

MECA



Driving the Automobile AFTERMARKET

The aftermarket for automobile parts, tools, and shop equipment is constantly changing. MECA Group is keeping up, navigating the challenges thrown its way while it sets itself up for a long period of positive growth.

Images by Johan Jeppsson

MECA Group works tirelessly to make car ownership easier and more cost effective for its consumers. Already a leading provider of aftermarket automobile services in the Scandinavian market, it has a strong vision for future success with strategies in place to enable it to achieve its full potential. Its distribution networks are made up of more than 80 departments and it operates 600 MECA car service centres as well as 180 Bosch car service centres. Under the MECA Group banner sit four subsidiaries: MECA Sweden, MECA Norway, MECA/Mekonomen Group, and MECA Car Parts.

Krister Duwe is the managing director of MECA Sweden. Appointed in October 2013, his mission is to leverage the synergies between the company and MECA

Group's parent organisation Mekonomen Group to encourage growth and increase the brand's presence in the specialised automobile sector.

Prior to his current role, Krister was involved in the food industry for approximately 20 years, working as a qualified chef for three, then as a sales director with the Swedish agricultural cooperative Lantmännen. In 2007, he switched industries and joined paint company Alcro-Beckers where he remained for three years as sales director. He was then employed in his first managing director role with automobile spare-parts chain Mekonomen Group, before it acquired MECA Group, to lead its Swedish operations.

"From a personal point of view, it was really quite a challenge," Krister reflects. "I came into a

company which was growing and I thought it was a natural step for my career. My assignment from the board was very clear. It was to increase the sales and improve the profitability of the company. That was what the board said to me. I worked with them for three years and during that time we bought out our big competitors, MECA Group. I was the first from the management team that took a leading role in MECA Group and that was in 2013. Now, I am the managing director for MECA Sweden."

Mekonomen Group consists of three subdivisions: MECA Group, Mekonomen Nordic, and Sørensen og Balchen. It offers a broad and easily accessible range of value-for-money, innovative solutions and products for consumers and companies, with 400 stores and more than 2,300 workshops. >



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Last year, Mekonomen Group and MECA Group merged their establishment, marketing, and purchasing departments to encourage collaboration between both parties and aid further growth. Krister says MECA Sweden, and MECA Group as a whole, is growing year on year. “Last year we grew 10 per cent and if you compare that to the market, the market is only growing at a rate of something like 1 to 2 per cent. So we are taking market shares right now. Our company is growing organically and through acquisitions. I think in the future we will be growing through organic means and through some further acquisitions as well. To achieve this, we are currently working on two very important and clear key strategies.

“The first strategy is strengthening the brand of MECA Group. The

awareness of MECA Group is currently at about 50 per cent. It is our vision to increase the brand awareness to over 70 per cent within the next two or three years. The MECA Group brand’s journey has just begun and we are setting up a lot of substantial resources to strengthen it right now.

“The second strategy is to strengthen our workshop chain. We have an ongoing upgrade of quality assurance at our affiliated workshops happening right now and we have also developed a new concept that we call MECA Plus. With that we are building the future’s workshops and it is what we call a one-stop workshop concept where you, as a consumer, can leave your car in one place and in an easy way. It is very important that everything is easy, and that we can help with everything you need. This includes servicing, repairs, crash repairs, gas, air conditioning, and inspections. Anything and everything should be accessed in an easy way and they will be bigger workshops than we already have today. Those are the two key things that we are working on right now.”

“MECA and Klokkerholm have a long-term cooperation. Together they are a strong brand and supplier to the Scandinavian automotive aftermarket. Klokkerholm sees MECA as a very professional and market-leading partner.”
- Michael Nolsøe, Sales Manager Nordic, Klokkerholm

Another of MECA Group’s goals is to lead the way for IT solutions in the automobile aftermarket sector. Its affiliated service centres have access to a set of web-based tools that provide easy access to information to enhance the overall experience for customers. An online shop allows clients to easily place orders, search for products and download price files at the click of a button. This makes searching for spare parts extremely efficient. The shop also features technical information that facilitates the order process, such as service schedules which provide a clear overview of repair times and the parts needed for a particular type of service.

MECA Group’s business system is another web-based tool that can be easily adapted to the needs of the large and small service centres across Scandinavia. It provides operation, support, and updates and is based on a market-proven system called Microsoft Dynamics NAV, which has more than a million users in a variety of industries worldwide. Modules in the system include car administration, service centre administration, finance and accounting, stock and purchasing, tyre, and customer management.

The organisation’s online booking system has also proved itself to be effective. It is a user-friendly administration program which makes it easy for car owners to book appointments at the service centres. Customers can make bookings at any time of the day, which means shop personnel are not always tied to the telephone. Finally, MECA Group’s extranet is the coordinating channel for information about news, products and promotional campaigns. Information about the concept, training, and technical information is posted on this platform and it gives partners access to marketing tools they can use to create their own advertisements, business cards, and more.

In the next three to five years, Krister believes MECA Group will be the most prominent player in



the aftermarket automobile services industry. “We are actually already the leading player but we will make sure that we still are,” he notes. “We will increase our position and I think that in the next few years we will have at least 50 MECA Plus workshops. We will be the most attractive car service in Sweden, both for businesses and for consumers as well. MECA Group will be the company with the best growth and the company delivering the best affordability in the industry.”

