

Setra News

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It should be easy to do business with Setra

OVER THE PAST YEAR, Setra has gradually implemented a new marketing organisation for sawn wood products. The intention is to provide clarity and make it easy for our customers to do business with us. At the same time as we are strengthening and developing existing customer relationships, we are also putting greater effort into cultivating new markets. Today we work with sales within four main geographic areas: Scandinavia, Western & Central Europe, North Africa & Middle East, and Asia & New Markets. Our customer service organisation has also been adapted to this new way of working and we now have one customer service manager responsible for this expertise. In this issue of Setra-News you can read about Setra's customer service function, the vital link between production and market.

During the spring Setra has also combined the Group's expertise within construction and homes to form a new business area, Setra Building Products & Systems. This has been achieved by merging the operations within Setra's subsidiary Plusshus with those of the former Wood Products business area, with sales of building products primarily to the Swedish building materials trade. In this issue you can read more about Plusshus and how standardised building system solutions keep down costs and attract more customers.

SPRING AND SUMMER mean high pressure for sales of building products to the Swedish building materials trade. This year Setra is launching several exciting new products for the patio. These include outdoor flooring treated with hard-wax oil and dimensionally stable glulam decking. Personally, I am wondering whether pine heartwood decking would look good at the summer cottage ...

Enjoy the newsletter!

Hannele Arvonen,
CEO



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New faces

Patrik Larsson has been appointed as the new Manager of Setra Vimmerby where he takes over from Björn Ståhlberg who is retiring. Patrik has many years of experience at Vimmerby sawmill where he has held a number of different roles.

Lena Mika is the new Customer Manager for Central & Western Europe. She previously worked as market coordinator within the Building and Living business area at Stora Enso.

Britt-Inger Marklund has taken over as Finance Manager at Plusshus. Britt-Inger previously worked at Setra's now sold unit in Kvarnåsen, and was subsequently Managing Director of Kvarnåsen Trä.

Krister Norberg has been appointed as Operations Manager of Setra's subsidiary Plusshus. He was previously head of production and operational development at Plusshus. Prior to that Krister worked at Hjaltevadshus and Volvo Buses.

Kaj Tönsberg will become the new Market and Sales Manager for Setra's Building Products & Systems business area on 1 June. He joins Setra from the floor manufacturer BerryAlloc where he worked as Nordic Sales Manager.



PATRIK LARSSON



LENA MIKA



BRITT-INGER MARKLUND



KRISTER NORBERG



KAJ TÖNSBERG

DID YOU KNOW...

that right now Setra is raising its visibility in the company's Swedish digital channels. Welcome to setrakampanj.se and be inspired by Setra's wood floors, outdoor flooring and exterior claddings!

Continued focus on China

MARKET At the end of March Setra, in cooperation with ten other Swedish sawmill companies, took part in Interzum, the major furniture industry fair, in Guangzhou in southern China. Participation was coordinated by the industry organisation Swedish Wood as part of efforts to promote business contacts between Swedish wood products companies and Chinese customers.

"Forecasts for 2014 indicate that our exports to China will double compared with the previous year. It is important for us to be part of this growing market and the fact that we now have our own sales representation on site in China is a major step," says Setra's Market Director Olle Berg.



Broader recruitment base with apprentice programme

EDUCATION At Setra Skinnskatteberg a cooperation with the Swedish Public Employment Service has resulted in a dual success. Through an apprentice programme unemployed young people were given an opportunity to try the sawmill industry while the sawmill built up a local recruitment base.

“This is an excellent way for job seekers and companies to get to know each other. We have problems finding the right skills locally and the apprentice programme means we can train our future workforce before the need arises,” says Harald Nylinder, Product Engineer at Skinnskatteberg and one of the driving forces behind the project.

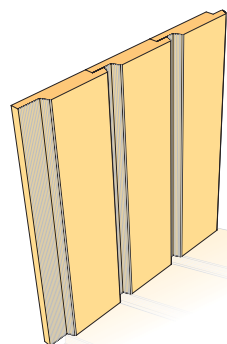
Now the first group of apprentices has completed its training and is ready to jump in when needed. Pontus Schönbeck from Skinnskatteberg is one of them.

“I had been unemployed for about a year and applied for masses of jobs



Pontus Schönbeck and Harald Nylinder.

when I was tipped off about seeking an apprenticeship. The programme has been a really fun way to acquire new skills without having to sit in the classroom,” says Pontus.



Waxholm cladding changes name

PRODUCTS Setra continues to adapt its building products to the industry's Vilma standard. During the spring Waxholm cladding was gradually phased in and given the new name Rebated Edge Cladding. Appearance-wise the cladding has a smaller gap which is now 10 mm compared with the previous 20 mm. This change applies to both untreated and painted cladding.

NEW INVESTMENT IN VALBO

TECHNOLOGY A new CNC machine was installed at Setra's planing mill in Valbo at the end of 2013. The machine makes it possible to cut out wooden components using computer technology. The purpose of this investment is to meet increased demand for pre-cut timber, particularly from Plusshus and other modular building manufacturers which want to reduce machining processes in their factories.

