

## Miele celebrates 125 years of quality and innovation

- ▶ Family-owned global player with roots in East Westphalia
- ▶ From broad-based agricultural equipment supplier to leading premium manufacturer for household, commercial and medical technology

**Gütersloh, June 21, 2024 - Almost 125 years ago to the day, on 1 July 1899, engineer Carl Miele senior and businessman Reinhard Zinkann found Miele & Cie. with their first product: a cream separator. What begins with eleven employees in a former grain mill in the small town of Herzebrock is to develop into a globally successful high-tech company with more than 22,000 employees in 49 countries and a turnover of € 4.96 bn. More than almost any other company, Miele stands for quality and durability - and has thus become one of the most respected brands in German economic history. A journey through 125 years of striving for quality and pioneering spirit.**

A year later, the cream separator is joined by the butter churn, a round oak tub with a stirrer. The first Miele washing machine follows in 1901 – a larger wooden tub with a rotating drum, initially operated by a lever. In 1907, Miele moves its head office and production facilities to its current location in Gütersloh, Germany, where a much larger workforce is available and the company's own railway siding facilitates delivery of the rapidly growing quantities of wood required. The young company's order book develops beyond all expectations.

The founders' commitment to social responsibility is also evident at an early stage – for example, by introducing one of the first company health insurance schemes in Germany in 1909. Miele also sets an example when it comes to environmental and climate protection, starting with the proverbial longevity of its appliances. Today, the focus is on energy efficiency and the recyclability of appliances as well as the use (and generation) of renewable energy at the company's sites. This is recognized, for example, by the German Sustainability Award 2014 and 2024.

### From agriculture to households

On the product side, Miele initially develops into a supplier of a wide range of agricultural equipment. These include appliances for preparing animal feed ("feed steamers"), ladders, handcarts, wooden sheds, bicycles, and mopeds. Even cars are produced, but this is abandoned two years later due to the anticipated need for capital. At the end of the 1920s, the Bielefeld factory (built in 2016) produces the first vacuum cleaners and, in 1929, Europe's first electric dishwasher. From then on, however, the company gradually focuses on high-quality electrical appliances for the kitchen, laundry, and floor care. Laundry technology is



added in 1924, followed by commercial dishwashing and cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization equipment for medical facilities and laboratories (today: Professional Business Unit).

In 1960, Miele ceases production of bicycles and mopeds in Bielefeld. Instead, the company concentrates on dishwashers, which are becoming increasingly popular in kitchens. At the end of the 1980s, the milking technology division is sold, followed by kitchen furniture in 2005. A milestone in strengthening the strategically important built-in kitchen appliances business is the 1989 acquisition of cooking appliance manufacturer Imperial, with plants in Bünde and Arnsberg. World firsts such as the first built-in steam cooker are created there in the 1990s. Imperial had already launched the world's first ceramic hob in 1973, in partnership with glass ceramic specialist Schott.

## **Pioneers in laundry care, dishwashing and smart home appliances**

In 1987, Miele set new standards in dishwasher loading convenience with the patented Miele cutlery drawer – followed by laundry care in 2001 with the patented Miele honeycomb drum. In 1998, Miele paves the way for intelligent domestic appliances with the InfoControl function, which uses a compact radio receiver (pager) to signal the end of a washing machine or tumble dryer programme. This is followed ten years later by the first automatic control of the hood via the hob. Today, the company is a pioneer in AI cooking and climate-friendly washing and dishwashing.

At the same time, global sales structures and the factory network continue to grow. In its anniversary year, Miele is represented in 49 countries by its own sales companies and more than 200 brand stores. Of the current 15 production plants, eight are in Germany and one each in Austria, China, the Czech Republic, Romania and Poland. Added to this are the two sites of the Italian medical technology specialist Steelco Group, which has been part of the Miele Group since 2017.

In order to further expand its promising business in North America, Miele is currently building its 16th plant in the US state of Alabama. Here, the production of large-volume ovens and cookers specially designed for this region will commence at the end of 2024. To further strengthen medical technology at Miele, a joint venture has been established with the Swiss industrial holding company Metall Zug AG, in which Miele holds 67 % of the shares. The Gütersloh-based company will contribute the Steelco Group, while Metall Zug will contribute the former Steelco competitor Belimed. The Executive Board of the Miele Group is made up of two representatives of the owner families Miele and Zinkann as well as four family-independent Executive Directors, each responsible for a specific department.

However, two things have not changed in 125 years. Firstly, the brand promise "Immer besser", or "Forever better", which the two founders had already written on their first machines. And secondly, the fact that the company is still wholly owned by the Miele and Zinkann families. On June 8, Miele will be celebrating its anniversary at almost all of its locations with employees and their families.

**Further details on the history of the company can be found here:**

[125 years of Miele – The story](#)

[125 years of Miele – The milestones](#)

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**Company profile:** Miele is recognised as the world's leading supplier of Premium domestic appliances, with an inspiring portfolio for the kitchen, laundry and floor care. The company also offers machines, systems and services for use in hotels, offices, care and medical technology. Since its foundation in 1899, Miele has lived up to its brand promise of "Immer Besser" in terms of quality, innovation, performance and timeless elegance. With its durable and energy-saving appliances, Miele helps its customers to make their everyday lives as sustainable as possible. The company is still owned by the two founding families Miele and Zinkann and has 15 production plants, eight of which are in Germany. Around 22,700 people work for Miele worldwide and the company's most recent turnover was 4,96 billion Euro. The company has its headquarters in Gütersloh in Westphalia.

**There are three photographs with this text**



**Photo 1:** Founded their company Miele & Cie. in 1899: Carl Miele senior (l.) and Reinhard Zinkann. (Photo: Miele)



**Photo 2:** An icon of advertising history: Just "Miele Miele" said Auntie, who knew all the washing machines (1920ies) (Photo: Miele)



**Photo 3:** Stylish indulgence and timeless elegance – the Miele Generation 7000 built-in appliances in action (here: the TwoInOne induction hob with integrated cooker hood) (Foto: Miele)



**Photo 4:** Wherever Miele sells its appliances, first-class service is always guaranteed. In the picture: the all-electric VW ID Buzz, which Miele was one of the first companies to include in its customer service fleet - in Miele red, of course. (Photo: Miele)



**Photo 5:** The Executive Board of the Miele Group in its anniversary year (from left): Dr Markus Miele (Executive Director and Co - Proprietor), Olaf Bartsch (Finance & Administration), Rebecca Steinhage (Human Resources & Corporate Affairs), Dr Reinhard Zinkann (Executive Director and Co -Proprietor), Dr Axel Kniehl Marketing & Sales), Dr Stefan Breit (Technology) (Photo: Miele)

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