



Leadership isn't transactional
– it's about genuinely caring
for the people you work with.

Rachel Bridges, Managing Director for the UK and Ireland at Alfa Laval, on her leadership style characterised by authenticity, curiosity, and a love for learning.

Meet Rachel Bridges – page 12.



ABOUT THE SWEDISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR THE UK

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce for the United Kingdom is the ultimate platform for entrepreneurs and businesses within the Swedish-British community. Founded in 1906 – by business, for business – we have represented, inspired, and promoted our members, extended commercial relations between our countries, and delivered first-class services and events for over a century.



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DEAR MEMBER,

Something about the turn of the year feels like both a reset and a continuation. Rooms are still full, conversations still going – but there's also a moment to look back at what we've done together before we turn the page.

The autumn set the tone. We gathered the Swedish-British retail community for the Retail Forum to explore how shifting consumer behaviour, sustainability and technology are reshaping the sector, highlighted the Swedish business footprint in both the West Midlands and Scotland, and brought senior leaders together at the Executive Forum at the Ambassador's Residence. Different topics, same feeling: a curious, open, and ambitious network.

In the final weeks of 2025, the pace only intensified. Our Nordic Private Equity Forum dug into where capital, innovation, and opportunity are heading next. Then came our back-to-back finale: the leadership summit Outer Thinking, followed by a day of festivities at the Annual Christmas Luncheon – two very different formats, but both a reminder of the energy, ideas and relationships that define this community.

As we look ahead, a clear theme will run through much of our work next year: the need to future-proof operations by moving beyond 'just' digitalisation and automation towards something more connected, human, and sustainable. For us, it is less about labels and more about how technology, people, and the planet come together – hyper connected, human centric and resilient. That is what we mean when we talk about Industry 6.0, and this transition will sit at the core of our activities in 2026, shaping our programmes, our conversations, and the way we support Swedish-British businesses in navigating what's next.

I hope this winter issue of LINK gives you a snapshot of the year we've just shared – and a hint of where we are heading. Enjoy the break, recharge, and we look forward to seeing you in the new year, ready for the next chapter together.

FREDRIK WARNERYD

*Chief Executive
Swedish Chamber of Commerce for the UK*

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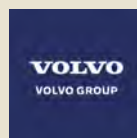


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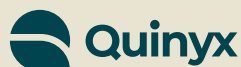
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MEET THE PATRONS

The patronship of the Chamber consists of a core group of Member businesses, all committed to the long-term support of the Swedish-British business community. The Patrons are advocates for the Members of the Chamber and in return, the patronship comes with a range of added benefits, exclusive access and invites as well as extended marketing and networking opportunities.

Founded in 1992, the patronship has grown steadily and consists today of a vast number of Member businesses that represent a wide range of industries, from the financial sector and manufacturing, to retail and tech. The Patrons reflect the strength of the Chamber's business platform and represent some of the largest brands in Swedish-British business.



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HOW INNOVATION, AUTHENTICITY, AND SLED DOGS SHAPE LEADERSHIP AT ALFA LAVAL UK & IRELAND

From service centre hum to innovation, Alfa Laval's culture comes alive through Managing Director Rachel Bridges – and her sled dogs.

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LISTEN FIRST, GROW SECOND:

THE NEWBIE APPROACH TO EXPANSION

TEXT: ALVA MILD | PHOTOS: NEWBIE

When Newbie opened its first UK store in 2017, few could have predicted the rapid expansion that would follow. Today, with 11 stores and ambitious plans for 30 by 2030, the Swedish children's lifestyle brand is revolutionising how we think about family fashion. We sat down with Gemma Keenor, Country Manager UK at Kappahl Group, to explore Newbie's recipe for success: listening to their customers.



Born in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2010 as an organic cotton collection under the Kappahl group, Newbie's journey has been anything but conventional. Rather than chasing trends, the brand grew organically by tuning into what customers wanted. "It's all about that community feeling, because they are the reason that we're here today," Gemma notes.

What started as a collection within a larger department store chain has evolved into something entirely distinct. Today, Newbie operates as a standalone lifestyle brand under the Kappahl umbrella. Gemma explains: "We just listened to our customers, and that's why we've then started to have Newbie standalone stores. We also found that the Newbie and Kappahl customer were quite different."

A community-first approach

What sets Newbie apart in a crowded market is its unapologetic focus on community. The brand doesn't rely on traditional market research alone – instead, they empower the community of customers to shape their future. "Our expansion into the UK, and our continued plan for Newbie is very much down to our customers, or as we like to call them, our 'Newbie lovers'" Gemma notes. "They've contributed to how we grow the collection, as well as help us decide where our next locations will be."

Gemma explains that the company uses online data and social media insights to identify where customers are concentrated, then strategically opens stores in those communities. She notes: "Our physical stores are extremely important. It's where the brand really comes to life. So, we must remain very agile and make sure that our stores are really in strong locations where our Newbie lovers are."

Sustainability at the heart

Whilst some brands use sustainability as a marketing checkbox, Newbie has made it foundational to everything they do. The cornerstone is organic cotton – particularly important for newborns with sensitive skin or conditions like eczema. "More than anything our initial focus is on the quality of the product. So organic cotton is kind of the heart of what Newbie is," Gemma explains.

But the commitment extends far beyond material choice. The brand's design philosophy ensures that colours work cohesively across seasons and collections. Gemma notes: "You'll find that our colour palette is really soft and neutral. You could buy things in the spring, and then buy things in the autumn, and they will cohesively match together." Newbie also uses certified, lower-impact materials, and has pioneered a pre-loved collection in stores where customers can return outgrown garments for discounts on future purchases.



This circular approach emerged from observing customer behaviour. "We see that our garments really do stand the test of time," Gemma explains. "They have a long-life period because of their quality. So, there is a real hand-me-down way of working with our products." Rather than forcing sustainability messaging, Newbie simply recognised what customers were already doing and created a system to support it.

The in-store experience

Walk into a Newbie store and you immediately understand the brand's Swedish heritage. From the moment you approach, the design and atmosphere tell a story – calm, inviting, and distinctly Scandinavian. "The idea is the moment you step foot into our store, it's a lovely, calm, inviting, relaxing experience," Gemma describes.

This isn't accidental. Staff are trained to make the shopping journey smooth for busy parents, activity tables keep children entertained, and collections are laid out to make outfit-building effortless. Perhaps most distinctively, every purchase is beautifully wrapped in sustainable packaging with ribbon. Gemma notes: "I think this is something the UK customer maybe doesn't experience all the time. So, I think that Swedish tradition is really beautiful for us to hold on to."