“The CNC concept is entirely right for today and offers new opportunities to meet our customers' wishes for customised products which make assembly work more efficient,” says Fredrik Kojonen who is Mill Manager at Valbo.

The investment in Valbo is part of the efficiency improvement programme being conducted by Setra to further strengthen competitiveness.



PRODUCT NEWS



Effective with glulam facade

This season's new product for facades is Setra Glulam Cladding which can be mounted vertically or horizontally. The cladding, which is hewn from a glulam beam, provides a durable and dimensionally stable cladding which with its extra width gives the house a unique look. The cladding is available both pre-painted and untreated. The generous width makes assembly effective since it covers a large area.

Glulam decking with extra width

Setra's new pressure-treated glulam decking will give patios and terraces an exciting look this summer. Setra Glulam Decking is made in the same way as glulam beams which makes it dimensionally stable and less inclined to split. By combining pressure-treated glulam decking with smooth or grooved decking it is easy to create a personal patio with an attractive design.

Outdoor flooring which bridges the gap

Attractive patios and terraces are highly popular. Suddenly the gap between outdoors and indoors can be bridged when Setra's new, exclusive outdoor flooring takes the best room out onto the patio. Setra Outdoor Flooring is a hard-wax treated outdoor floor specially developed for covered patios and terraces. The floor is available in brown or black with a structured surface that resembles driftwood with clearly visible grain.





Customer service

– THE HUB OF THE BUSINESS MACHINE

As the link between production and market, customer service sits at the heart of Setra. From their base in Setra Kastet they control the flows so that everything involved in deliveries ends up in the right place. TEXT: KAROLINA GRUNDIN PHOTO: ALBIN BOGREN



Setra's new centralised customer service for sawn wood products is based at Setra Kastet where most of the team works.

SPRING LIGHT SEEPS INTO the offices at Setra Kastet. Through the window the employees have a view of the timber yard and Gävle Bay. Here in the heart of the Kastet sawmill is where most of customer service for sawn wood products can be found. They are the hub in Setra's sales of sawn redwood and whitewood.

All deals made by Setra's sales teams go via customer service. As the link between production and market it is important to always tread carefully.

"Working at our customer service is very much about having the right intuition. It is important to monitor what happens at our sawmills and make sure that production output meets our customers' needs," says Lisa Olofsson, head of Setra's customer service.

Collective strength

From its previous locations out in the various sawmills, the customer service function for sawn wood products is now

housed in one place. This new central customer service function is based in Setra Kastet and headed by Lisa Olofsson.

"I think it feels very good that we are taking a collective approach to customer service. A centralised function gives us strength and a better overall picture," says Lisa.

Despite the high level of activity, it is still fairly calm and quiet in the Kastet office. From time to time a phone rings and breaks the silence but most of the work



Left: Customer Service Manager Lisa Olofsson discusses deliveries with Mauricio Reyes. Above: Sten-Åke Hedberg, Susanne Björkman and Ellinor Berglund are members of the customer service team at Setra Kastet.

and communication is conducted via the computer system and e-mail.

“To make sure of deliveries we have many daily contacts both internally and externally. We mainly communicate a lot with the loading areas at the sawmills,” explains Ellinor Berglund, one of the employees at customer service.

Fitting the pieces together

Most of Setra’s customer relationships are already so well established that much of the day-to-day work is purely routine. At Setra the role of the customer service function is to plan deliveries, make sure that correct documentation is in place, book transport and ensure the customer gets the right goods at the right time.

“It’s always a challenge getting all the delivery details together in time. There are so many parameters to consider and customer service work is a bit like completing a large jigsaw,” explains Mauricio Reyes, a customer service employee.

“Understanding the customer is very important. At the same time it is vital to be flexible when new customers and markets are established. A lot of details need to come together and the most important thing for us is that the customer feels secure about the deal,” says Lisa. ■

Comments about customer service

“Customer service secures the entire deal”



Marlene Bergström,
Sales Manager,
Scandinavia:
Our work is totally dependent on a strong customer service function. They secure

the entire deal. The sales team draws up the contract but it is customer service which makes sure the customer receives delivery at the right time. The customer often has closer contact with customer service than with their customer manager which places high demands on service and expertise. The market is changeable and the entire marketing organisation must be open to changes that create new conditions. It is truly a challenge to always be responsive and creative when faced with customer wishes while at same time remaining focused on efficiency and profitability.

“Our biggest competitive tool”



Carl-Johan Petersson,
Sales Manager,
Western & Central
Europe:
Europe is a big trailer market which makes high demands on activity and customer contacts if it is to work.

This is why good service is one of Setra’s biggest competitive tools in the European market. Having a professional, active and personal customer service unit makes a huge difference to how customers perceive us as a company. Our customer service is the essential glue between production and market and an aspect that customers include in their assessments. When the trend moves towards customers wanting to reduce their stocks, this will place even higher demands on us to provide information, flexibility and delivery details.

