

**The 2019 financial year for the kitchen water hub specialists****BLANCO continues to grow**

**Total sales increased to 395 million euros / Growth in Germany despite stagnating kitchen market / Sales drivers: Silgranit sinks and mixer taps / Second-highest level of investment in the company's history with the Silgranit production network / From product to system: the kitchen water hub**

The Blanco Group finished the 2019 financial year with consolidated net sales of 395 million euros. Despite a weakening economic situation across the globe and growing competition, the company, based in southwestern Germany, has been able to achieve slight growth worldwide. Once again, the drivers of growth have been Silgranit sinks and kitchen mixer taps. Within Germany, the international specialist for water hub solutions in household kitchens achieved sales of 142 million euros. This equates to a 3.5 % increase on the previous year. In doing so, Blanco was able to build upon its leading role within a stagnating kitchen market. By contrast, the international regions showed very different trends, in some cases shaped by volatile economic conditions. Sales in markets outside Germany totalled 253 million euros for 2019, putting them at almost the same level as the previous year. This amounts to 64 % of total sales. Even though the positive trend within Germany compensated for the slump in sales in some of the international markets, the expectations were higher, declared CEO Frank Gfrörer on the occasion to the annual press conference. "After ten years of continuous growth, we are experiencing intensified competition both here in Germany and in international business. We will have to step up our efforts more than ever before to achieve our ambitious goals going forward."

### **Supporting trade partners: from product to system**

Blanco has long been one of the leading sink and mixer tap manufacturers, impressing millions of customers all over the world with high-quality products and reliable service, but now the company is going one step further. "We want to be able to provide our trade partners with an even better package of services in future, so as to help them sell through to customers," says Gfrörer. As the kitchen water hub specialist, the manufacturer is concentrating even more intensely on this central area in the kitchen. The aim is to establish Blanco as the brand for seamlessly integrated solutions, delighting consumers with hands-on experience of the convenience and benefits that are to be had when preparing food, drinking water and cleaning. This is what the 'Blanco Unit' is all about. It embodies holistic solutions that go beyond the product itself and are intended to create a sustainable brand experience for consumers, with tailored services and information, in all of the global key markets.

### **Delighting consumers with smart products and services**

Blanco has successfully enhanced its kitchen mixer tap range with attractive products like the new generation of smart mixer taps featuring special functions like touch-free operation, the exact amount of water you want, and the option of choosing filtered or boiling water. In Germany, a special installation service provided by Technical Customer Service assists trade partners with installing such high-quality water systems. Furthermore, Blanco has expanded its array of models and colours for the globally successful Silgranit sink range. The new and intense black colour has already made its debut in some international markets.

### **Investing in the future: a production network for Silgranit sinks**

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Blanco invested 29.3 million euros last year. The largest share was accounted for by the new plant for Silgranit sinks in Most, Czech Republic. It was completed in late 2019. This new plant will relieve some of the production capacity at the Sinsheim plant, which was previously at its limits. The now-expanded production network, comprising Sinsheim (Germany), Most (Czech Republic) and Toronto (Canada), provides a framework for further growth.

### **Growing with outstanding employees**

The company had 1,515 employees in average. Blanco's adherence to the very highest standards of HR management has been confirmed by its renewed certification by the Top Employers Institute. Real appreciation and an approach based on mutual trust have always been essential to the company culture, spanning different areas of the business, hierarchies and international borders. Spurred on by Blanco's rapid growth over recent years and the greater complexity that this has brought to international collaboration within the Group, the catalogue of values has now been revised to establish new points of focus for all employees. Summing up the new compass of values, CFO Rüdiger Böhle, who is also in charge of HR management, says, "the new global corporate values, which apply to all of us as we work together, form the basis for delighting our customers and trade partners worldwide with superb products and services."

According to the CFO, the extensive training opportunities, needs-based working hours models, and holistic health management that goes beyond existing standards, are all testament to the high level of social responsibility that the company demonstrates toward its employees. High-quality development programs such as the international potential-boosting STEP program, which was recently successfully completed,

focus on training young people who are particularly keen to develop their career for new responsibilities within the Blanco Group.

