

# GöteSSons

- the company that sees the future

When you think of Sweden and successful innovative companies the names that often come to mind are the global IKEA, Spotify, H&M, Skype, Electrolux and so on. But there are more, even though they are on a smaller scale they have a lot of qualities comparable with bigger companies and many times a stronger customer care, traditions and values.





Götessons new building, voted Sweden's third-best-looking office.



**G**ötessons has been synonymous for hard-working entrepreneurs and innovators for over three generations. Today Johan Götesson is CEO of Götessons. His father, Ola Götesson, started the company, and there is a long tradition of entrepreneurial spirit in the family. When Johan talks about the company, you quickly understand that they are not like other players in the market. For Götessons it is about understanding customer needs *before* the customers does – then developing a solution, their own or together with designers.

‘When my father started in 1986 in a corner of a room in Dalstorp, he made wire products such as paper trays, hat racks, dish racks etc. but with the computer boom, we began developing products for a better working environment in the office,’ says Johan.

In 1993 Götessons created a new concept, the first ever cable holder on the market. Since then, many new products have been developed and marketed, often unique of their kind in both form and function. Today the product range has expanded into the conference and hotel industry. Götessons is about creating an ergonomic, comfortable and stylish environment, with the right products and preferably in collaboration with interior designers and architects.

What distinguishes the company from others on the market? ‘Götessons is a bit of an innovator in the industry. Furthermore, we are good at seeing the big picture and communicating it,’ Johan explains.

Götessons has been operating since 1990 in the present sector and is now the market leader in its segment in Scandinavia. The

company has a well-established sales network of over 2,000 dealers around the world. Götessons deliver products to market-leading companies like Kinnarps, EFG, Martela, Isku and many other major office furniture producers. Götessons has seen a strong increase in export in recent years with many new customers.

The acquisition of Acoustic Environment in September 2015 will mean that new markets will open up with new customers, which allows them to increase “after sales” for both companies. This can be achieved partly by post-assembly work at a customer a year after project installation, making additional needs analysis and ultimately sales.

The company was started by Ola Götesson in 1984. A generation shift took place in 2007 when his son Johan Götesson acquired a majority share holding in the company. In 2013 Connecting Capital Sweden AB acquired 70% of the company and Götessons management 30%.

Now the Götesson group provides the market’s most functional and well-designed solutions for office workplaces, conference rooms, public spaces and hotels. Götessons combines the commitment and care of a small company with the efficiency and seriousness of a large company. Three important elements for the future within the areas the group focuses on are sound, light and air. Götessons expects continued growth in these 3 elements through continued expansion in the export market and the acquisition and implementation of Akustikmiljö in Falkenberg AB.











The huge conference room, with 3.5 m tall palm trees in the conference room can even be seen from the motorway. The thought comes to mind that both concisely listed agendas and discipline are required from meeting participants to prevent their attention being caught up in the panoramic view.

Gotessons sees a clear trend that, in combination with the increasing rental rates in the big cities & prime locations, the office space is getting smaller and more compact because companies see it as unnecessary to pay for more space than required. More staff in less space means open offices, smaller office desks and small storage facilities with poor acoustics, which increases the need for smart products and solutions for better storage and acoustics.

In a study done by the office furniture company Steelcase in 2015, 85% of respondents said that they could not concentrate at work. The noise level in open offices is generally higher than in smaller offices. A higher noise level has a significantly negative impact at the work environment. Overall, interior design has become increasingly important when it comes to attracting and retaining skilled staff within companies by utilizing existing space optimally and creating a healthy work environment from an acoustic perspective.

'It is very important for the group to continuously analyze current trends and ride the wave of current demand and to adapt to new and established customers,' says Johan Götesson. Trade shows are an important part of Gotessons marketing where the company has

positioned itself as an innovative player that is always ahead in terms of design, new products and product development.