“The link between production and market”



Hans-Joachim Neuhaus,
Sales Manager North Africa,
Middle East and
Southern Europe:
Customer service has a very important function for the markets in the south. They are

the link between production and market and they are the people who make sure the flows function. We ship everything to North Africa and the Middle East by sea and a lot of details need to fall into place for customers to get their goods on time. It is really a challenge to coordinate large flows from many different sawmills. Our customer service unit is very good at problem solving and this is because they understand the business and have good control of all the extensive documentation that is needed.

“Foresight and planning”



Henrik Bertilsson,
Sales Manager, Asia
& New Markets:
Customer service is truly the spider in the web which keeps together the business and

relationships with salespeople, shipping companies, banks and customers. In the Asian markets where shipping takes over one and a half months, a smooth-functioning customer service unit is a central part of the deal. Having such long shipping times requires good foresight and planning. In addition to synchronising with production and obtaining the right goods, it is important to have the right documentation and valid agreements with banks and chambers of commerce. New situations and challenges constantly arise as we become established in new markets all with their specific requirements and preferences.

OPTIMISM IN SMÅLAND

SETRA'S MOST SOUTHERLY SAWMILL LOOKS AHEAD

Employee commitment and joint efforts mean that the previously unprofitable sawmill Setra Vimmerby can now post a profit. Headed by new Mill Manager Patrik Larsson, Setra's most southerly sawmill is gearing up. TEXT: KAROLINA GRUNDIN PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LJUNG



Vimmerby, in the province of Småland, is Setra's most southerly sawmill.

VIMMERBY SAWMILL has some tough years behind it. Competition for raw material in the region has been intense and profitability was not achieved. Several mill managers have tried to turn the ship onto an even keel, but without really succeeding. But now the wind seems to have turned for Setra's most southerly sawmill. Red figures have been transformed into black and the entire sawmill breathes optimism.

A large part of this success story stems from fairly basic cost efficiency measures such as contract reviews and other purely practical matters. But above all it is due to a major commitment from the employees. When Björn Ståhlberg took over as mill manager just over two

years ago, Vimmerby was on Setra's list of sawmills to be sold. Today, two years later, Vimmerby is an obvious part of Setra and belief in the future is restored. Björn, who came to Setra Vimmerby with no illusions, played a significant role in this success. But above all it is a result of good cooperation throughout production.

"My image of Setra and Vimmerby sawmill has really changed during these years. I see enormous potential and have a very positive feeling," says Björn Ståhlberg as he looks out over Setra Vimmerby's tidy storage yard.

New mill manager standing by

The ball is rolling in other words. And now when Björn retires he feels happy about

handing over the work he has started to a colleague. Ready to accept this challenge is Patrik Larsson, previously Production Manager at Setra Vimmerby.

"It feels really great to take over as Mill Manager and I am very keen to continue the work of making Setra Vimmerby more efficient," says Patrik.

"At the same time it is a major challenge to achieve a functioning whole and make us an even more efficient and competitive workplace," he feels.

Although Patrik is new in the role of Mill Manager he is no spring chicken when it comes to the sawmill world. Twenty years have passed since he first stepped in through the doors of the family-owned sawmill which was soon to

Björn Ståhlberg has handed over the baton to Patrik Larsson who is ready to take up the challenge as new Mill Manager.



Setra Vimmerby

RAW MATERIAL: Pine

PRODUCTS: Sawn redwood sideboards and planks, bioproducts

PRODUCTION VOLUME 2013: 123,000 m³

MAIN MARKETS: 60% is exported. Sweden and North Africa are the largest individual markets, followed by the UK, Denmark, Poland and France.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: approximately 55

ESTABLISHED: 1949

be acquired by AssiDomän. In subsequent years he has tested most of the sawmill's roles and realised that this is a world he enjoys.

"I am genuinely interested in production and sawmill technology and it has been great fun to be involved and see the sawmill change," says Patrik while taking us on a tour.

Major export focus

Today Setra Vimmerby is purely a redwood sawmill with a major focus on export markets. 60% of everything produced is exported, primarily to North Africa.

"We have been strong in the North African market for some time but we also focus a lot on local Swedish customers. This is a key customer segment which we try to find special solutions for when required," explains Patrik.

The Swedish province of Småland is known by many people as a glass-works landscape but it is also a sawmill landscape with deep historical roots. Today the forests of Småland are not so dense in sawmills but competition for raw material remains high. Access to sawlogs is generally tougher in the south than it is for Setra's more northerly mills. And undoubtedly competition over raw material has had an impact on Vimmerby's profitability over the years.

The forests of southern Sweden have higher growth than those in the north

60% of everything produced is exported, primarily to North Africa.



Edger operator Pernilla Torgnysson and dryer supervisor Conny Lagerström are two of Setra Vimmerby's employees.



“I see enormous potential and have a very positive feeling”





Mill Manager Patrik Larsson and Britt-Mari Heimonen in the trimmer.

