



STAFF SATISFACTION

Willi Bruckbauer, founder of Bora, has been at the forefront of innovation since 2007 – we find out what drives him, how he's invested in his staff, and what it is that sets Bora apart from its competitors

Words **Danielle Lett**





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Having been a company for 12 years now, Bora is consistently going from strength to strength. Founded by Willi Bruckbauer in 2007, who firmly remains at the helm to this day, he has always had an eye for design and a knack for making. “I was a master carpenter for over 20 years, designing and making kitchens. This is where I learnt and experienced first-hand the physical and visual obstructions often caused by huge extractor hoods,” Bruckbauer explains. But with extractors proving to be problematic – “not only did these obstruct views, but people knocked into the corners making them something of a hazard, particularly in the busy family kitchen” – Bruckbauer looked to provide a less disruptive, alternative solution.

“My vision was to follow the needs of the customers, so I invented my very own cooktop extractor system that met the highest standards of function and aesthetics. The result is the Bora cooktop extractor system, with the extractor integrated directly into the cooktop to draw the cooking vapours downwards,” he says.

And it's been this vision that has caught the eye of renowned industry awards such as the iF Design Award, the Plus X Award and the Red Dot Award, scooping accolades across the board. Despite only being launched a few months ago, the Bora Classic 2.0 recently received the Plus X Award for ‘Best Product of the Year 2019’. “We consistently invest in research and development, and the aim is always to achieve further growth. Our image is that of a trendsetter and we work hard to present innovative and revolutionary new products, the most recent of which includes the Bora Classic 2.0 and Bora Pure,” Bruckbauer says.

With such growth and recognition throughout the appliance sector, this has allowed Bora to invest not only in its products but also its staff – with the recent unveiling of a new office expansion in Germany. “The new building was designed to reflect the company values as part of the company’s own corporate design – home, dynamism, differentiation, premium,” explains Bruckbauer. The building project, covering 14,000sq m, is an affirmation on the site. The headquarters for worldwide distribution and the high-tech development laboratory are located right on the River Inn and not far from the Bora Headquarters in

Raubling. He adds: “All global services from product research and development, through product management and corporate architecture to marketing and international sales are accommodated at the site, with the building being a design statement. There are attractive mountain views thanks to oversized glass elements, exposed concrete, a façade composed of larch shingles and an innovative cooling and heating system.”

With a huge investment made, the payoff in staff satisfaction and productivity has reflected this. “Feedback from staff has been fantastic,” Bruckbauer says. “There is a great work atmosphere, with employees enjoying an inspiring work atmosphere including training and regeneration areas with air at a high altitude comparable to that of a 2,000 metre mountain.” Other Bora office perks include changing and shower rooms, physiotherapy spaces, rest areas, flexible conference rooms, a library and several kitchens. In the Healthy Bar, along with reverse osmosis water fountains, staff can also enjoy a free healthy lunch every day – on the roof terrace with outdoor space in fine weather. “I am proud to provide our staff with innovative workplaces that should enable top performance through top architecture.”

With things going so well in Germany, Bora continues to focus on its growth in the UK market, with Bruckbauer noting how changes in the design of the British kitchen are playing a hand in Bora’s success. “Kitchen spaces in the UK are increasingly being designed as open plan, with designers looking for the same solution to the problem of overhead extractor hoods as I once faced. This is why we believe that the UK market is very important to Bora, with the demand for the cooktop extractor system only just beginning,” he says.