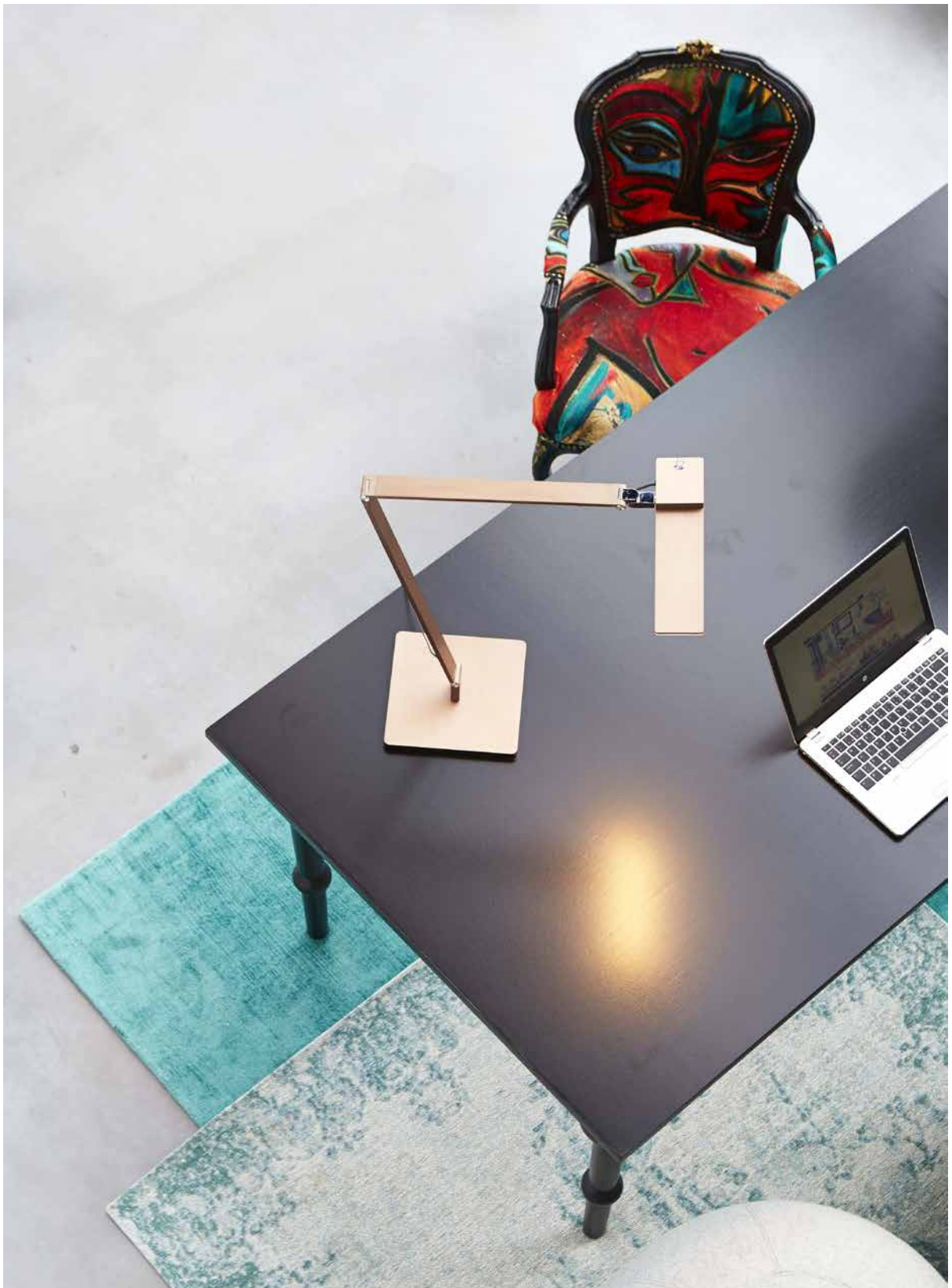
The new HQ at Rönnsåsen enables increased brand exposure as well as entirely new opportunities to display Gotessons products in real-world environments.

Products that contribute to sustainability and a fresh air climate in the office make up a very interesting segment for Gotessons.

In many countries with serious air pollution, it is unhealthy to live outdoors. Driving a scooter in a big city in China is a health hazard. With the new global climate awareness, now efforts are being made to address the problems. Consumption must become more sustainable, everyone agrees on that, and this will also affect the market for office furnishings.

Johan Götesson recently visited China where there is a great demand for Scandinavian design and healthy accessories for the office environment. Contributing to more sustainable solutions is not only ethical, it can also be a really good deal, he explains.

'We believe that our screen with PAZ, Pure Air Zone, can become a real bestseller. There is a screen with a built-in particle filter that absorbs everything from pollen to diesel particles.'



Reception at Gotessons, on the picture you can see the new lamp from Gotessons – Led Orchid is an exclusive and modern desk lamp for maximum range and flexibility.





Historical wall – affixed across an entire wall is Gotessons' story, in the form of old newspaper clippings and photographs. The street artist Emil Olsson has now made it all into a work of art.





