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From tinkerer's workshop to world market leader

Kärcher turns 90

Winnenden, 2 January 2025 – Kärcher is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year. Founded on 2 January 1935 by Alfred Kärcher as a tinkerer's workshop for heating technology in Stuttgart, the family business has developed over the decades into a world-famous brand for cleaning technology.

„Kärcher is characterised by a great passion for technical solutions that make a difference and has thus become synonymous with quality, innovation and sustainability,“ says Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Management at Alfred Kärcher SE & Co. KG. „Our steady growth and numerous awards, such as the recent German Sustainability Award, are confirmation of our path. This success would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of generations of Kärcher employees.“ Kärcher has been particularly successful in the recent past: In the last 20 years, turnover has increased by more than 340 per cent. In the same period, the number of employees has tripled.

To celebrate the 90th anniversary, Kärcher teams around the world will be carrying out 90 free cleaning projects in public places such as squares, parks, beaches, riverbanks and historic buildings during the anniversary year. There will also be limited promotional models for customers across all appliance categories with a special design and additional features.

Innovation in the DNA

Innovation has characterised the company since its beginnings and is still deeply rooted in the company's DNA today. Alfred Kärcher's first successes included the 'Kärcher salt bath oven' for hardening light metals and preheating devices for vehicle and aircraft engines. This was followed by a large number of products that were completely new in their time and helped to shape the market for cleaning equipment. These include, for example, the first European hot water high-pressure cleaner KW 350 from 1950 or the first portable high-pressure cleaner for consumers HD 555 in 1984, with which Kärcher

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KÄRCHER

PRESSEMITTEILUNG

entered the market for private users. Other important milestones were the fully autonomous RC 3000 cleaning robot for households at the beginning of the noughties and the well-known WV 50 window vacuum cleaner from 2008, with which Kärcher mechanised window cleaning, which had previously been carried out purely manually, for the first time. Current devices with a game-changing character include fully automatic cleaning robots such as the KIRA B 50 scrubber-dryer and cleaning devices for private users that can be controlled via an app.

Internationalisation under Irene Kärcher

After the death of the founder in 1959, his wife Irene Kärcher took over the management and drove the internationalisation of the company forward with the establishment of the first sales companies in other European countries. In 1974, the strategic focus was placed on high-pressure cleaning and the establishment of the now familiar corporate colour Kärcher yellow. From 1980, the company focussed on all basic cleaning requirements in the areas of transport and buildings, and Kärcher developed into a system provider. „Irene Kärcher has significantly shaped our company and our corporate culture,“ says Hartmut Jenner. „In the years of her management, she made many far-sighted decisions that were the prerequisite for Kärcher to develop from a medium-sized company into a global market leader, without losing sight of its values as a family business.“

Sustainability as a key element

Sustainable behaviour has been firmly anchored in Kärcher's business model from the very beginning. The company is committed to comprehensive measures to reduce emissions, conserve resources, avoid waste and promote a circular economy, for which it has received several awards. Most recently, the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) officially confirmed that the targets set by Kärcher contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius and are therefore in line with the Paris Climate Agreement.

Today, a team of over 17,000 people in 85 countries and 170 companies work together at Kärcher to make the world a little cleaner. The product portfolio

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PRESSEMITTEILUNG

now includes over 3,000 cleaning and care devices. In 2023, the company once again achieved record sales of 3.294 billion euros.



The first cleaning appliance from Kärcher: the first European hot water high-pressure cleaner KW 350 from 1950.



Alfred Kärcher founded the company on 2 January 1935, his wife Irene took over after his early death and drove internationalisation forward, among other things.

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PRESSEMITTEILUNG



The first HD 555 portable high-pressure cleaner for consumers in 1984 was an important milestone for Kärcher and also marked the company's entry into the market for private users.



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