The future of Newbie

As Newbie opened its Ealing Broadway store in November – conveniently located on the new Elizabeth line – the brand shows no signs of slowing down. As Gemma explains: "By the end of this year we'll have 11 stores, but we see so much potential for the future. By 2030, we have a plan for 30 stores in the UK, but we will always continue to listen to our customer as to where those locations should be."

What emerges from Newbie's story is a business model that feels increasingly rare: one that prioritises quality and community over rapid scaling, that listens rather than lectures about values, and that sees sustainability not as a trend to chase but as a natural reflection of what customers want. In an industry often criticised for its throwaway culture, Newbie is proving there's genuine appetite for something different.

“ It's all about that community feeling, because they are the reason that we're here today.

Gemma Keenor, Country Manager UK



Q&A

THREE VOICES ON THE AUTUMN BUDGET

This Q&A brings together three voices from across the Swedish-British business community. Each contributor answers two focused questions: what stood out most in this year's budget for their sector or business, and whether any surprises – positive or negative – might influence their plans for the year ahead.



LISA CHRISTIE

Director of Public & Regulatory Affairs UK
Vattenfall

What stood out to you most in this year's UK Autumn Budget, and how do you think it will affect your business or industry?

Energy costs are at the forefront of consumers' minds, and I was pleased to see some energy policy costs move from the domestic energy bill and into general taxation. That will cut the average bill by around £134 from next April, and should help families on low incomes the most. There were also some measures to make electricity cheaper for industry, which is really good news. This should help to accelerate electrification, and reduce costs for our supply chain, both things that will help to lower bills even further in the future.

Were there any surprises – good or bad – in the Budget that might change your plans for the next year?

Vattenfall firmly believes that building a more renewable generation is the only way to guarantee energy security, deliver stable bills for British households, and strengthen our industrial base to compete globally. The energy transition is also an important engine of growth, providing good-quality jobs up and down the country.

Maintaining the pace and ambition of rebuilding our critical national energy infrastructure should therefore be a priority. Whilst Government is taking many steps outside the Budget to do that, it was really good to see a commitment to recruiting 350 extra planning officers in England, helping to speed up the planning process.





CALLUM LAIDLAW

Partner
Kekst CNC

What stood out to you most in this year's UK Autumn Budget, and how do you think it will affect your business or industry?

Despite the Chancellor's continued emphasis on growth being the pathway to fiscal stability, growth policies were relatively thin on the ground, with the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) noting policies would "temporarily boost demand by 0.1 per cent next year but have no significant impact on output by 2030". That said, there were a couple of green shoots in the expansion in the Enterprise Management Incentive's eligibility and grant limits, and reform of enterprise investment and Venture Capital Trust schemes. This change to include more established businesses could be of particular value to regional and family-owned businesses, that often take longer to scale-up. A dearth in the London Stock Exchange's performance in recent months has also become a symbol of the UK's broader economic malaise, so the news that the Chancellor will introduce a three-year stamp duty holiday on newly listed shares was a welcome, if modest, incentive for businesses considering a UK float.

Were there any surprises – good or bad – in the Budget that might change your plans for the next year?

This was a predictable budget even before the leak of the OBR report. But with no significant surprises this did yield a positive market reaction, with the FTSE trading up 0.85% by close of play. However, the bigger news came two days later with the unprecedented publication by the OBR of its forecasting, which showed a surplus rather than a deficit. While different arguments can be presented about the state of the UK's finances, the bigger issue is whether this makes Reeves's position untenable (with Opposition leaders calling on her to quit) and the impact this has on the continued poor polling for the Government and the pressure on the Prime Minister in the run up to May's local, Welsh, and Scottish elections.



MELIHA DUYMAY

CFO & Vice President
Skanska UK

What stood out to you most in this year's UK Autumn Budget, and how do you think it will affect your business or industry?

The Autumn Budget was less dramatic than expected, but the government's commitment to infrastructure investment stood out. If these pledges become real contracts, they could drive growth in hospitals, defence, energy transition, and regional development – critical for economic resilience. Pipeline certainty matters more than quick fixes, enabling planning, productivity, and investor confidence. Success depends on turning promises into action and unlocking real investment. For our business, corporation tax changes are minimal as we're not capital-intensive, and full expensing remains available. We're monitoring the national living wage increase, which should have limited impact but raises costs. Industry must also improve productivity, which predictable pipelines make possible.

Were there any surprises – good or bad – in the Budget that might change your plans for the next year?

We welcome the government's commitment to a stable pipeline, which supports confidence and planning. However, risks remain. Sudden increases in employer costs or changes to tax reliefs could slow recruitment and project delivery, especially with ongoing skills shortages. A major concern is the change to salary sacrifice pensions, adding full employee and employer NI contributions above £2,000 from April 2029. While not immediate, this will increase our staffing costs considerably. We're also monitoring the proposed mileage-based EV charge, which could cause further cost increases. These measures won't affect short-term plans but signal rising future costs. Construction remains resilient, but collaboration with government and investors is essential.







RACHEL BRIDGES

How innovation, authenticity, and sled dogs shape leadership at Alfa Laval UK

TEXT: ALEXANDER HÖGBERG | PHOTOS: MAJA STENBERG

From the hum of the service centre to the innovation shaping tomorrow's industries, Alfa Laval is a company defined by people and passion. At the centre of it all is Rachel Bridges, Managing Director for the UK and Ireland, whose leadership blends authenticity, curiosity, and a love for learning – qualities that ripple through every team and process she touches. And somewhere amid the precision, engineering, and innovation, sled dogs have found a place too.

Arriving in a Volvo, Rachel Bridges pulls up at the station to collect us. With an easy smile, she welcomes us to Camberley – where Alfa Laval is well rooted and now host around 150 workers.

A short drive later, we step into the company's offices, greeted by two of her colleagues – Dave Jones, Service Centre Manager and Liam Rice, Separation Team Leader – who hand us steel-toed shoes, safety glasses, and crisp white vests stamped with the Alfa Laval logo. It is clear we are heading straight into the heart of the operation.





Inside the service centre, where around 30 colleagues work with remarkable precision, restoring and repairing equipment entrusted to them by Alfa Laval's clients. There is a quiet pride in the air – one matched by Rachel's own.

"I come down here at least every other week," she notes. And it shows. As we move through the workshop, she greets people by name, pauses for quick conversations, shares a laugh, and listens intently while Dave and Liam talk us through the processes with genuine enthusiasm.

Back in Rachel's offices for the interview itself, she says: "The engagement I see every day from colleagues, how they talk so passionately about the different machines – the passion is really here. It doesn't look like much externally – a decanter is a piece of metal with some spirals in it – yet the pride in what they do and the customers they work with is pretty incredible. We are a really proud company."