Inauguration Party was acclaimed as party of the year by most of the 170 clients and friends of Gotessons.

Playfulness is also something that sells. Computer Monitor protection in different colours with a zip around became a real bestseller for example.

‘It was a product that came right in time when more people are working in the so-called modern open and flexible office. With a screen protector or a pouf with built-in storage, you can express your personality with the little details,’ says Johan, adding: ‘Imaginative products with function continue to be our hallmark.’

Last summer, Gotessons moved in to their new premises in Ulricehamn. There is no need of extra imagination when you step into Gotessons HQ. They have invested in an interior that both highlights the company’s products and innovations and captures its identity and philosophy. The interior design firm Joy of Plenty was responsible for the new deco. The first thing that catches your eye in the three-storey high atrium is one of Gotessons best sellers, the sound absorber called *Sound Off*.

A jungle theme runs throughout the building, with its lively colours, and various materials, matching the company’s range of products perfectly. One of the meeting rooms has a safari feeling

with different wild animals on the walls, symbolizing the different personalities of Gotessons employees. Each department has been decorated to showcase some of Gotessons own designed products.

The staff at Gotessons are very happy with their new workplace which is both creative and very personal. ‘We have received a very positive response and a lot of spontaneous visits from our customers since we moved here. We really got a design that sticks out from the traditional. It is important to create a sense of pride among the crew. We have great fun at work and in this environment we will enjoy our job even more,’ says Johan.

The company has designed the building so that they can grow, for example, they have a third floor that initially will be used as a showroom. ‘Before we moved to the new building, we had two different properties in Dalstorp, about 25 km south of Ulricehamn,’ Johan explains. ‘When we didn’t have any more room to grow we took the decision to build something new with a better location for both customers and staff. And when the new highway opens between Stockholm and Gothenburg in October, we will be right there in the centre.’

LOFT asked Johan Götesson how he sees the company’s future



The entrance surrounded by glass and the ceiling is fourteen meters high. A custom-built white steel staircase with flashes of sponged-on green which leads up towards the upper two floors; and the outlandish starfish-like seating in the middle of the entrance hall.

development. 'Identifying customer needs and solving problems has always been Gotessons strength,' he says. 'Today screens which create privacy between work spaces in open offices and sound absorbers are bestsellers. We know that building owners, landlords and businesses are demanding ergonomic, functional and well designed environments.'

'We bought the company Akustikmiljö in Falkenberg in September 2015. Acoustics is a segment that is growing and our solutions are for both business and public spaces,' Johan explains. 'More and more companies realize that a good sound environment can be a means of competition in the market. Restaurant Guests, for example, want to be able to talk to each other during their visit and pupils achieve better results and the teachers get better work if the sound environment in classrooms and corridors is good.'

It is the company's vision to become Europe's leading provider of accessories for the office workplace and one of the leading suppliers in the group's niche for public environments, conference and hotel environment.

When LOFT met Johan Götesson and he described how the company grew, he recalled a day when he was having lunch at restaurant Haga in a small village where Gotessons and this story

started. There are 900 inhabitants in Dalstorp and everybody knows each other, so when a girl came in whom nobody knew, Johan and sales rep. Patrik nearly fell off their chairs. Johan immediately concluded that she must be a model and he called the other big company in the village, Svedbergs, which his grandfather started up once upon a time.

He checked if there had been any photo shoots that day. And indeed, Konrad's tiles that worked together with Svedbergs had borrowed their premises for a photo session.

Johan contacted CEO Frederick Zimmerman and swiftly got the model's name and number. It turned out she was a former Miss Sweden model, nowadays a sports teacher, and she then became Gotessons model and front page catalogue for the next 8 years.

Due to Johan's fashion passion and an eye for detail, he has always been in charge of all photo shoots, so he got to know Annette well. When Johan mentioned his interest to kick start export and that Gotessons needed an export manager she immediately suggested a Dutch guy who was married to her best friend, living in Spain and planning to move up north.





John de Boer had a very international hotel management background and had been working in property development in Spain. A week later at the job interview, 12 hours after moving to snowy Sweden on a cold December day, John arrived late trying to find this tiny village in a wintry landscape.

After a doubtful interview Johan went with his gut feeling and looks back with a smile remembering how John wanted to

invest in Gotessons shares from day one but he made him wait 3 years to become part owner.

'John influenced Gotessons development a lot over the years and has brought much success and joy to the company and our relationship is as strong in business as in friendship,' says Johan. 'It's funny how things work out and a good job there was only one restaurant in the village!' ■