

Tec graduate given prize for innovative design in Germany



Elena Martínez Robles, who holds a degree in Industrial Design from the **Tec's Querétaro campus** and currently works at the German company [HARTAL](#), received the [Red Dot Design Award](#) in the **Innovative Product 2020 category** for developing a novel **component** for motorhome and caravan **doors**.

HARTAL, which specializes in the design of doors, windows and mosquito nets for motorhomes, entrusted Elena with finding a **functional and safe solution** for a door design.

The designer developed a **contact that fits on to the hinge** which conveys **electricity** from the vehicle and a signal from the computer to the door for different functions, such as **opening and closing the doors**.

The jury gave her a special recognition award for the characteristics of the contact, which improves the door system and provides greater security.

"A door (on a motorhome) cannot have a cable. It has already been attempted, and it's dangerous. So other people designed a device similar to mine, but it had a lot of flaws," shared the Tec graduate.



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“I researched all doors that had that type of contact: not all of them had the same problems. It was only those that had non-symmetrical movement caused by the hinge design. The movement itself was what caused the problems,” explained the Tec graduate.

Later, she modeled different options and generated prototypes using a **3D printer**.

After 14 attempts, the award-winning idea was finally complete: it stood out for having a design capable of adapting to the shape of the hinge, which makes the contact almost invisible.



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The **Red Dot Design Award** has become one of **the most highly recognized awards** for **good design quality anywhere in the world**. It is divided into three different [categories](#): **Product Design**, **Brands & Communication**, and **Design Concept**.

The competition is held once a year and the winning designs are showcased at the [Red Dot Design Museums](#) in Germany and Singapore, in an online exhibition, and feature in the **Red Dot Design Yearbook**.

Together with the company she works for, **Elena participated in the 2020 competition, which received more than 6,500 submissions for products from 60 countries around the world.**

"I started as a technical draftsman but, from the very beginning, they always gave me a lot of freedom at the company.

“The first project was to design a door specifically for the caravan belonging to one of the company owners. They liked it and started giving me more projects, one of which was for this contact,” Elena concluded.



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