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A STRONG Support

Dinolift has been dedicated to offering products and services in the aerial-work platforms space for 40 years, and today its lifts are used by customers in more than 40 countries worldwide.

Images by Aki Aro

As a leading provider of aerial-work platforms and lifts in the European market, Dinolift has been serving its satisfied customers and developing its innovative products for 40 years.

Petri Paavolainen, Managing Director of Dinolift, spoke to *The CEO Magazine* about the company's strengths and successes over the past four decades.

The CEO Magazine: How did your career lead you to your current role?

Petri: Before this, I worked for a company in the material-handling business for 12 years. I have been involved in various things, starting in production and then becoming a factory manager. I then got an

assignment to establish a factory in Estonia where we would outsource products and production. I then jumped over to the service business where I worked in development, starting up operations in new countries and looking after acquired units.

In 2010, I moved to Austria to be responsible for the company's business development in south-east Europe, and to acquire new businesses. In 2013, I came back to Finland and I was responsible for the business development in the whole Region Europe.

In February of this year, I moved to Dinolift to assume the role of managing director. Before that, I'd had experience with Dinolift as I'd been on its board since 2012, so I knew the company well.

What attracted you to Dinolift?

It's a small- to medium-sized company, it has a good spirit for developing and improving the operations, and it has great products. My background sits very well with Dinolift and I know it can be utilised. Before I was focused on lifting materials and now I'm focused on lifting people, so there's lots of similarities. I think it's a good combination.

What are the major changes that you want to make in Dinolift? What do you want to achieve over the next few years?

I think this company is in very good shape at the moment. However, I see that we have the potential to improve more. We have some very strong markets where we're present and we also >

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- Petri Paavolainen



and most of the demand is in the summer months. In company history there have been radical drops in demand during the economic recession years of 2008 and 2009 so that's something that we can learn from and keep in mind.

have quite a wide market base, but we still have the possibility with our existing products to develop even more in the newer markets. Clearly, we need to capture this potential. It's a good problem to have, though, because there are so many markets and countries to choose from. The important thing is that we are patient and work consistently. It takes a while but it's something that we need to do.

Second, at the moment production is getting increasingly competitive. Production flexibility is very important for us now and in the future. Demand fluctuates

The third vital area for the future is that we develop attractive products, both for our existing customers and for new customers. We have many interesting things underway and we have a process of critical review to determine what we should focus on. We want to sharpen our research and development significantly.

There are three areas where we need to develop. One is our existing products and developing them in line with customer feedback and learning to make them even better. The second is to develop new products where we see demand, and the third area is to look more into the future and what the potential customer needs are. These three elements need to be working

simultaneously and efficiently with the right balance.

What do you believe sets Dinolift apart from other industry players?

We have been growing in the business and this year we are actually celebrating 40 years in the access business. During these four decades, we have gained a lot of experience and this is reflected in our products and services. Safety is the most important thing in this business and we don't compromise in any way on safety. I see that as one of our key strengths.

We have also got good applications on this side and our product side. We are reliable and trustworthy. A large number of our customers are in the rental business so there's all kinds of end users, both experienced and less experienced. Sometimes the handling of the equipment might be quite rough. Nevertheless, our equipment is designed to be functional and used

by any user in any condition. That's very important and I think in this area we have managed it quite well.

We also want to listen to our customers and serve them well. We are a mid-size company so we have good possibilities to make agile decisions that move with customer demands.

What steps is Dinolift taking to encourage innovation and development in your products?

We continuously speak with our customers and dealers. It's a very active dialogue on how to make the products better and what kinds of needs there are for different products. We are regularly going through all our own ideas and decisions with our sales and research and development departments and handling all the proposals and feedback.

Internally, we want to promote innovation, and this might be related to our products or it could

relate to our operations and processes. We award people for their ideas and we really try to emphasise this attitude of proactivity and innovation.

The communication within the company is very direct and straightforward. We're very local, as our headquarters and production site are in the same location. It makes things a bit simpler; the distances between the various organisational levels are short.

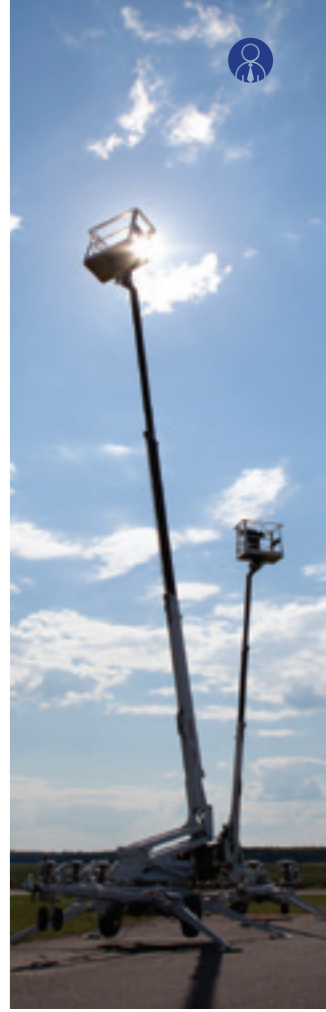
With Dinolift celebrating its 40th anniversary, what have been the company's proudest moments over this time?

We had a big celebration at the end of the summer. Our factory was transformed and we invited all our dealers, customers, and partners. It was a big celebration for us and for everybody that's been involved in the business. This is one concrete achievement and we've also taken a lot of pride in the transformation we had with

our new products, logo, and branding materials.

I think it comes back to safety as well. This reputation of impeccable safety standards that we've been able to build and hold is really important. Our products have been in the market for so long and the customers know them well. They know that they are robust and reliable. They know that there's a good second-hand market for our products at good prices. This is something that you can't speed up—you can only get this kind of reputation by being in the business for a long time and delivering consistently.

However, we are well aware that we have to continuously protect this reputation and try to improve. A strong history is great but on the other hand companies are continuously evaluated on their performance. That's the reality and that is what's going to determine our future. It's something that we always need to keep in mind. ●



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