With the extraction market expanding and becoming more saturated, just what exactly is it that sets Bora apart from its competitors, ensuring that it stays ahead of the game? “The original patent has multiple advantages – the premium-quality systems are more effective than conventional hoods, extremely quiet, energy efficient and easy to clean. They enable maximum design freedom for kitchens and a clear view. Each new product sets new standards, with concise design, functionality and optimised operation, putting Bora in a class of its own.” ■

PROFILE

Bora Lab

Who are we? Lloyds Wharf, 2 Mill St, Bermondsey, London SE1 2BD.
Tel: 0203 693 1390

What we do? The Bora Lab is a dedicated training space for customers, where they can get hands on with Bora technology and return to their showroom with a comprehensive understanding of how the systems work and their advantages. Bora retailers can also visit the Bora Lab with end consumers, where they can see working displays and watch Bora products in action. Bora is a premium brand committed to developing the most efficient cooktop extractors and cooktops on the market. In doing so, it focuses on excellent quality, an eye for detail and unique design with outstanding customer benefits. Bora downdraft cooktop extractors are based on a simple principle of physics: the Bora system draws away vapours and odours at a greater speed than they rise. The result: the vapour is completely extracted. This is the Bora Vision: the end of the extractor hood, therefore revolutionising the design and function of kitchens

- 1 In fine weather, staff can enjoy their lunch out on the roof terrace overlooking the view
- 2 Flexible conference facilities were part of the design of the new building
- 3 Bora staff are encouraged to recharge their batteries in the Regeneration room
- 4 Just one of several kitchens in the new building

Q&A

What is your greatest challenge?

"Our number one challenge lies in altering people's perceptions of kitchen extraction and fulfilling the Bora vision of the end of the extractor hood. Running simultaneously with this is inventing cooktop extractor systems that always meets the highest standards in terms of both functionality and aesthetics," says Bruckbauer

And your greatest opportunity?

"To present people with Bora products and demonstrate that the seven principles of Bora really work. Simplified, these are that consumers should enjoy cooking in fresh air, effective and quiet operation, ease of cleaning, energy saving, high quality, design freedom without an extractor hood and a clear view when cooking. Alongside this is the opportunity to fulfil customer wishes and help people to add their own personality to the kitchen as a living space and enabling customised planning and design without restrictions," he explains

Strange but true Willi Bruckbauer made his first tests with a vacuum cleaner and a pan full of water before inventing Bora



PROFILE

Bora

Who are we? Willi Bruckbauer, founder

Where are we? Bora is headquartered in Raubling, Upper Bavaria. Bora Lüftungstechnik GmbH, Rosenheimer Straße 33, D-83064, Raubling/Rosenheim. Tel: +49 8035 9840 100. www.bora.com

What we do Cooktop extraction manufacturer

Business history Founded in 2007 by Willi Bruckbauer, he had a vision – the end of the extractor hood. The patented product that he developed offers multiple benefits: the high-quality systems are more effective than conventional extractor hoods, very quiet, energy saving and easy to clean. They enable maximum design freedom for kitchens and a clear view. Bora received its first award within the scope of the innovation contest 365 Orte im Land der Ideen (365 Places in the Land of Ideas) back in 2009, followed by the German Entrepreneurs' Award, Red Dot awards, Plus X Awards, German Design Awards, Iconic Award, German Brand Award, Good Design Award and others. The company has successfully developed and sold cooktop extractor systems that draw vapours downwards thanks to the use of patented technology. The innovative Bora Pure, Bora Basic, Bora Classic and Bora Professional product ranges are now sold in 58 countries worldwide

Staffing levels 200, and 5,500 distribution partners worldwide

“WE CONSISTENTLY INVEST IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, AND THE AIM IS ALWAYS TO ACHIEVE FURTHER GROWTH. WE WORK HARD TO PRESENT INNOVATIVE NEW PRODUCTS”

Willi Bruckbauer, founder, Bora



1 Staff receive a free healthy meal every day including reverse osmosis water

2 Training can take place in the Bora kitchen overlooking the mountains

3 The new Bora building makes a statement with an attractive mountain view thanks to oversized glass elements, exposed concrete, a façade composed of larch shingles and an innovative cooling and heating system

4 Plenty of glass means that the outside is brought in for staff

5 Every element of the 4,500sq m building was carefully considered – even the staircases

