Heiner Olbrich due to leave employment with Miele on September 30 as planned – Successor Axel Kniehl comes from Whirlpool/Bauknecht

Change on Miele Board of Directors

Gütersloh, April 2, 2014. – The new member of the Board of Directors at Miele & Cie. KG has been named as Dr Axel Kniehl, currently member of the European management board with the US domestic goods corporation Whirlpool. The 43-year old business administration graduate is thereby the designated successor to Dr Heiner Olbrich who will be leaving the company on September 30. Axel Kniehl will commence service as Miele Managing Director on August 1 in order to ensure a proper transition.

Heiner Olbrich joined Miele in early 2011 as the successor to Dr Reto Bazzi on the latter’s retirement. Under the leadership of Dr Olbrich, Miele has made considerable progress with its world-wide marketing strategy and has gained market shares in many key countries. Last year, Dr Olbrich announced his decision to leave the company for personal reasons by December 31, 2014 at the latest. Dr Olbrich cited intensive travel commitments which accompany the position as the reason for his departure. Heiner Olbrich recently became a father for the third time and his family continues to reside in Munich.

Axel Kniehl is both familiar with the domestic appliance market and with key Miele markets: At Whirlpool, he was responsible for European dishwasher sales and later for the sales regions of Russia/Eastern Europe and China in that order. Since 2013, he has been Vice President and member of the European management board with the Whirlpool Corporation responsible for Northern and Continental Europe and at the same time in charge as CEO of the Stuttgart-based subsidiary Bauknecht Hausgeräte GmbH. In these positions, Axel Kniehl has not only gathered broad international experience but has also demonstrated a keen entrepreneurial mindset.

After a doctorate in the field of motivation research (1997) and an assistant professorship at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Kniehl was employed among others by the McKinsey business consultancy and as Head of...
International Expansion with Fielmann AG. He joined Whirlpool in 2006. Axel Kniehl is married and has two children.

The other members of the Miele & Cie. KG Board of Management, all on an equal footing, are Olaf Bartsch (Finances/Administration), Dr Markus Miele (Managing Director and Co-Proprietor), Dr Eduard Sailer (Technical Affairs) and Dr Reinhard Zinkann (Managing Director and Co-Proprietor). Senior Management and the Miele Family Council are pleased to have been able to engage the services of Axel Kniehl and would at the same time like to thank Dr Heiner Olbrich at this early juncture for his successful commitment to the Miele company whilst reserving a more comprehensive announcement of their appreciation for later.

(451 words, 2,974 characters incl. spaces)

Press contact:
Carsten Prudent
Tel. no.: +49 (0)5241/89-1951
Email: carsten.prudent@miele.de

Company profile: Miele is the world leader in the field of premium domestic appliances including cooking, baking and steam-cooking appliances, refrigeration products, coffee makers, dishwashers and laundry and floorcare products. This line-up is augmented by dishwashers, washer-extractors and tumble dryers for commercial use as well as washer-disinfectors and sterilisers for use in medical and laboratory applications (Miele Professional). The company, founded in 1899, has 8 production plants in Germany and one plant each in Austria, the Czech Republic, China and Romania. 2012/13 turnover amounted to approx. EUR 3.15 bn, with sales outside Germany accounting for 70%. Miele is represented with its own sales subsidiaries and via importers in almost 100 countries. The Miele company, now in the fourth generation of family ownership, employs a workforce of around 17,250 with two-thirds in Germany. The company headquarters are located in Gütersloh/Westphalia, Germany.

There are two photographs with this text

Photo 1: Dr Heiner Olbrich, Managing Director for Sales and Marketing at Miele & Cie. KG, is due to leave the company with effect from September 30, 2014 for personal reasons. (Photo: Miele)

Photo 2: New board member for Marketing and Sales at Miele & Cie. KG will be Dr Axel Kniehl, currently Vice President and European Board Member with Whirlpool as well as CEO at Whirlpool's Bauknecht subsidiary. (Photo: Slava Ebinger)