and philanthropist. He supports countless initiatives and projects in the fields of the environment, education, culture, health and policy, both personally and through his foundation. He has signed the Giving Pledge, so that at least half of his assets go to charitable purposes. The jury said: “In Hansjörg Wyss, we are honoring a true ‘son of Berne,’ who has confronted life in all its facets, got involved throughout his life and is a long way off from withdrawing into retirement. We are acknowledging work that will endure over several lifetimes, and we are honoring a personality who says of himself that *success is mainly a matter of luck.*”

### **Water for East Timor**

EY took advantage of the anniversary for a fundraising campaign. Gifts from EY, its partner, Credit Suisse, and sponsors were auctioned among the guests. The proceeds will be going to the Timor Foundation, which was founded by Dr. Barbara Lietz and is now headed by José Ramos-Hora, the former President of the Democratic Republic of East Timor and 1996 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. The Timor Foundation aims to improve living conditions in this very poor country through education and entrepreneurship. At the heart of this is the public supply of drinking water. The auction was run by Dr. Berthold Müller from Christie’s.

### **Globally comparable**

The Entrepreneur Of The Year award is the largest and most prestigious business award in the world. The competition is held with the same criteria worldwide. It is staged at 150 EY locations. Several thousand entrepreneurs and companies compete each year for the coveted title. It is the only competition of its kind. In early summer of the following year, an independent jury selects the World Entrepreneur Of The Year from among the national winners. In 2017, Willi Miesch, last year’s award winner in the category “Industry/High-Tech/Life Sciences,” represented entrepreneurship in Switzerland.

The Entrepreneur Of The Year competition was held in Switzerland for the 20th consecutive year in 2017. It is supported and assisted by its program partner Credit Suisse, and by its sponsors AMAG, watchmaker H. Moser & Cie., Die Mobiliar and SWISS.

### The 2017 independent jury

- Adrienne Corboud Fumagalli, co-founder and CEO of Deeption SA
- Claude R. Cornaz, Vetropack Holding AG, CEO and Entrepreneur Of The Year 2012
- Dr. Beat Curti, entrepreneur
- Dr. Paul J. Hälg, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sika AG
- Dr. Sara and Christoph Hürlimann, founders of zahnarztzentrum.ch AG, Entrepreneur Of The Year 2010
- Dr. Jan Lichtenberg, CEO of Insphero AG, Entrepreneur Of The Year 2015
- Simon Michel, CEO of Ypsomed AG
- Edouard Pfister, entrepreneur
- Sébastien Tondeur, CEO of MCI Group Holding SA and Entrepreneur Of The Year 2011
- Prof. Thomas Zellweger, University of St. Gallen, Director of the Center for Family Business

**Photos of the winners** can be downloaded from **9.30 pm on Friday, 27 October 2017 at [www.ey.com/ch/en/newsroom/news-releases](http://www.ey.com/ch/en/newsroom/news-releases)** (<http://www.ey.com/ch/en/newsroom/news-releases>).

**Photos of the event** can be downloaded **on Tuesday, 7 November 2017** at our **picture gallery**.

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- News release (339 KB)
- Portrait Thomas Hanan
- Portrait Paul J. Wyser
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