→ and provide a raw material with wider annual growth rings. In the areas close to Vimmerby, however, the ground is stony and more difficult to cultivate which means that the Småland pine despite everything is unusually slow-grown.

“Our raw material has a lot of tight knots with considerable distance between knot circles. This leads to high demand for finger jointing and the furniture industry,” explains Patrik.

Future plans

Just like at Setra’s other sawmills half the log is transformed into bioproducts. One of Setra Vimmerby’s plans for the future has a focus on these. The hope is in cooperation with raw material supplier Sveaskog to construct a biofuel terminal on the sawmill’s land. Since electricity and heating producer Vimmerby Energi is currently building a new boiler in Vimmerby, such a terminal would fit in very well. The sawlogs which Sveaskog sells to the sawmill in Vimmerby will then be partly repurchased to finally become heating and energy in Vimmerby Energi’s boiler.

“We are very much in favour of this type of cooperation and are happy to take a closer look. We would like to work more closely with Sveaskog and the biofuel terminal is something which would benefit both of us,” says Patrik.

And a new biofuel terminal is not the only project which Patrik and his colleagues in Vimmerby are thinking about. Innovation, commitment and optimism are in the air and it shows that employees believe in their sawmill.

“We have masses of ideas for the future. First and foremost we want to reach full production volume which would mean an additional 40,000 sawn cubic metres per year.

“We are already well on our way and I know that Setra Vimmerby still has a lot to give,” says Patrik with a big smile. ■

PERFECT PARQUET

There are probably only a few people who know that the modern parquet floor was born in southern Sweden. Or that Europe’s largest wood floor manufacturer is in the town of Nybro. SetraNews paid a visit to Kährs – inventor of the multilayer parquet board – and got a lesson on how a parquet floor is made. TEXT: KAROLINA GRUNDIN PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LJUNG

THE COMMUNITY OF NYBRO in the Swedish province of Småland originally grew up as a stopover for travelling salesmen on their way between Växjö and Kalmar. The industrial revolution saw the start of several factories, among them AB Gustaf Kähr which initially made turned wooden items. 150 years later Kährs is one of the world’s most successful wood floor companies.

Although the Kähr family is no longer involved, Kährs has retained its name and the largest production facility is still in the heart of Nybro.

“If I needed to describe Kährs in one sentence I would probably say that we are Europe’s largest wood floor manufacturer and have the clearest environmental focus,” says John Ahlgren, buyer at Kährs, when he greets us at the door.

Innovation and history

Despite minimal marketing, Kährs has established itself as one of the leading

floor manufacturers in the world. This good reputation probably has much to do with the invention in 1941 by Gustaf Kähr, grandson of the founder Johan, of the multilayer parquet board.

“They say that the laminated floor came into being when someone used our laminated doors as flooring and realised that the multi-layer system of laminations could be used in many ways,” says John with a smile.

Backed by a patent for wooden laminated floors, business started to take off. Seventy years later there is some sort of parquet floor in most Swedish homes and Kährs floors are exported to over 50 countries. The niche product is a slightly more exclusive wood parquet which has been adapted to current tastes over the years.

“Trends determine what we make. Previously our beech floor was extremely popular but today 80% of our production is oak with different treatments,” says John.



The multilayer parquet board was invented in 1941. Today’s modern parquet has a special locking function which counteracts movement in the wood.



John Ahlgren and Roger Emilsson from Kährs show Setra's Customer Manager Peter Thure round the production facility in Nybro.

Three layers of wood

To the naked eye laminated parquet perhaps looks like a solid wood floor. But in reality there is considerable skilled engineering, and several layers of wood, behind Kährs parquet. And this is where Setra comes into the picture. Setra is namely one of the main suppliers of wood for the so-called core of Kährs parquet. Beneath the 3.5 mm thick upper layer there is a hidden middle layer of redwood laminate.

"The quality of the core is extremely important for achieving the right quality for the floor. Our parquet consists of three different wood layers each of which helps to counteract movement in the wood caused by variations in air humidity," explains John.

Each week many truckloads of sideboards from Setra in Vimmerby, Nyby, Kastet and Skinnskatteberg roll in to the Kährs yard in Nybro.

"Thoroughly stable quality is critical for achieving a good bearing core in the parquet board and Setra is one of our most consistent suppliers," explains Roger Emilsson, production manager at Kährs, when he shows us round the factory.

Over 800 people work shifts in the vast premises and production is more or less non-stop, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Many steps are needed before the different layers of wood are transformed into a

parquet board. It takes a lot of timber and Setra is one of Kährs' biggest suppliers of redwood.

Environment in focus

Over the years the spirit of innovation at Kährs has also come to include a significant environmental commitment. Responsibility therefore plays an important role when choosing a supplier. Today Kährs only buys wood from suppliers with FSC or PEFC certification or who can demonstrate in some other way that they are environmentally aware in their timber procurement. In 2011 they were the first in the world to launch a floor manufactured from Chilean wood with both FSC and Fairtrade certification. In spring 2014 some 40 Nordic Ecolabelled oiled and lacquered floors will be launched. The aim is that all Kährs floors made in Nybro will have Nordic Ecolabel certification before the end of the year.