Where does the passion come from? According to Rachel, it is the company's rich heritage.

Alfa Laval's origins trace back to a simple moment of everyday observation back in 1883. When Gustaf de Laval saw how time-consuming and inefficient it was for farmers to separate cream from milk, he set out to solve the problem with smart engineering rather than hard labour. His invention of the centrifugal separator not only transformed dairy production but laid the groundwork for a company built on practical innovation with real-world impact. That same spirit still defines Alfa Laval today: identifying challenges across industries and

creating technologies that make processes cleaner, faster, and more sustainable.

"Hopefully Gustaf is still proud of us," says Rachel.

Present in your everyday life – without noticing it

Alfa Laval develops technologies that heat, cool, separate, and transport liquids – essential processes that keep industries running smoothly. Their solutions help everything from food production to energy and marine operations become more efficient and more sustainable.

"I think what's interesting about Alfa Laval is that 95% of the population is a recipient of a process we've been involved in. They might not even know it or the company. However, they've probably used a product that had our product in its process – like if they've had milk, ice cream, or if they've turned their boiler on, there's probably an Alfa Laval product involved. We are really prevalent in everyday life, yet without people knowing," says Rachel.

Innovation and sustainability present in each step

At Alfa Laval, innovation touches everything they do. Rachel explains: "Robotics and automation are helping us assemble high-volume products like brazed heat exchangers more efficiently, but the real innovations are in the materials and processes themselves. We're exploring new metals, using zero-carbon energy, and investing in technologies like cryogenics – opening doors to green hydrogen and future fuels. Advanced engineering isn't just about machines; it's about finding smarter, more sustainable ways to do our work."

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Listening,
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Sustainability, she adds, is more than a tagline. “Our phrase, ‘pioneering positive impact,’ reflects how we approach it. It’s about making our customers’ processes cleaner and more efficient. Even in traditional sectors like oil and gas, we can help reduce environmental impact. It’s not always flashy technology; it’s practical improvements that work for the people using our products, here in the UK and Ireland, and beyond.”

The focus on people remained central, especially when moving into AI. “Many tasks on the floor are still manual and heavy,” Rachel says. “AI and robotics can take on the risky parts, whether that’s lifting or measuring equipment, so our teams are safer. Technology is exciting, but its real value is in supporting people – keeping them safe, empowered, and able to focus on the work that matters.”

Passion drew Rachel into a world of engineering

Rachel’s journey into engineering began when she was 19, in need of a job, and walked into Cummins’ marine offices in Charleston, USA. “I was met by people who were genuinely passionate about the industry,” she recalls. “They would stop and show me the details of an engine, explain its functions and applications. It was infectious – I got hooked immediately.”

Starting as an admin assistant, she worked through roles in marketing, product development, and sales management, driven by curiosity and the energy of passionate colleagues. Alfa Laval, a former supplier to Cummins, came into the picture unexpectedly.

“Meeting the Alfa Laval marine team felt familiar, like sitting down with people you’ve known forever. Cummins was shifting focus away from marine, and the timing felt right. It felt like fate.” And now, she has been in her position as Managing Director for over one and a half years.

An American leading a Swedish company in the UK comes with its lessons though, Rachel laughs and explains: “I grew up in a very top-down, American style of management,” Rachel reflects. “Alfa Laval is very consensus-driven – very Swedish. I’ve had to learn patience, to pick where consensus matters, and to delegate more. I got it wrong at first, insisting on doing things my way. Listening, understanding how people communicate and make decisions, and adapting my approach has been a real learning journey.”

Leadership isn’t transactional

Rachel’s leadership philosophy has been shaped not by a single moment, but by countless small lessons along the way.





"I really love to learn from other people, to watch and listen," she says. She's had the privilege of working with leaders from all over – American, British, Spanish, Austrian – and she absorbs what resonates, weaving it into her own style.

One lesson stands out vividly. Early in her career, when she had her first direct report, she approached it transactionally: checking in on tasks, tracking progress, assigning activities. Until one day, her colleague asked, "Do you know what's important to me? You don't really talk to me." Rachel laughs softly recalling it. "I thought I was being supportive. But she had never felt seen. That moment stayed with me. Leadership isn't transactional – it's about genuinely caring for the people you work with."

It was a lesson we saw come to life just an hour earlier, walking through the service centre with her.

For Rachel, modesty and authenticity are at the heart of leadership. "You see so many leaders that never seem to show any type of weakness or uncertainty. And I'm not like that," she says. "The more I open up, especially to my team, the more honest I can be, the more authentic I can be, the better we work." She adds, "They don't look at me like I have to have every answer. They know I don't. They know I'm a flawed individual, as we all are. And I think that really helps to generate solutions. They know they have some accountability to come to the table with their own solutions."

Rachel's love for huskies became a strategic business success

One of the things that drives Rachel outside the office is racing with her two huskies, and it's a passion that clearly informs how she leads. "The structure of a sled team is fascinating," she says. "The musher leads from the back – not making all the decisions but guiding the team. The lead dogs at the front can see what's ahead much more clearly, so they need to make choices, and the musher teaches them how to make the right ones."

Every dog in the harness has a role, and if even one doesn't pull its weight, the whole team can falter. "It can lead to disasters – the sled could tip; the team could go off course. But when you put a harness on a husky ready to work, they are thrilled, passionate, and eager. That's how I want my teams to feel. Excited to get to work, confident in their role, and performing together."

Earlier this year, Rachel introduced the sled dog as a symbol for the team. “We have a very ambitious target after a tough 2024. We needed something everyone could rally around – a common language. Giving each colleague a stuffed husky, together with a clear strategy, reminded everyone: we’re in this together, everybody has a role, and we want you to be happy working in the harness.”

It’s a simple, personal image, but one she returns to again and again. “I’m not the world’s best storyteller,” she admits, “but if I pick a theme I care about, I can weave a story. In the past it’s been rugby or football, but sled dogs are a favourite. It gives the team a shared image, a consistent message, and a way to keep talking the same language.”

The Chamber – real value for the whole company

Rachel sees real value in the Chamber. “The networking opportunities are invaluable – connecting with other Swedish companies in the UK and sharing experiences. When I first joined Alfa Laval, it helped to have a few trusted connections to navigate a new environment and exchange advice.”

She also appreciates the insights the Chamber provides. “Hearing both business and political perspectives helps us understand what’s realistic and where we might need to

influence. It gives context to our ambitions and decisions.”

Rachel plays an active role in the network, coming to events and being a mentor in our mentorship programme. Now, she actively involves her team too. “I’ve started sending out invitations and encouraging participation. It’s been a great investment of time – for anyone coming from Sweden, or from outside, it’s a really helpful way to get oriented and connected.”