### **2020: delivering products throughout the coronavirus crisis**

The current financial year is being shaped by the global coronavirus outbreak. Blanco reacted very quickly and adapted its processes to the situation. "The health and safety of our employees was a top priority right from the very start," says Andreas Ostermann von Roth, COO and Head of the Covid-19 Taskforce at Blanco. "At the same time, we succeeded in ensuring that we could continue to provide service and deliveries to our customers worldwide. No expense was spared over this – we were, and still are, able to deliver at any time. We do not foresee any coronavirus-related delays to deliveries in the future, either." Internally, the focus has been on coping with the crisis. Incoming orders have dropped over recent weeks due to the lockdown measures. "We are adapting our capacity flexibly to market demand, using options like short-time hours to do so." The COO believes that this period is really proving Blanco's strengths.

Sales in the first quarter of 2020 were largely in line with planning. Overall, however, Frank Gfrörer believes that the company can expect a significant drop in sales due to the pandemic. "That said, we are perfectly primed for the future global orientation of the brand, and our employees are really engaged. Despite the crisis, our goal remains to make Blanco a byword for seamlessly integrated water hubs in high-quality kitchens."

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### Image captions:

#### Image 1:



BLANCO continues to grow: the Blanco Group finished the 2019 financial year with consolidated net sales of 395 million euros. Despite a weakening economic situation across the globe and growing competition, the company, based in southwestern Germany, has been able to achieve slight growth worldwide. Once again, our growth drivers have been the Silgranit sinks and kitchen mixer taps. The board of directors at the annual press conference (from left to right): Rüdiger Böhle (CFO), Frank Gfrörer (CEO, Chairman of the Board) and Andreas Ostermann von Roth (COO).

#### Image 2:



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The company had 1,515 employees in average, 1,090 of whom were based in Germany. Figure shows employees at the Sinsheim plant (Germany), one of the three sites where the globally successful Silgranit sinks are made.

**Image 3:**



The Blanco headquarters in Oberderdingen, southwestern Germany, where the company was founded in 1925 by Heinrich Blanc.

**Image 4:**



As the kitchen water hub specialist, the manufacturer is set to concentrate even more closely on this central area in the kitchen in future. The aim is to establish Blanco as the brand for seamlessly integrated solutions, delighting consumers with hands-on experience of

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the convenience and benefits that are to be had when preparing food, drinking and cleaning.

**Image 5:**



One bowl, two rails, three functional levels: clever concepts like the Etagon bowl range delight millions of Blanco customers around the globe. Sinks and bowls made of the exceptionally resistant, easy-care composite material Silgranit also made a significant contribution to growth in 2019.

**Image 6:**



Blanco has successfully enhanced its kitchen mixer tap range with attractive products like the new generation of smart mixer taps featuring



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special functions like touch-free operation, the exact amount of water you want, and the option of choosing filtered water. With Evol-S Volume, the desired amount of water can be accurately set with an additional rotary control.

Photos: Blanco

Blanco is all about systems that are meticulously designed down to the finest detail for the water hub in household kitchens. The brand has won over consumers worldwide with its modern design, ergonomic handling and reliable product quality. All components are perfectly integrated with one another, from the mixer tap to the sink, and all the way through to the base cabinet configuration. As such, Blanco systems make a significant contribution towards sustainably upgrading high-quality kitchens around the globe with everyday convenience and benefits when it comes to preparing food, drinking and cleaning.

Founded over 90 years ago, the company is now one of the leading manufacturers of sinks and kitchen mixer taps worldwide. With subsidiaries in Europe, North America and Asia, plus its trading partners, Blanco has a presence in about 100 countries all over the world and offers its customers a portfolio that is perfectly tailored to consumer needs.

The company headquarters and key production sites are in southwest Germany. The Blanco Group generated consolidated annual sales of 395 million euros and had 1,515 employees in average, of whom 1,090 worked in Germany and 425 at the international locations.

Founded in 1925 by Heinrich Blanc, today Blanco is part of BLANC & FISCHER Family Holding and has won multiple employer awards. [www.blanco.com](http://www.blanco.com)

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