"Today's consumers are well aware of environmental and social issues and here at Kährs we are extremely pleased that our values are taken into account when purchasing decisions are made. An attractive and natural wood floor is a responsible and sound investment which brings a little piece of nature into our lives," says Bruce Uhler, environment ambassador at Kährs. ■

KÄHRS IN SWEDEN

Products: Parquet flooring in different woods

Production: Swedish floor production is located in Nybro in southern Sweden. There are also production facilities in Finland, Romania and Russia. Kährs is also owner of two Swedish sawmills.

Main markets: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia, Germany, the UK and the US.

Number of employees: approx. 800.



It started with turned toys and spinning wheels. Today the focus is entirely on parquet floors.

Green success in the Middle East

In the shadow of Dubai's skyscrapers an awareness and desire to build green is emerging. With the upcoming World Expo as a catalyst, projects relating to sustainable building are sprouting forth. As the focus moves from price to quality and sustainability, opportunities for the Swedish wood products industry open up. TEXT AND PHOTO: KAROLINA GRUNDIN

NORTH AFRICA and parts of the Middle East have been familiar ground for Setra for many years. Now demand for Swedish wood species has started to grow from the Gulf states as well.

"So far we have not been particularly active in this market, but now interest has awakened and over time I believe there is major potential in the areas around the Persian Gulf," says Andreas Nyström, Customer Account Manager for the region.

Industry experts also highlight the Middle East as a good growth market. Above all they emphasise the high quality of Swedish wood and the fact that we make strict demands on sustainable forestry, as good competitive advantages.

"So far this is generally a price-sensitive market which makes it more difficult for Swedish wood to compete. But countries like Saudi Arabia are interested in quality which is an important sales argument," says Roderick Wiles, industry expert at Singapore-based Broadleaf Consulting.

"The fact that Swedish companies can also offer such a high proportion of certified wood is an ace up their sleeves. Arabs like certification. They want to know that the products they buy are the best," continues John Stewart, an architect based in Saudi Arabia.

Dubai – the world's trading hub

Most trading in the Middle East starts from the city of Dubai. Located in the United Arab Emirates, in the northernmost part of the emirate of Dubai, the city of Dubai has emerged as a strategic hub and trading centre for the entire world.

Unlike many of its neighbouring countries, Dubai's economy is not founded on oil. Instead it is trade, financial services, IT and tourism that drive the emirate forward. The trading tradition stretches far back in time and major infrastructure investments have strengthened Dubai's position as a trading hub. The port of Jebel Ali, the largest man-made harbour in the world, was inaugurated back in the 1970s. Since then the modern city has grown up at breakneck speed.

Today Dubai's silhouette is characterised by skyscrapers and cranes. The city can boast several of the world's highest buildings, artificial groups of islands and giant shopping malls including an indoor ski slope.

Despite the fact that the city's facade is dominated entirely by materials such as steel, concrete and glass, there is now an awareness about building for a greener future. In the neighbouring emirate of Abu Dhabi the carbon-neutral district of Masdar is being built. Located in the middle of the desert it will get its energy supplies from solar energy and other renewable

sources. All urban planning and architecture for the new desert city are based on a plan for a sustainable future. One of Masdar's new buildings is a knowledge centre built with glulam.

"Unfortunately many people still believe it is impossible to use wood in the desert so we must work slowly to change attitudes. Glulam is a fantastic material which I believe has major potential here in the Middle East," says architect John Stewart, one of the originators of the knowledge centre.

"Our job as wood ambassadors must be to work to raise standards. This is especially true now ahead of construction for the World Expo 2020. Let's join in and raise the quality there," interjects Roderick Wiles enthusiastically.

Hosts for World Expo 2020

The joy in Dubai was considerable when the city took home the prestigious hosting of the World Expo 2020. It is noticeable how proud the city's inhabitants are to have this opportunity to show their innovation, expertise and architecture to the world. An enormous amount has been invested in marketing and on many city walls you already encounter the slogan "Expo 2020 – Connecting minds, creating the future".

"Sustainability is a cornerstone of the World Expo and we hope that this green theme will influence and inspire the public to adopt a greener lifestyle," explains Saeed Alabbar, Chairman of Emirates Green Building Council.

"It is mainly two factors which have heightened awareness in the region. First and foremost we have a higher domestic demand for water and electricity, which



Setra's Customer Account Manager Andreas Nyström talks to a potential Arab customer at the wood trade fair in Dubai.



The futuristic Burj Khalifa skyscraper, the highest building in the world, is one of Dubai's most prominent landmarks.

MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East was originally a European name for an imprecise area of Southwest Asia and North Africa, consisting of the countries in the Arabian peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain) as well as Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Iraq and Kuwait. Sometimes this also included Turkey, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and some North African states in addition to Egypt (such as Libya, Somalia and Sudan).

Today Setra exports goods to Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Libya and Sudan. The Middle East accounts for 20% of Setra's export volume. Products are largely redwood.