“I am so proud of my team”

As the interview draws to a close, Rachel, with a quiet pride in her eyes, adds one final remark: “I want to end with one thing; as I said previously, 2024 was tough and the targets for 2025 are high. I am so proud of my team because we’re going to beat almost every single one of the targets that we set. We’re having an incredible year, and I’m so happy and proud for the team.”

Walking out of Alfa Laval, each of us with a small stuffed husky – a playful reminder of the team spirit Rachel cherishes – it’s clear how her leadership and the passion on the floor and throughout Alfa Laval come together. “I am so proud of my team,” she says, and having seen the energy, skill, and dedication around every corner, it’s easy to understand why.



“
We are
a really
proud
company.”



THE ENERGY AWAKENING

TEXT: MAJA STENBERG
PHOTOS: ELECTROLUX

Across the UK, a quiet revolution is underway in homes, both old and new. Rising energy costs and a growing sense of environmental responsibility are changing how people approach daily routines. It's about saving money – but there's also a deeper awareness that every choice, from a quick laundry cycle to cooking a family meal, has an impact. This moment of change has brought Electrolux into sharp focus.



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Sustainability is one of our core business drivers and is at the heart of everything we do.

The question isn't whether companies will adapt to this new reality – it's how quickly and how thoughtfully they'll do it. And our Patron Electrolux, a household brand with roots in the UK for over a century, is on it. Not only are they navigating this new reality, they are also positioned to shape it. Will Sherwood-King, Brand Marketing Lead UK & Ireland, has witnessed this change firsthand.

“At Electrolux Group, we know that people are becoming increasingly more aware of their energy use and sustainability. And 88% of consumers want brands to help them be more environmentally friendly, therefore it's our job to provide them with the appliances to do so,” he says.

Changing habits, changing homes

For many people, sustainability now shapes daily decisions, with quick washes and energy-saving cycles as the new normal. “We're aware that people are also increasingly time poor in today's society,” Will notes, referencing research showing that the quick wash is “the unsung hero of the home.” Electrolux has responded with features like “PowerClean 59min,” which Will describes as using “innovative technology to offer complete stain removal in under an hour.”

As routines evolve, Will points out that many of the advanced features, especially in kitchen appliances, are often overlooked. “Many appliance functions go unnoticed by consumers. We encourage people to take some time to look into and understand the settings on their appliances. They may find that they've missed a setting that could take their staple dish to the next level with a burst of steam or a better use of heat distribution for that crispy base.”



The design and innovation response

As Will stated before, as households adapt, so must the companies that serve them. Since the 1920s, Electrolux has supplied brands like Zanussi, AEG, and Electrolux itself to UK homes. Today, much of their consumer business is represented by the AEG brand, which Will describes as “an appliance brand rooted in German heritage that seeks to offer products with a no compromise approach to design, innovation and sustainability.”

Recent changes in the AEG built-in Kitchen range reflect how design and innovation are responding to modern needs. Will points out “sleek gloss and Matt black finishes, a redesigned user interface with advanced assisted cooking features, and our SaphirMatt induction hob range.” The SaphirMatt hob, for example, is “4 times more scratch resistant than our standard glass, delivering not only a striking Matt black aesthetic, but a surface that stays looking new for longer.”

Will also shares that new dishwashers are on the way, designed with quieter cycles, greater energy efficiency, and improved cleaning.

Sustainability in practice

For Electrolux, sustainability is not just a corporate talking point. Will is clear: “Sustainability is one of our core business drivers and is at the heart of everything we do, meaning it feeds into the technologies we put into our appliances.”

He points to research showing that “85% of the global climate impact of an appliance, during its lifespan, is generated when it is being used in the home, so aside from market leading energy ratings we equip our appliances with functionality that make sustainable choices easier than ever.”

Even the user interfaces are designed to make sustainable choices more accessible, offering “easy access to recipes and features that help homeowners cook more sustainably and intuitively,” Will adds.

Electrolux has their ears to the ground – recognising and responding to the changing priorities of consumers. As the energy awakening continues and 88% of people look to brands for help in living more sustainably, the real challenge for any organisation is to listen and adapt. As Will said earlier: “It's our job to provide them with the appliances to do so.”





SHIPPING IN A WORLD OF GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES

BY CARLJOHAN HAGMAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NYK GROUP EUROPE

Global shipping currently has to navigate through waters more unpredictable than for decades. Despite the threats, challenges and uncertainties ahead, a long career in this industry has taught me to accept and handle its cyclicity. I can therefore be concerned about the recent trends, but still afford to stay rather optimistic.

Rightfully concerned because the very core foundations of global trade – predictability, openness, and clear international regulations – are under immense pressure. Optimistic because our industry has never been more innovative, more committed to sustainability, or more aware of its critical importance to society and driving the world economy forward.

Sweden and Scandinavia have long been pioneering maritime nations. From the early days of trans-Baltic trade to our modern world-class shipping clusters in Gothenburg, Malmö, Oslo, and Copenhagen, the region has punched well above its weight in shipping competence. Companies across Scandinavia – shipowners, logistics specialists, technology firms, and research institutions – have all helped to set global standards in efficiency, safety and also in decarbonisation. This heritage definitely shapes my own perspective. I wholeheartedly believe in open markets, international collaboration, and the free movement of goods. Yet seldom has my belief been more challenged.

The current geopolitical landscape has introduced a level of uncertainty that affects every vessel, every route, and every supply chain. Trade – normally the quiet enabler of economic prosperity – is now frequently at the frontline of political confrontation.

The United States, traditionally a champion of open markets, has over the past years adopted a significantly more protectionist posture. The latest round of tariffs, trade barriers, and politically targeted restrictions imposed by the current administration have implications far beyond bilateral relations. For European and Asian shipping companies, including NYK, these measures distort long-established trading patterns and massively complicate our strategic planning.

When tariffs are imposed suddenly, cargo flows shifts unexpectedly. Established shipping services become unviable overnight. Equipment imbalances increase. Costs rise. The ripple effects cascade across global networks. For export-oriented

economies such as Sweden – with its strong automotive, industrial, and forestry sectors – the recent uncertainty in U.S. trade policy is particularly worrying. When the world's largest importer suddenly becomes the most unpredictable partner, the consequences reverberate through quite literally every ocean.

Shipping is also facing the reality of geopolitical instability in critical maritime chokepoints. The ongoing tensions in Yemen and the wider Red Sea region have forced many lines, including NYK, to reconsider their Suez Canal transits. Drone attacks, missile threats, and insecurity in adjacent waters have turned what was once a predictable shortcut into quite a risky undertaking.

