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Blommer Chocolate Company Expands Lab Capabilities and Opens New 10,000 Square Foot R&D Center in Chicago, IL



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Blommer Chocolate Company, a cocoa processor and ingredient chocolate supplier in North America, expands lab capabilities and opens a new R&D Center located in downtown Chicago, IL in the Merchandise Mart. The R&D Center will focus on future development, concept testing, processing & ingredient research, and application creation.

Mark Okita, COO and President, conveys, *“The R&D Center is a place where anyone can discuss new chocolate ideas with Blommer members, regardless of scale. Establishing this Center in the Mart, located in downtown Chicago, a city known for its candy culture, holds significant value. Blommer’s R&D Center will be a sweet destination for anyone with a sweet tooth.”* This 5,000 ft² expansion, resulting in a 10,000 ft² R&D Center, comes two years after Blommer moved their HQ offices to the Merchandise Mart, and one year after the historic Chicago manufacturing plant closed.

The R&D Center is intentionally designed to showcase the rich history of Blommer and advance the company’s mission to enhance research & development and elevate creative solutions in compound and chocolate technology. *“Blommer Chocolate Company’s new R&D Center is a hub of innovation for future chocolate technology. It brings together*

scientists' passion and creativity, allowing customers to participate in developing new ideas. This center honors Blommer's history and paves the way for next-generation chocolate products, inspiring the industry's future" says Tomoki Matsumoto, CEO and Chairman.

The R&D Center's curated spaces, equipment, and strategic staffing allows for the full scope of development, from innovative concepts to application, for Blommer Chocolate customers. The space is also built to be super collaborative, enabling on-site customer and partner engagements, plus hosting industry community experiences. The new development labs are outfitted to enable end-to-end processing from chocolate liquor to finished product application. The equipment replicates Blommer's manufacturing production capabilities to aid in product customer sample development, innovation and new business development, plus adds analytical instrument capability. Additionally, the expansion allows for more focused customer hospitality and supports employees' workplace wellbeing with ample room for staffing expansion needs. The new expansion footprint complements the existing application areas including the hot kitchen, chocolate kitchen, sensory analysis and ideation spaces.

"This R&D Center was designed with purpose, by scientists, to involve customers in our creative approach to critical thinking and development of novel concepts. The magic happens when the ideas come together and their output becomes inspirations for the future" says Melissa Tisoncik, VP R&D. This expansion will continue to highlight the Blommer & Fuji experience and will help elevate the brand as well as realize the Blommer R&D vision: Through thoughtful and proactive collaboration, we will deliver advanced innovation, impactful technical support, and generate meaningful, creative solutions to help unlock the full potential of our customers.

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Blommer Chocolate Company is a cocoa processor and ingredient chocolate supplier in North America. The company provides comprehensive business solutions for domestic and international customers of all sizes in the confectionery, baking and dairy industries. Among Blommer's core competencies are cocoa bean processing, chocolate manufacturing, commodity risk management, and product and process R&D. The company is a leader in advancing sustainable cocoa farming as a founding member of the World Cocoa Foundation and through its privately managed farmer programs in Cote d'Ivoire and Ecuador. Founded in 1939, Blommer maintains an outstanding reputation for customer service and quality. For more information about Blommer Chocolate Company, please visit www.blommer.com.