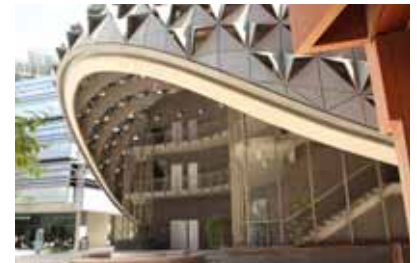


Photo: Charlotte Apelgren

In the city of Masdar in Abu Dhabi a Knowledge Centre built of wood has been constructed. The centre, which is built of certified timber, is the only wooden building in Masdar.

here is generated by fossil fuels. This means that we can no longer export as much oil and gas. The second factor is the carbon footprint which results from our increased energy and water consumption."

Swedish wood on stage in Dubai

In central Dubai, surrounded by futuristic skyscrapers, lies the Dubai World Trade Centre which at the beginning of April arranged the Middle East's biggest wood trade fair. The fair gathered exhibitors from all over the world who wanted to display their products for potential customers and partners. Interest among visitors was considerable even for the light-hued stand organised by the industry organisation Swedish Wood. Some visitors already had good knowledge of Swedish spruce and pine while for others the light-coloured wood was a new acquaintance.

Issam Mhanna, interior designer from Kuwait, was among those who stopped to feel the redwood floor samples in the stand.

"Interest in wood interiors has indeed just started here but I notice that wood is becoming increasingly popular. I really like wood and try to include it in some way in everything I do," says Issam Mhanna.

"Here in this region wood is exclusive and wooden interiors show that you have money. I recently designed a patio with a large wooden deck for a member of the royal family in Kuwait and the customer was very pleased."

Sustainable prospects

"The strong feedback we get from the industry and the involvement being shown by the government make us sure that

environmentally sustainable construction will be given high priority in the Arab world in the future. Choice of material will therefore be increasingly important in terms of a building's financial and environmental impact," says Saeed Alabbar.

Baharash Bagherian, at Baharash Architecture Dubai, recently won an international competition to build phase two of Dubai Sustainable City. The project extends over 46 hectares and will consist of homes, ecological farms and educational buildings.

"Dubai is changing. The city has set its own targets to be among the most sustainable cities by 2020. The world population is growing and people have realised that designing for a sustainable future is no longer a choice, it is a necessity," says Baharash Bagherian. ■



Prefabricated added value

Standardised solutions combined with new, creative approaches is the recipe Plusshus uses to meet the growing market for industrial-scale construction of wooden buildings.

“With the entire value chain backing us we can go a step further and rationalise the process even further,” says newly-appointed Operations Manager Krister Norberg.

TEXT: KATARINA BRANDT PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LJUNG

WE HAVE LONG KNOWN that wood has a good load-bearing capacity for its weight, is flexible and easy to work with. But in Sweden it was the lifting of the restriction on wooden structures for high buildings in 1994 that allowed wood to seriously start to catch up building systems in other materials. Today, 20 years on, industrial-scale construction of wooden buildings is discussed more than ever before and

regarded as something of a key issue for the development of the entire building sector. Now we are not just setting our sights higher, industrial-scale wooden building systems have been improved and developed at a furious pace.

Setra’s subsidiary Plusshus, which since January is part of the new business area Building Products & Systems, has a long tradition of industrial-scale construction of wooden buildings. Operations started back in 1967 and today both box units and modules are manufactured at the facilities in Skellefteå and Kristinehamn. There are two levels of prefabrication where box units, such as inner and outer walls, joists and ceilings, allow efficient and flexible building. Ready-built modules speed up the building process further since everything from floor and wall coverings to kitchen units with white goods are already in place on delivery to the building site. Modules also include smart solutions for such things as sound-proofing, ventilation, heat recovery and

pipng.

Lean improves productivity

That Plusshus is experiencing an upswing is confirmed by Operations Manager Krister Norberg. With experience from the automotive industry, right now he is focusing on optimising work in the factories and creating a more process-oriented flow.

“We are working with the Lean concept as a base. Lean is about eliminating wasted resources which can instead be put to use in developing and improving our processes, thereby increasing productivity.”

Krister Norberg believes that the future for industrial-scale construction of wooden buildings lies in standardised solutions and more efficient processes with a focus on pure assembly. With the entire Setra Group behind them, Plusshus is well placed for success. Today Setra’s building products such as exterior claddings, joists, solid wood panels and glulam are used in both box units and modules.

As part of Plusshus’ efforts to reduce

Modules are prepared in the factory and put together on the building site.





Soundproofing is a smart detail in apartment blocks built with Setra's patented building system, Trålyftet. It uses a steel roller bearing which is installed in the walls between the floors. This structure is inherently double-skinned since the modules are separated from each other both horizontally and vertically when they are adjacent or stacked. The space created is filled with mineral wool which provides excellent insulation.

High environmental requirements were decisive when Sänga-Säby Hotell & Konferens on Ekerö chose Plusshus as supplier of the new hotel section which was opened in August 2012.

the number of processing steps in the factory, much of the wood arrives pre-cut. Pre-painted claddings from Setra's paint shop in Skutskär make the process even more efficient.