Re-routing around the Cape of Good Hope increases our sailing distances dramatically – by as much as 3,500–4,000 nautical miles on the Asia–Europe services. This means higher fuel consumption, increased emissions, longer lead times, and ultimately higher costs for our customers and global consumers. It also undermines schedule reliability, something the industry has fought hard to improve in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Scandinavian shippers, many of whom rely heavily on stable Asia–Europe supply chains, feel this impact acutely. Swedish exporters of machinery, paper products, pharmaceuticals, and consumer goods are all experiencing the downstream effects of these disruptions.

The Red Sea situation is a stark reminder that global trade still depends on a handful of narrow corridors. When these choke, the world immediately feels it.

Yet, possibly the most profound challenge we face right now is not geopolitical, but environmental. The International Maritime Organization's (IMO) recent and much anticipated vote on the Net Zero Framework regulations was one of the most significant regulatory milestones for global shipping in decades. The proposal, aimed at setting binding targets and market-based measures to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, represented a long-awaited step toward tangible and ambitious climate action.

However, on October 17, 2025, it all came to an abrupt halt. The decision to delay implementation following tough pressure from the United States has suddenly left the industry in limbo. For companies like NYK – already deeply





invested in sustainable technologies, alternative fuels, and fleet decarbonisation – the postponement creates an uncomfortable and problematic uncertainty.

On one hand, we understand the concerns of developing nations and smaller fleets. A rapid transition without adequate support risks creating inequities within global shipping. These voices deserve to be heard. On the other hand, the climate clock is relentlessly ticking. Every year of delay makes the future trajectory steeper, the necessary investments become larger, and the transition more complex.

NYK has long been at the forefront of environmental innovation. From LNG-fuelled car carriers to research into ammonia and hydrogen propulsion, from digital optimisation systems to shore-power initiatives, our company has made sustainability a core strategic priority. But without clear global rules, long-term capital planning becomes more difficult. Major decarbonisation investments require commitment and predictability – not just vision.

Although IMO's postponement does not materially change NYK's overall sustainability ambitions, it does however mean we must now carefully navigate a transitional period where regulatory uncertainty coexists with urgent environmental responsibility.

As a true globalist, I remain convinced that open seas and open markets increase prosperity, strengthen international connections, and reduce geopolitical friction. Free trade has lifted more people out of poverty than any other force in modern history. Just to illustrate: in 1980, there were some four and a half billion people in the world, and forty percent lived in poverty. Since then, we've gained roughly four billion new consumers, all enjoying a similar standard of living as we had in Sweden back in 1978. Fewer than ten percent live below the poverty line today. This would just never have happened without ample supply of cheap and effective transportation.

The alternative – fragmented economic blocs and protectionist barriers – benefits no one, least of all maritime and foreign-trade dependent nations like Japan and Sweden.

But we must be honest: the world is clearly becoming more fragmented, not less. Recent trade wars, regional conflicts, and

divergent regulatory regimes threaten the openness that global shipping relies upon. For the maritime sector – and for all who depend on it – our response must be twofold.

First, we must continue to advocate for international cooperation.

Shipping has always been governed by global rules. IMO regulations, safety conventions, and open-registry principles have allowed the industry to function across borders. Defending this global system is absolutely essential. Sweden, with its long history of active participation in international maritime governance, has an important role to play.

Second, we must double down on innovation, efficiency, and environmental responsibility.

Geopolitical uncertainty cannot be an excuse for inaction. The Scandinavian shipping cluster also here demonstrates that sustainability and competitiveness are not mutually exclusive – they are mutually reinforcing. The world's most advanced vessel designs, digital optimisation tools, and green-fuel pilot projects frequently originate from our part of the world.

We, as NYK Group Europe closely collaborates with Scandinavian partners, and we see this spirit of innovation every day. It gives me confidence that, even in challenging times, the industry can jointly chart a responsible and forward-looking course.

Shipping is the most cyclical of industries and has many-a-time survived oil crises, wars, pandemics, and global recessions. It will survive today's geopolitical turbulence as well. But survival is not enough. The task ahead is to steer the industry toward a future that remains open, sustainable, and prosperous.

For this, we need clear rules, stable trade frameworks, safe waterways, and a collective commitment to reducing emissions. We also need leaders – both political and industrial – who clearly understand that protectionism, fragmentation, and indecision ultimately impose far greater costs on society than openness and cooperation ever could.

Although our seas may seem more turbulent and troubled than before, with proper determination and collaboration, I do remain firmly convinced that globalisation will always prevail.



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WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE IS CHANGING EVERYTHING

TEXT: MAJA STENBERG | PHOTO: NETMORE GROUP

This SCC UK Member manufactures nothing you can buy or hold. Instead, Netmore has built the invisible wireless network backbone connecting millions of devices that communities and businesses depend on every single day, and in just four years, they have quietly become one of the UK's most significant infrastructure players. We spoke with Ove Anebygd, CEO at Netmore Group, to understand the company, its approach, and what's next for connected Britain.

Founded in Stockholm in 2010, Netmore operates across 18 countries, connecting millions of devices that send real-time data back to utilities and businesses. "We provide network solutions that connect and manage millions of devices like smart meters, environmental sensors, and trackers that provide real-time data to enhance business operations," Ove explains.

What sets Netmore apart is that its network management platform is built to avoid becoming obsolete. "A platform designed to remain relevant without the need for generational upgrades," as Ove describes it. This matters because organisations don't face the costly disruption of ripping out



old infrastructure or redesigning systems when technology moves on – the platform simply evolves instead.

Today, Netmore operates the UK's most extensive LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network), covering 43 of the 92 counties and reaching more than 51 million people – nearly 8 out of 10 of the population.

Real outcomes, real impact

The proof is tangible. Yorkshire Water now saves more than two million litres of water per day through real-time leak detection on Netmore's network. They are also deploying 90,000 wastewater management sensors with their partner Detronic. Netmore has won contracts to connect over three million smart water metres across the UK – fundamentally changing how utilities manage natural resources.

Earlier this year, Severn Trent selected Netmore to deploy and manage network services for one million smart meters. The project targets ambitious sustainability goals by 2030: a 16% reduction in household water leakage, 7% reduction in household water use, and 3.5% reduction in non-household water use.

These contracts underscore Netmore's position as a leading specialist in utility infrastructure. With partnerships spanning some of the UK's largest water authorities, the company has established itself as a credible partner for the complex modernisation challenges that utilities face when upgrading critical infrastructure.

A Swedish DNA shaping Netmore's UK operations

"Our Swedish DNA is incorporated into everything we do. It's a blend of innovation, sustainability, and straightforward efficiency applied to our business approach," Ove says. "Sweden has a long history of telecom leadership, and we've carried that forward with a startup-like agility backed by solid infrastructure capital."

