



Old values, new ideas

AGA Rangemaster has a long-held reputation for innovative and 'best-in-class' products. It is building on its heritage — with help from BSI.

"We're about safety, performance and quality... working with BSI complements that"

Dave Reynolds,
Technical Director, AGA Rangemaster

The business in brief

American-owned AGA Rangemaster is a British manufacturer of cookers, sinks and other kitchen equipment, for residential use. Its core market is the UK but it exports to mainland Europe, North America, Australia and China. The company has a long history of innovation — and a long-standing relationship with BSI. It holds several BSI Kitemarks and certificates and was the first company to be certified by BSI to AGS (Australian Gas Safety) standards and new EU rules.

BSI: the business benefits

BSI...

- Validates internal product tests and reduces risks
- Increases customer confidence
- Helps ensure new products are 'market ready'
- Supports the international growth of a company
- Provides an important external resource

Company background

AGA Rangemaster can trace its origins to the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century. "There's been a manufacturer on our site in Leamington Spa [in Warwickshire, central England] since 1777," says technical director, Dave Reynolds. That same site was where, in 1833, the Flavel family opened the Eagle Foundry, and developed one of the first multipurpose cast-iron stoves, the Kitchener.

The Flavels made their mark on the local Midlands community, creating jobs and holding civic office — and they made their mark nationally. Sidney Flavel showcased the Kitchener at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and, relying on just a single heat source, the stove went on to revolutionise cooking in Victorian Britain.

A lot, of course, has changed since 1851. The company now consists of three organisations: AGA, based in Telford in Shropshire, Rangemaster, based at Royal Leamington Spa, and Leisure Sinks, based at Long Eaton in Nottinghamshire. And it has an American owner: the Middleby Corporation of Illinois, whose sales totalled \$2.7bn in 2018, the bulk of them in the food-service sector, bought the company in 2015.

Two things, however, haven't changed. One is the company's commitment to proactive innovation. The Leamington Spa site, has a state-of-the-art research and development centre, and it remains a pioneer, recently introducing a steam oven for range cooking. "We are constantly generating patents, constantly inventing," says Reynolds. "The Flavels were innovators; that tradition lives on."

The other constant is a focus on attention to detail, performance and 'brand desirability'. "The Leamington Spa site was modernised in 2002 to create a centre of excellence," Reynolds continues. "The Kitchener was a best-in-class product, and that commitment to quality and performance also lives on."

These two constants will remain core to the company. "Delivery of customer service and ongoing innovation are Middleby values, and they will drive the development of the business," Reynolds adds.

Working with BSI

Reynolds has worked with BSI at Rangemaster for some 25 years, and Leisure Sinks, the largest maker of sinks in the UK, holds a number of BSI Kitemarks for products. There's a synergy, Reynolds says, between AGA Rangemaster and Middleby values and those of BSI: "We're about safety, performance and quality — and BSI complements that 'trinity'. The Kitemark schemes mean both our products and our quality management systems are audited and approved by an independent third party."

Importantly, BSI supports the growth of the business — both at home and internationally. "The Kitemark is a powerful symbol of quality for our customers in the UK, and BSI, a notified body for regulators, is well respected in other markets, too. BSI's international presence [the company has 90 offices in more than 30 countries] and its global reputation make it a 'one-stop shop' for us. We use it for product certification for America, Australia and Europe, and for China, an expanding market for us."

AGA Rangemaster has its own testing laboratories but uses BSI to further reduce the risks of defects and non-compliance. "BSI testing provides additional confidence and reassurance, validation that our results are accurate," Reynolds explains.

This extra layer of quality control can be particularly important when bringing new products to market. "The last thing we want is to sell something new and find it fails in some way," Reynolds adds. "With any innovation or new development, safety, quality and performance remain our primary focus. If we lose sight of them, we lose sight of the customer."

Developing the business

AGA Rangemaster has a history of innovating with BSI: it was the first company to be certified by BSI for compliance with the new EU Gas Appliance Regulations (GAR) and to Australian Gas Safety (AGS) standards, allowing it to sell its products in Australia and New Zealand.

The company's developers are currently looking at what increased interconnectivity and the Internet of Things (IoT) mean for the business and new product development. Again, the focus will be on improving and strengthening a product before it goes to market. And working with BSI will again be important. "BSI are not consultants and they don't tell us what to do, but their technical expertise and their knowledge of standards and regulation make them a good partner and reference point for us," Reynolds says.

Whatever the effect of the IoT on its product range, the company's long relationship with BSI is unlikely to end any time soon. "Everyone at BSI — from the upper management to the individual engineers — is capable, well trained and knowledgeable," Reynolds adds. "We're working with BSI more closely than ever and have a steady stream of products coming through for certification. We've recommended them to our suppliers and to sister companies in the Middleby Group, and we've no doubt we will continue to work with them in the future."

Contact us to find out how BSI can help your business make excellence a habit.

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