"With widely implemented standardisation of our existing building systems we get a repetition effect in the factory and don't need to re-invent the wheel every time. This means that without sacrificing quality we can keep down costs and attract more customers."

Part of the value chain

Today Plusshus focuses primarily on apartment blocks of up to four storeys.

"Today we are most cost-effective in the 3-4 storey segment. In the long term we expect to also have attractive offerings for greater heights."

Together with an architect, Plusshus is now looking at how the buildings' aesthetic values can be further improved in everything from floor plans to facade claddings. Exciting work which will take shape and be presented to the market during the coming year.

"We are pleased to be part of Setra's new business area. Now we are a part of the value chain where our homes are the result of our cooperation with sawmills, planing mills and processing plants," concludes Krister Norberg. ■

"With widely implemented standardisation of our existing building systems we get a repetition effect in our factories and don't need to re-invent the wheel every time"



In August 2013 construction started of low-energy apartments in Knivsta, north of Stockholm. The apartments are built with modules from Plusshus and comprise two blocks with a total of 40 units.

BUILDING PRODUCTS AND SYSTEMS

Setra's new business area Building Products & Systems includes everything from building products such as glulam, solid wood floors and claddings to industrial-scale wooden building systems. Production takes place at processing units in Skutskär, Valbo and Långshyttan and the modular building factories in Kristinehamn and Skellefteå.

BOX UNITS AND MODULES

Box units are prepared in the factory and comprise outer and inner walls, joists and ceilings which are delivered to the site packed flat. **Modules** have a higher level of prefabrication and are in principle complete rooms where everything from floor and wall coverings to kitchen units with white goods are already in place on delivery.

"New collaboration models are just as important as technical improvements"

ERIK SERRANO is Professor of Timber Engineering at Linnaeus University in Växjö. He thinks that Sweden is well out ahead when it comes to industrial-scale wooden building construction and that we have come much further than many other European countries in the level of prefabrication. Today we have found solutions to the technical challenges which are often associated with high levels of prefabrication. We have good systems for sizing and stabilising buildings and know how to handle fire, noise, stress and vibration.

"The questions we must now answer are related to business and cooperation models. These are just as important as any technical improvements. Many manufacturers will need to take increased responsibility a long way into the building process, for example by providing their own fitters who are specialists in the building system being used.

"In a perfect world it should also be possible to have a common product catalogue for the sector."

Coordination of existing building systems and a sector-wide view of the parameters which define a building element are, however, a long way into the future, believes Erik Serrano.



DREAM JOB WAS IN THE CARPENTER'S SHOP

As a six-year-old Daniel Johansson did his carpentry at home in his dad's workshop. Today Daniel runs one of Sweden's biggest and most forward-looking joinery companies. From Falköping in southwest Sweden C&D Snickeri takes creative carpentry out into the world. TEXT: KATARINA BRANDT PHOTO: SEBASTIAN STREITH

THERE WAS NEVER any discussion. That Daniel Johansson should be a carpenter was clear from the very beginning. Partly he had the trade in his genes. His grandfather was a carpenter and Daniel's father was devoted to carpentry as a hobby. But it was his contact with the material – wood – that made up his mind.

"Wood is fascinating in many ways. I like the craftsmanship and that there are so many ways you can express yourself in wood. You can do almost anything and only your imagination sets the limit."

Daniel studied wood technology at secondary school, got his journeyman's certificate and after a couple of years his master carpenter certificate. But the journey really began after secondary school when he and his classmate Claes decided to start their own workshop in the town of Falköping in southwest Sweden. A region that really stands out when it comes to processing of wood products.

"Our business concept was to produce specialist joinery with quality right through so that we could work with exclusive, demanding and, above all, fun assignments."

Creative cooperation

Today, 26 years later, C&D Snickeri is one of Sweden's major joineries. Daniel is now at the helm himself and the original carpenter's shop has grown into a 4,500 square metre production facility.

"We are specialists in interiors for private homes, public spaces and offices. The aim is to nurture our customers' ideas through creative cooperation. We have unique possibilities to work not just with wood but with composites, glass and stone for modern interior design. This means that many architects use us for assignments worldwide."

There is really only one little cloud hovering over Daniel's head. The number of new carpenters is far too low. C&D Snickeri has become involved in the problem and is one of seven member companies in the Woodcraft Network which is a cooperation between wood processing companies in the region. The



Daniel Johansson is at the helm of C&D Snickeri. Sweden's most distinctive design joinery with exciting assignments worldwide.

aim is to raise interest in the sector and see that there is training that ensures the availability of competent labour.