Ove continues to explain how this philosophy prioritises reliability and lasting results over flashy launches. "We approach business opportunities with a focus on long-term value over short-term hype and we're rational about costs, focused on reliability, and prioritise sustainable outcomes," Ove explains. In the UK, that commitment has translated into something tangible: the country's most extensive IoT network.

Flexibility that solves complex problems

What gives Netmore an edge is adaptability. Rather than forcing customers into a single solution, the company supports multiple network protocols that results in networks being tailored to specific customer needs. In the Severn Trent partnership with Vodafone, for instance,

“

Our Swedish DNA is incorporated into everything we do. It's a blend of innovation, sustainability, and straightforward efficiency applied to our business approach.

OVE ANEBYGD, CEO AT NETMORE GROUP



most meters use one technology, but where requirements demand it, the platform supports alternatives. In other words, no customer gets told 'that won't work.' Netmore finds what works and implements it, so organisations can focus on their core business.

Partnerships that make communities flourish

Behind the infrastructure is an equally important innovation: community engagement. Netmore builds its networks by beginning with umbrella coverage from high tower sites and municipal assets, then densifying coverage through local rooftops and homes.

Here's where the model becomes distinctive: the company partners with property owners and residents, offering financial incentives to host network gateways. "In this model, we partner with local property owners and residents to host gateways on rooftops or in homes and in return, we provide them with financial incentives," Ove explains.

"This approach has also generated significant local employment across the UK – Netmore's UK team of 21 staff members is supported by 207 contracted positions, including over 40 network gateway installers and nearly 170 water meter installers, strengthening communities whilst building critical infrastructure."

Milestones worth the mention

Ove proudly shares: "We've come a long way in the UK since our initial rollout in 2021 and are now the largest LoRaWAN operator in the region." And looking ahead, he continues to see significant opportunity: "There is a massive opportunity to extend our advanced metering and monitoring infrastructure to other water, gas, and district heating utilities in the UK, facilitating the modernisation of critical infrastructure to support sustainability and safety directives."

For a Swedish company that arrived just four years ago, Netmore is proving that critical infrastructure can be built differently – through long-term partnerships, community engagement, and a commitment to solving real problems.





UK-Sweden MoU

BUILDING ON OUR PARTNERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA OF INNOVATION

TEXT: ALEXANDER HÖGBERG | PHOTOS: MAJA STENBERG

In the world of international business and policy, some agreements quietly set the stage for transformation – often years before their full impact is felt. This October, Maria Nilsson, State Secretary to Lotta Edholm, Minister for Upper Secondary School, Higher Education and Research, and Lord Vallance, UK Minister for Science, Innovation, Research and Nuclear signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Cooperation in Research and Innovation, marking another step in a journey that began with the Strategic Partnership Agreement of 2023. For leaders in both countries, this MoU is not just a formal gesture – it is a signal of intent, and an invitation to shape the future together.

The story of this MoU is rooted in a deepening relationship. Two years ago, Prime Ministers Ulf Kristersson and Rishi Sunak formalised a Strategic Partnership, broadening cooperation between our countries across security, trade, innovation, and research. This agreement reflected a recognition – shared by both governments and business leaders – that the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century demand more than national solutions. They require collaboration between countries that share values, ambitions, and a commitment to open, rules-based engagement.

Reflecting on the journey, Maria remarked: “This MoU is the result of a bottom-up approach, drafted in close collaboration with the research community. In today’s geopolitical reality, it is more important than ever to be close to like-minded countries and to learn and grow from each other. The UK is a very like-minded country to Sweden, and this agreement builds on the strategic partnership signed two years ago.”



Marika Amartey Kaliff, Head of the Office of Science and Innovation at the Swedish Embassy in London, echoed this sense of achievement. “I feel delighted, of course. But most of all excited for the next steps, to deliver concrete results. The new MoU is very timely, given the rapidly changing science and technology landscape and increasing global competition. Research and innovation are being recognised as crucial for our economy, security, and wellbeing – and justifiably so.”

From vision to action

The latest MoU builds directly on this foundation. It establishes a framework for regular dialogue, joint research, and cooperation in key areas such as artificial intelligence and other strategic technologies, fusion, and telecommunications. This can offer opportunities for industry to engage with world-class research and emerging technologies, not least through the EU Framework Programmes.

“There is already a great deal of collaboration between Swedish universities and British universities, from exchange programmes to research partnerships. This MoU puts a framework around what is already happening, providing infrastructure to take the process further in an organised way, while still maintaining a bottom-up approach,” Maria continued.

Marika highlighted the immediate priorities: “Together with the UK Science and Technology Network in Stockholm we are already planning a kick off meeting to identify the immediate next steps.”

She also pointed out the importance of collaborations with the business landscape: “We are also working closely with the Swedish Chamber of Commerce for the UK, because we want this MoU to strengthen not only research but also commercial operations in both countries. We see our business communities as an integral part of the partnership, by driving investments, research and innovation in areas such as AI, quantum, and future telecommunications.”



Unlocking business opportunity

Craig Jantzen, Diplomat and Northern Europe Regional Manager, Science & Technology Network, spoke directly to the business potential: “Business benefits from having a strong science and research base in both countries – a feedstock of highly skilled talent and ideas coming out of universities into spin-outs. The main benefit of this agreement is deepening collaboration, especially through Horizon Europe, which will hopefully lead to more and better research links between our two communities.”

He added: “The UK has an excellent science research base – world-class science built on openness, excellence and collaboration. By partnering even more with Sweden, which also has an excellent research base, we can produce better research, faster. It’s not a zero-sum game; by working together, the whole pie grows.”

Maria echoed this optimism: “By pinpointing areas such as strategic technologies, fusion energy, and AI as focus areas for the first year, we are setting the stage for even deeper cooperation. Sweden and the UK are both strong in the triple helix model – academia, state, and business working together – and I hope this MoU will help take those collaborations further, especially in emerging technologies.”



Looking ahead

As the MoU moves from agreement to action, its true legacy will be written by the businesses, researchers, and entrepreneurs who seize the opportunities it creates. “In particular, we would like to see increased UK-Sweden participation in Horizon Europe, more research exchange and access to our world leading research infrastructure in Sweden, as well as constructive dialogue on research security and responsible internationalisation in research and innovation,” says Marika.

And, in a fitting analogy, Craig described the partnership as: “Maybe it’s like Zlatan Ibrahimović coming to Manchester United – Swedish brilliance coming to the UK to make something great – in this case we are talking about making great science, not scorings goals. That’s what this partnership is all about: teamwork that lifts everyone.”