The professional automobile services industry is moving at a fast pace with cars increasingly becoming more complex and sophisticated. New features and technologies are more prevalent in vehicles than ever before and, according to Krister, car manufacturers are doing everything they can to create a monopoly and shut brands such as MECA Group out of the market. “They are doing everything to make it hard for us. That’s an issue

for us. We are doing all we can to ensure that we can accept the newest technology, the latest diagnostic tools and the most recent information about the cars. Our role is to ensure that our workshops have all of the related knowledge we need and that our MECA Group workshop concepts are of the highest quality.”

To continue its reign as an industry leader, MECA Group realises the importance of employing and retaining high-quality staff. When Krister was appointed as managing director of MECA Sweden he says his biggest challenge was to quickly create relationships with his employees and those who were working closest to him. He dedicated a tremendous amount of time to getting out and meeting staff and also to learning how the organisation runs and operates. “I quickly formed an opinion of the company and realised where the opportunities and challenges were,” he says. “This has helped me, and our team, to focus on

“Everyone in our team must understand how important they are and the role they play in contributing to the company’s goals.”

- Krister Duwe

the right areas, which will in turn increase our group and our profitability.”

Krister believes his staff are the most important part of MECA Sweden. He makes it a priority to ensure they understand all of the business’s objectives and key focus areas and that they apply them to their day-to-day roles. Everyone is aware of the short- and long-term goals and is working together to achieve them: “Everyone in our team must understand how important they are and the role they play in contributing to the company’s goals,” Krister notes.

There are four core values which MECA Sweden instils in its staff to ensure success. These are identified by the acronym PIKE, which stands for ‘Professional’, ‘Innovative’, ‘Kompetent’ (Swedish spelling of competent), and ‘Engaged’. These principles are always front of mind for Krister’s team and once a year everyone works together to review them and to determine the biggest, or most important, areas which need to be worked on in the future.

MECA Group collaborates with Mekonomen Group and utilises its resources to deliver first-class training for its employees. The MECA Group technical training organisation is unsurpassed in the market and is staffed by highly skilled instructors who have had thorough training in their fields. They not only take on the role of educator but also provide daily support to service centre customers. MECA Group’s complete training package includes programs in advanced automobile electronics, fuel injection and mechanical systems. At least two training courses are completed by staff in affiliated service centres on an annual basis.

In addition to regular training sessions, shop personnel also have access to e-learning courses that supplement the traditional program. Krister says that the MECA Electude is the most modern e-learning platform on the market. A web-based skills >



MOTIP DUPLI Group



With the brands MOTIP, DUPLI-COLOR, presto, and ColorMatic, MOTIP DUPLI Group is mainly active in the automotive, do-it-yourself and industrial markets with a large assortment of aerosols. Varying from high quality professional (car) lacquers to more technical products, such as brake cleaners and silicone sprays.

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On a yearly basis, MOTIP DUPLI Group produces more than 100 million aerosols.

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- Foundation Vogelsang AG (Switzerland) in 1946
- Foundation MOTIP B.V. (the Netherlands) in 1967
- Foundation VoMo Corporation in 1996
- Successful merger to MOTIP DUPLI Group in 1998



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assurance and evaluation tool further complements the employee training options.

Mekonomen has its own business and leadership school called ProMeister Academy, which MECA Group also utilises for its staff. The training unit is aimed at securing the quality and skills of mechanics at all of Mekonomen's affiliated workshop chains. It offers the latest and widest range of training opportunities for car mechanics.

Good relationships with suppliers and other key partners are also critical to MECA Group's success. "In our industry, everything is changing so fast and therefore the cooperation with our suppliers is very, very important," Krister says. "Through our suppliers we get access to the latest range of products, which is everything in order to conduct a business. Close cooperation is absolutely necessary and through our suppliers we get access to the latest knowledge and technical support. Education and training of our mechanics is a vital issue for us and we are doing this together with our suppliers. That is

a very important part for us. We can't do it by ourselves, so we have to do it with our suppliers."

MECA Group understands the role it plays in looking after the environment. It works systematically to find new and improved ways to ensure its operations are as sustainable as they possibly can be. Its customers, employees and regulatory agencies can feel comfort knowing that they can rely on MECA Group and its suppliers to meet environmental standards. An example of this is that as part of its environmental management program, it offers customers a variety of solutions to help them properly manage the disposal of hazardous waste. MECA Group has also developed a manual for its affiliated service centres, which guides the environmental efforts of staff and contains policies, laws, action plans, procedures, regulations, and mandates.

MECA Group strives to meet the requirements imposed by regulatory agencies, customers, and applicable law; develop and offer products with improved

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environmental characteristics; reduce environmental impact from the supply, storage, and distribution of products; consider environmental factors in connection with investments and purchasing; increase knowledge about environmental issues among employees; conserve natural resources and maintain cost-effective waste management; and continuously follow up, audit, and improve its operations from the environmental perspective. Evidently, it is doing a lot to ensure it doesn't leave a negative impact on the environment.

MECA Group is well positioned for a positive future and expects to experience further growth in the aftermarket automobile services industry. It is setting itself up to become a highly recognised name in the Scandinavian market and it will continue to build its chain of service centres and workshops. •

"Motip enjoys a successful working partnership with MECA. Both companies are very market oriented and focus on the customer. MECA is always looking for professional solutions, giving them the best platform regarding customers and service." - Sven Gille, Country Manager Sweden, Motip Dupli Group