Daniel thinks that the wood industry must market itself better and explain how the sector has developed in recent years. "I represent a sector for the future with

endless possibilities. One day I'm working with functional accommodation modules for a North Sea oil platform, the next with a longboard made using the latest technology. It's these kind of contrasts and challenges that inspire me!". ■

QUIETER WOODEN BUILDINGS

How is noise experienced in apartment blocks and what needs to be done to meet future acoustic requirements? Last year, two major research projects were completed which will have an effect on wooden buildings in the future. TEXT: KATARINA BRANDT

TODAY BETWEEN 10 and 20% of newly-built apartment blocks have a wooden frame. Even if it cannot be seen from the outside, the choice of frame material is noticeable on the inside. A building with a wooden frame has a muted acoustic and a special calm which provide a positive experience. On the other hand something which might be considered negative is the really low frequencies that can arise in a wooden building such as the sound of small children running around.

Klas Hagberg is head of acoustics at the WSP Group which is one of the world's leading professional services companies. He was project leader for both the Swedish research project AkuLite and the European project AcuWood, which ran in parallel. The projects carried out extensive surveys of performance and the residents' experiences of living in a wooden building. The aim was to develop objective methods for measuring acoustics relating to sound-proofing, vibration and stress, regardless of the buildings' frame systems.

"The background is that more building is being done in wood and hopefully this will increase further. Despite this, standards, norms and regulations are still intended for concrete buildings. But wooden buildings have other properties. Noise and vibrations behave differently which means that other, more suitable modern building regulations and technical solutions are required."

Wood requires thought

Noise and vibration issues in multi-storey wooden buildings are somewhat more complicated to handle than in concrete-frame buildings. The reason is that the wooden frame and building system weigh less and have a more complex structure compared with solid building systems such as concrete. This means that more thought is required to design a wooden building so that it also works acoustically. Choice of material for floors and joints are examples of things that affect noise and vibrations in buildings.

"If you jump on a wooden joist you



Photo: Petra Bindel

Stockholm's first wooden high-rise building is in Sundbyberg. For the soundproofing to work properly the ceilings are supported on the walls, not on the joists above, and the walls between the apartments are built with double solid wood planks with a twenty millimetre air gap. Each apartment is thus its own acoustic box

get a small shaking and a low frequency rumble. If you jump on a homogenous concrete joist it will be almost totally rigid and you'll get a pain in your feet instead."

In March the European research project "Silent Timber Build" started with representatives from many European countries including Sweden, Norway and Finland. The aim is to follow up results from AkuLite and AcuWood and develop new calculation models.

"Now we know what goals we are aiming for. With correct calculation models it will be easier to avoid errors and traps and ensure that acoustic demands are met cost-effectively at design time or early in the building process. Good acoustic solutions are a prerequisite for strong develop-

ment of industrial-scale production of apartment blocks in lightweight materials such as wood," concludes Klas Hagberg. ■

Klas Hagberg is Head of Acoustics at the engineering and design consultancy WSP.





FINALLY

Elisabeth Lindberg
Title: Head of Loading
Setra Skutskär
Age: 50
Lives: Gävle
Family: Husband and
two grown-up children
Interests: All forms
of training. Hockey
enthusiast who rarely
misses a Brynäs match.

Springtime for building products

TEXT: KAROLINA GRUNDIN PHOTO: CHRISTIAN LJUNG

ELISABETH LINDBERG, head of loading at Setra Skutskär, gazes out over Skutskär's stocks of pressure-treated decking. Spring is in the air and it is high season in the building materials trade for processed building products.

As the link between customer service and the loaders Elisabeth must tread carefully when loading is going at full speed. Several times a day she makes a tour round the stockpiles at Setra Skutskär. She has a few words with the truck drivers and makes sure that everything is running smoothly.

"The biggest challenge is to get all the deliveries to match both in time and with

transport. We always have the customer in focus, but we must also find solutions that work for us in loading," says Elisabeth.

Another challenge is that orders from the building materials trade vary between seasons. Generally the high season for processed products starts around Easter. But nowadays you cannot be sure any more. Some years spring breezes wake peoples' carpenter instincts and longing to renovate as early as February.

"And the warm autumn and mild winter have meant that we hardly had any seasonal downturn at all this year," explains Elisabeth.

On the product side Elisabeth is quite certain what will be the top seller again this summer. Classic green pressure-treated decking remains unrivalled top of the list for outdoor builders. At the same time, pre-painted facade cladding has shot up in just a few years.

"You need to look after number one. It takes time to repaint a house and nobody wants to spend their entire holiday up a ladder. If you can buy time, then people gladly do so," says Elisabeth with a smile. ■

SETRA is one of Sweden's largest wood products companies and a leading player in Europe. We offer eco-certified wood products for interiors and construction to customers in the building materials trade and industry.

Sawn and planed wood products in redwood and whitewood account for most of sales. The assortment for the building materials trade includes products such as floors, glulams, exterior claddings, interior claddings and decking.

Setra has 900 employees and annual sales of approximately SEK 4.1 billion. Exports to Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia account for almost 60% of sales.

Setra Group includes nine sawmills, three wood processing units and two modular building factories.

Setra's principal owners are Sveaskog (50.0%) and Mellanskog (49.5%). The other approximately 1,500 shareholders together own 0.5% of the shares in the company.