LEICHT is 90

LEICHT - the long-established kitchen manufacturer from the southern German area of Swabia - has become a successful international architectural brand.

Innovative power, quality „made in Germany“, proximity to the dealers and top-quality kitchens in every price category: there are a number of factors that come together at LEICHT to orchestrate the company’s success. 90 years after the company was established, LEICHT is a brand with international appeal that continues on the road to success.

The company founded as a carpenter’s workshop in 1928 by the brothers Alois and Josef Leicht was sold to the Welle family in Paderborn in 1975. The company’s success was not always self-evident. At the start of the 1990s, the Welle family was interested in an IPO for LEICHT, but had to adapt to the requirements of an increasingly internationally oriented market and develop a new strategy that would work long term.
Product, service, brand

Stefan Waldenmaier joined LEICHT in 2002 and this was to prove to be a turning point for the company. He described the new strategic orientation concisely with the concept „product, service, brand“: in other words developing a durable, top-quality product that can be planned in a variety of ways and selling this product to end consumers through dealers. Furthermore, the brand was to be given more charisma at international fairs with online and ad campaigns, showcasing in the company’s own showroom as well as image publications. LEICHT has always kept its promise to dealers and customers that it would supply classically timeless, top-quality, exclusive kitchens to suit every taste and has thus gained a large number of loyal followers over the years.

All over the world LEICHT is now synonymous with homely, prestigious and open kitchens in all price segments and has found a place for itself with individually plannable kitchens that are outstanding value for money. Most recently the company has also devoted its attention to designing the dining and living area with room dividers, shelving and complete wall coverings in appropriate colours and materials.

Architectural cooperation – LEICHT is not only about planning kitchens for the luxury segment

Close cooperation with outstanding architects all over the world has proved to be most fruitful for LEICHT. In the series of publications „Architecture + Kitchen“, LEICHT kitchens are showcased in exceptional houses demonstrating how completely different planning approaches can be realised in the various countries. But Waldenmaier sees maximum diversity and individual planning not only as a a top priority for the luxury segment but also for the price segments below it: „We provide perfectly planned kitchen concepts for every room size from EUR 8,000 to 10,000.„
Investments

The wide product range and dynamic growth is particularly due to the decision to create clear structures and set resolute priorities in production. More than EUR 20 million have been invested over the last our years in state-of-the-art machines and facilities; digitalisation is now also completely in place. The company is completely SAP-controlled which means the most diverse measurements can be smoothly conveyed to the machines.

Currently, LEICHT is investing several million euros on extensions to its halls and procuring new machines; a new assembly plant is due to be opened during the course of 2020. Waldenmaier shows great allegiance to the company’s location; the HQ and production will stay in the region. The „LEICHT I WELT“ opened in October 2014 plays an important role for the company at its HQ. This elaborately planned exhibition centre with training areas and conference rooms has become a much frequented meeting place for customers, dealers, architects and planners from all over the world.

An increased level of online activity

Since 2015, one of the priority measures to increase the international appeal of the LEICHT brand has been to extend Internet activities and campaigns on social networks. „Our topics are capturing people's interest online too,“ says Waldenmaier of the great popularity with end users: LEICHT generates just under 100,000 fans and around 300,000 page views a month with its various online activities, such as, for example, „Away from White“ which was successfully posted on Facebook.
Unique: Global Kitchen Design competition portal

The online portal www.global-kitchen-design.com launched in the autumn of 2015 is also unique in the kitchen industry. This year the portal will be organising its third competition. Here, planners and architects can upload projects they have realised with LEICHT kitchens. These can then be saved by visitors in an ideas book. The concept aims to bring kitchen planners and end users together. This successful initiative just recently celebrated its highlight with an awards ceremony at LEICHT I WELT: more than 600 international visitors came to Waldstetten to celebrate the Global Kitchen Design Awards in which the best planned kitchens were honoured both by country and at an international level. „The coupling of events, competitions and the like that we ourselves have initiated with strategically well thought out broadcasting online has brought sensational feedback,” says Stefan Waldenmaier who sees the Internet as a powerful instrument in terms of gathering information and channelling customers to dealers.

Awards and prizes

LEICHT is the „best sold premium brand for kitchens“, according to a survey by GfK in 2016; a further accolade was the „most innovative brand of the year“, a title LEICHT was awarded both in 2015 and 2017. The outstanding value for money has also been awarded a prize: a national survey showed that LEICHT was „price winner 2016“ for kitchen furniture and was awarded 1st prize. Exporting to 55 countries worldwide and with sales totalling EUR 137 million in 2017, LEICHT Küchen AG grew by 11% in 2017 alone 90 years after its founding and can be confident about its future.
90 years of LEICHT – key data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Founded by brothers Alois and Josef Leicht as a carpenter's workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940-1950</td>
<td>LEICHT developed the first modular kitchen which still has a valid measurement and grid system today.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>LEICHT was taken over by Welle Holding and continued to be run as an independent company.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The company became LEICHT Küchen AG. Today LEICHT Küchen AG is a non-listed subsidiary of Welle Holding. Shares are still held by the original founding family.</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Opening of the LEICHT I WELT at the company HQ in Waldstetten.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015/2017</td>
<td>LEICHT was deemed the „most innovative brand of the year“ at the Plus X Awards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>LEICHT has 610 employees and posted sales of EUR 137 million.</td>
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PRESS RELEASE

The LEICHT I WELT is well-known internationally. The annual DESING SHOW is just one of the highlights held in the exhibition centre, 1,500 square metres in size. Photo: LEICHT / T. Vukosav

Renowned architectural projects are fitted with LEICHT kitchens the world over – here an exclusive clubhouse in Tainan/Taiwan. In the company’s „Architecture + Kitchen“ publication, LEICHT presents numerous projects such as this one. Photo: LEICHT

LEICHT pledges allegiance to its location with production and assembly. LEICHT kitchens stand for quality „made in Germany“ and are held in high esteem all over the world. Photo: LEICHT / P. Schumacher

LEICHT’s competition platform Global Kitchen Design honours the best planned LEICHT kitchens worldwide. This initiative is unique in the kitchen industry – and is how LEICHT brings dealers and end customers together. Photo: LEICHT / A. Pogue

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