For business leaders, this new chapter is not just about policy – it is a practical platform for forging new alliances, driving innovation, and achieving sustainable growth on both sides of the North Sea. The groundwork is laid; the opportunity now lies in how executives and organisations choose to build upon it.





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TAKES TO POWER US TOO?

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Fredrik Warneryd, Chief Executive
fredrik.warneryd@scc.org.uk



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THE DAY CHILDREN ASK ABOUT MANUAL LAWN CARE

TEXT: ALEXANDER HÖGBERG | PHOTOS: HUSQVARNA

In a few years, maybe sooner, a child will ask their parent: “Did you really use to cut the grass yourself?” The question will land like “Did you really wash dishes by hand?” A small piece of history, no longer imagined as necessary. And when that moment arrives – when the question feels almost quaint – Husqvarna will have already rewritten the story of how that world came to be.

Husqvarna Group is a 336-year-old Swedish company that has spent the last two decades doing something rare: transforming how entire industries work. The company is a global leader across multiple categories – and what ties them together is something deeper than products. It’s a never-ending passion for innovation.

The millions of robotic lawn mowers now installed worldwide speak for themselves, but they only tell one part of the story. Husqvarna Group creates chainsaws engineered for precision. Gardening tools that merge durability with thoughtful design. Construction equipment that’s redefining what’s possible on job sites across Europe. What connects them all is that they are a result of the same core principle at Husqvarna Group: making work smarter, faster, and more sustainable.





4 QUICK QUESTIONS WITH GLEN

A book Glen thinks that everyone should read.

"Act like a leader, think like a leader by Herminia Ibarra."

A Swedish tradition he has truly embraced.

"Midsummer! Celebrated at the end of June, around the summer solstice and longest day of the year. A great opportunity to spend time with family and friends."

A hidden talent of his.

"Making spaghetti bolognese!"

What is his favourite Husqvarna tool and why?

"Favourite is the Automower. Why would anyone cut their own lawn, when they can sit back and watch the Husqvarna Automower in action with perfect results!?"





At the centre of it all is Glen Instone, the company's newly appointed Group CEO and the first non-Swedish person to take on the role. But what really makes Glen stand out isn't just this historic milestone, it's the clarity he brings to what comes next.

Speaking with Glen, his energy is immediate. There's a directness to how he thinks, an infectious confidence about what's possible. He doesn't rely on corporate language. Instead, he frames Husqvarna's mission in terms that feel almost refreshingly simple: "We are a product company at heart. There's no doubt about that. Husqvarna is a product centric company, and we like to make new products and solutions. And we've got a lot of passionate engineers in this company working on existing and new offerings."

But this isn't nostalgia for the past. It's clarity about the future. "At our heart is a 336-year-old company," Glen explains. "What we have done in that time is constantly reinvent ourselves. We've gone from making muskets to sewing machines to bicycles to motorcycles to chainsaws." And now, to leading the automation of industries most people assumed would never change.

The robotic revolution that rewrites how we think

One moment stands out in Glen's 23-year journey at Husqvarna: four and a half million robotic lawnmowers. That's not a statistic. That's a quiet revolution.

When Glen joined Husqvarna in 2002, the company was already tinkering with a product invented back in 1995. "We didn't have the best success in the early years," he recalls. That same year, Husqvarna was producing just 4,000 robotic mowers – and production moved from Sweden to the UK. Not exactly the stuff of a business legend.

But Glen saw something different. He watched the technology improve. He watched the market shift. He watched consumers start to imagine a different kind of lawn care. Now, more than two decades later, Husqvarna has put 4.5 million robotic mowers into homes and gardens across the world.

The impact is almost philosophical. "Maybe I can liken this to a sort of dishwasher moment," Glen says. "Our children really would look at us and say, 'did you use to wash the dishes yourself?' And I think one day we're going to have that same saying, 'did you really use to cut the grass yourself?'"

It's the kind of observation that feels humble until you realise what it means: Husqvarna didn't just make a better machine. It rewrote the rules of an entire industry. And it did so by sticking to something that feels almost out of fashion – patient innovation.



Leadership that trusts people to be better than you

Ask Glen about his leadership style, and he gives you three words: trust, empowerment, and simplicity. Not because they sound good. Because he's seen it in action.

"I didn't just pick up this with three buzzwords," he insists. "It's more that I've watched how different people lead and this is what I think is successful."

He's had two pieces of advice that stuck. The first came from a previous CEO: "Plant the feet firmly where they are, meaning do a good job here and now and the next position will find you." Simple. It freed him from the worry of climbing, and secondly: "The light shines brightest when reflecting off others around you." In other words, surround yourself with people smarter than you. "Most of the time I should be the dumbest guy in the room," he says with genuine comfort. "That's how it should be."

This isn't false humility from a CEO who's just reached the top. It's the foundation of how he's built his career. When facing challenges – and in 23 years at Husqvarna, there have been plenty – Glen relies on two things: staying alert and staying connected to customers. "The business cases you wrote three years ago or 12 months ago – things change, the world around you changes. You've got to change with the environment."

He argues that internally focused organisations fail. But companies obsessed with two things – understanding customers and building strong teams – are already halfway to success. "If you really understand your customer group and you've got a good team around you, I think you're a big chunk of the way there."

A company that constantly reinvents itself

What keeps a company alive for more than three centuries? For Glen it's clear: innovation. "We've got a lot of passionate engineers in this company working on existing and new offerings. That innovation drumbeat is what's kept us going."

But innovation without purpose becomes distraction. The company's Strategy 2030, launched in December, focuses on something Glen calls "where to play and how to win." It sounds simple, which is exactly the point.

The strategy rests on two differentiators. First, excellence in aftermarket service. "Being the best service provider possible," Glen explains. It means best-in-class support, replacement parts that are available, and a customer experience that extends far beyond the initial sale. Second, brand power. "We've got two super brands – Husqvarna Group and Gardena. We've got to shout more about them."

But strategy without execution is simply an aspiration. So, the company is getting rigorous about cost competitiveness, enabling investment in innovation, brands, and those aftermarket services. "Focus is key," Glen insists. "A lot of companies fail because they try and do too many things. I think it's better to do a few things well."

He brings this philosophy to everything – even how to remember a strategy. "We talk in threes because maybe we can remember things in threes or we can execute things in threes. When you start making that list five things, then it starts to dilute what you're really trying to do."

Swedish roots, global reach

The Swedish values that shaped Husqvarna are embedded in how Glen leads. Innovation and engineering excellence aren't just Husqvarna traits – they're hallmarks of Swedish industry. But there's something else: a commitment to balance. People. Planet. Profitability. "The three have got to play in harmony," Glen says. "It's hard to say one's more important, but I think they've all got to play together."

