

# NORDIC Innovation

The core strength of Nets is its ability to bring complex, innovative, and user-friendly products and services to its strong customer base of banks, corporates, merchants, the public sector, and individuals.

Images by Ulrik Eriksen

In a world where technology is constantly advancing, businesses like Nets need to be agile and ready to adapt. New opportunities are regularly presenting themselves and to succeed, the Nordic provider of payments, card, and information services has committed itself to developing new innovative solutions. Nets has a history that dates back to 1968 and is now the second largest of its kind in the industry in Europe. It has a staff of 2,500 in five countries and works with 250 banks, 500,000 merchants, and has 33 million card customers.

Bo Nilsson was appointed as CEO in August 2014 after holding the role of CFO and executive vice president for roughly 15 months. He attended Copenhagen Business School and started his career in

the finance industry. He has worked as the vice president for JPMorgan Chase, CFO and director of Media Capital, and founder and director of Grupo Leya.

Bo's approach has been to concentrate on the further digitisation of the company's offerings while also pursuing growth in the Nordic countries. He outlines four strategic priorities being implemented to help achieve these objectives: being customer orientated, having a high level of operational excellence, embracing innovation, and expanding into Nets's weakest market in the Nordic region—Sweden.

Bo explains his first task was to explore the overall vision and mission of Nets and to find a new strategic approach that would have

long-term benefits. "If we are to really be respectable and develop a great business I think we need it to be as efficient as the best in the industry," he notes. "We are really setting up a road to excellence, which I think is very important. I believe that for a business like ours you have to have a very strong sense of ambition. I think we can go beyond what we are already doing and be more competitive. Nets is here and we have a strong sense of building our own business and partnering with others to expand regionally or beyond."

So far in 2015, Nets has been focused on strengthening its various units, including its financial and merchant sectors, to ensure that it remains customer centric. "We had a number of approaches so that we could create a model for >

"If we are to really be respectable and develop a great business I think we need it to be as efficient as the best in the industry."

- Bo Nilsson



As featured in  
*The CEO Magazine*  
For more info visit  
[theceomagazine.com](http://theceomagazine.com)





the company in terms of not only setting up a new board after the ownership changed but also setting up very strong governance surrounding the various executive committee responsibilities, the business units, the structure, the support functions, and the operating model.”

Taking an innovative attitude to developing products and services

*“We are a strategic IT partner to leading businesses in the financial and industry sectors. Our teams work with the customer’s IT teams to provide value and scale. Over 2,500 employees work in the Nordic region.”*  
- Sarbajit Deb, Executive Vice President, L&T Infotech

is not uncommon for the Nets team. “Every company is striving to become more innovative and so are we,” Bo states. “It is an area where I think all companies can always improve. We have been relatively innovative but I think we can do more. I believe that innovation at Nets will be a main focus for us as we move forward, and we have had good results so far.

“Innovation at our end is not only about bringing new and exciting products to market; it is just as much about bringing them to market in a compliant way—remembering that our industry is all about stability and security. We have to factor in these items because we are dealing with people’s identities, with people’s information and people’s money. When you have those types of responsibilities you need to make sure that innovation, as such, is developed but is also filtered through these quite strict requirements.”

In 2014, Nets launched a ‘real-time clearing’ scheme in Denmark for payment transfers, which meant banks could clear funds and make transfers in less than a second. “This is clearly revolutionising the money flows and efficiency of working capital for companies and also the way we interact with banks,” Bo says. “This concept was successfully implemented in November and we have already more than doubled the transactions that we expected at this point in time. It is also the first system in the world that has ISO certification and we are quite proud of that.”

Furthermore, the company launched its nationwide e-security system for mobile platforms in Denmark that same year. “It basically gives you mobile access to all of your bank accounts and interactions with the government,” Bo explains. “We did that mobile conversion and increased the speed significantly over the course of autumn.”

Nets has built a substantial infrastructure network that offers fixed solutions for a wide range of clients. According to Bo, being a part of the system is a win-win for everyone involved. “These networks are very strong. They are efficient and cheap. The fact that we have invested in those and are running them at proven price levels, which are significantly below the alternatives, proves that it is a win-win. I think that’s a major strength of ours.

“I think for us to be very close to our customer banks and deliver them scale solutions where they can outsource significant parts of their business at a price point which is lower than the one they already have today is a plus. It is a significantly lower investment than what they would have to make if they kept those platforms within their own businesses. The scale that we have is very strong.

“I also believe that the knowledge we have about payments and digital information, the people that we have and their knowledge, and our history is something that is very difficult to replicate overnight. It strengthens over time as our products become a more integral part of society. That is something that distinguishes us from others.”

Bo believes improving internal and external communications is crucial to the success of Nets. “Telling people—employees through staff meetings, through my blog, through management letters—and explaining to them what is going on is something we make sure we do. Also, externally, with politicians, regulators, and customers, we make it a major priority to keep them informed.

“I think that major challenges are always, for us, about delivering promises to clients. When we are doing very major IT conversions, for banks in particular, we always face challenges and there is always potential for delays. We want to institute a culture in the company where we promise customers delivery on a certain day and fulfil that. Politicians, regulators,

“We have a big drive to be more customer centric and to make sure that our existing and new customers in the Nordic region get a better experience from our services and products.”

- Bo Nilsson



Business-to-IT Connect | Engage the Future | Execution Excellence



## Paving IT path to the future!

Larsen & Toubro Infotech Limited (L&T Infotech), is a wholly owned subsidiary of Larsen & Toubro, a US\$14 billion plus company. L&T Infotech's intellectual capital comprises of a vibrant, well focused and professional workforce of more than 20,000 employees servicing various business verticals.

L&T Infotech is differentiated by its unique Business-to-IT Connect, which is a result of its rich corporate heritage. More than 2,500 employees work for Nordic customers in IT and engineering services, with 350 of them based in the Nordic region.

Belgium | Denmark | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland  
| Norway | Sweden | England

info@Lntinfotech.com

www.Lntinfotech.com

commercial authorities, and all of our clients need to have as much information as they need about us, our products and our services.”

Since Bo became CEO, Nets has experienced three acquisitions, and further market expansions complemented by organic growth are on the table. The business has its attention firmly centred on Sweden while it also aims to strengthen its presence in Denmark, Norway, Finland, and the Baltics.

“I think the challenge now for 2015 is to implement the transformation program but also, in many ways, to build the platform for the future and really

get our growth strategies well implemented,” Bo says. “We have already had a good start and we are continuing to really fill in our strategic gaps within the various markets and businesses that we operate in.

“We have a big drive to be more customer centric and to make sure that our existing and new customers in the Nordic region get a better experience from our services and products. Once we are there and we have a finished transformation we will continue to invest in our future in relation to new payment methods, such as mobile, peer-to-peer, and different interfaces. After that we can consider going beyond the Nordic.” •