This isn't just corporate philosophy. It's reflected in partnerships like Husqvarna's sponsorship of the AIG Women's Open, where in 2025 robotic mowers maintained the fairways at one of golf's major championships for the first time ever. Or Liverpool FC, where the values between organisation and brand aligned perfectly.

These aren't vanity projects. They're proof points. Husqvarna is building a different kind of company – one that innovates with purpose, leads with trust, and believes that the future isn't just about making better products. It's about making them better for everyone.

For Glen, that's not a strategy document. That's just how you lead.





Previous events

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TANIA TANDON

This year's recipient of the
Extraordinary Member Award

TEXT: ALEXANDER HÖGBERG | PHOTOS: RADEK DRANIKOWSKI

In the midst of The Landmark's Tower Suite, in front of the impressive windows overlooking the winter garden, Tania Tandon sat with an almost disbelieving smile. In front of her, the gleaming Skultuna-crafted Extraordinary Member Award 2025 rested on the table – a symbol of a journey that began with an Indian junior doctor in 1970s Sweden and has led to a new kind of law firm, a bridge between cultures, and a remarkable contribution to the Swedish-British business community.





The room was almost empty. The murmur of preparations for the SCC UK's Annual Christmas Luncheon drifted in from the corridors of The Landmark, but in the Tower Suite, it was just Tania and the award that still felt slightly unreal to her.

"It feels incredible," says Tania Tandon, Founder of TandonHildebrand and recipient of the Extraordinary Member Award 2025. "It also feels to me like it's almost the wrong way around. I feel like I should be saying a massive thanks to the Swedish Chamber for everything it's done for me and my career and for me personally."

For Tania, the award is as much about family as it is about professional achievement. Her father, an Indian doctor, came to Sweden as a junior doctor in the early 1970s, at a time when it was unusual to be Indian in Sweden. "Sweden received him with very warm, open arms," she says. When the Chamber informed her about the award at a local Marylebone pub, the first number she dialled was his. "It makes him particularly proud," she adds.

That blend of cultures is the starting point of Tania's story. She was born in Sweden to an Indian father and British mother. Her father's medical career then took the family from Sweden to Kuwait with a group of researchers from Lund University, and later to the UAE. "I went from a small school in Sweden to a school with 150 nationalities," she recalls.

As a teenager she moved again, this time to the UK, where she finished school, studied law and, as she puts it with a smile, "got stuck" after meeting her British husband. Her legal career followed a traditional path in a famously competitive environment. "I applied for 47 training contracts and I received one," she says. "I found out when I got the job that the reason why they had chosen me was because I was Swedish on my CV – so it helps."

That single opportunity opened the door to leading international law firms such as Eversheds and later Trowers & Hamlin, where she became a partner. Yet the same curiosity and restlessness that had taken her across borders as a child eventually made her question the traditional law firm model itself.

Through the Swedish Chamber, which she already joined in 2009, Tania was exposed to a wide range of businesses, sectors and ideas. "I felt that I somehow outgrew the traditional model and I was becoming restless to try something new," she explains. The result was TandonHildebrand, the firm she co-founded with Richard Hildebrand. At first glance, it looks like any other City practice. At its core, it is built on a radical principle: there are no billable hours.

"We don't base fees on time," Tania says. "In the UK that is the basis of every law firm. It drives the advice to clients, the financial budgeting, the behaviours, the hierarchy, the culture – it sits behind absolutely everything. And we don't have that."



If the Chamber helped inspire Tania's entrepreneurial leap, it also deepened her connection to the Swedish-British business community. Her partnership with Richard was strengthened through their joint engagement. As a corporate lawyer and an employment lawyer, they saw a complementary way to serve Swedish businesses in the UK – and the Chamber became the platform where that offering came to life.

Joining the Chamber's Board of Directors in 2016 was another turning point. "It was such a surprise and an incredible honour to be invited to join the board," she recalls. "One of the highlights was being able to sit at the table with the sort of companies and calibre of professionals that I was able to."

What has stayed with her most, however, is the character of the Chamber itself. "It is a supportive, warm and proud, constructive network," she says. "People are there because they want to be there and they're proud to be there." From the inside, she has seen how a small team of 14 can deliver what many assume is the work of a much larger organisation. "If you ask people today, during the Christmas Luncheon, how many people work at the Chamber, they will probably say a hundred," she notes, admiring the efficiency, professionalism, and energy that radiates from the team.

Over the years, the Chamber has become "a kind of extension" of Tania and her firm – a complementary driving force that connects people, ideas, and markets across borders. Her long-standing commitment, from welcoming SCC UK scholars to London to championing the community at every turn, is rooted not in strategy but instinct. "It's all reciprocal and it's relationship building," she says. "It's a mutual kind of give and take."

That spirit of reciprocity lies at the heart of why Tania receives the Extraordinary Member Award 2025. Yet, in true Tania fashion, she insists the gratitude should flow in the other direction. "I always feel supported by the Chamber," she says. "Almost this award that I'm getting is like you've beaten me to it, because it definitely is a two-way stream."

In the Tower Suite at The Landmark, with the Skultuna award resting between us, that two-way stream feels almost tangible: one person, one firm, and one community that have grown together – and will continue to shape each other in the years to come.



SME Q&A

Expanding into a new market is rarely straightforward – and the UK is no exception. In this SME Q&A, our contributors share their experiences of entering and growing in the UK market.

They answer two key questions:

1. What has been the most significant challenge your business has faced when expanding into the UK market, and how did you overcome it?
2. What advice would you give to other SMEs considering entering or growing in the UK market?

Together, their insights offer a grounded look at both the hurdles and the opportunities of taking this step.



**SAMUEL
REFENNIG**

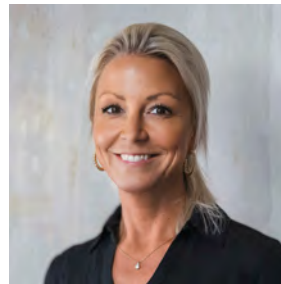
VP Internationalization,
Tendium

1 One of the biggest challenges was navigating the complexity and scale of the UK's public procurement landscape compared to the Nordics. While the Nordic markets are highly transparent and often on a smaller, more standardised scale, the UK's procurement environment is considerably larger and more fragmented, with varying frameworks, regional authorities, and differing approaches to supplier engagement.

Although not fully there yet, we have taken a structured and research-driven approach and have looked to map the market carefully, define our target customer segments, and ensure our product is able to deliver genuine value to customers and offer something over and above our competitors.

2 Don't hesitate to ask for help! We've been warmly welcomed by organisations such as SCC UK and Business Sweden, and feel a strong will to support our expansion. For us as a venture capital backed startup, we've also received a lot of support from our investors and their networks.

But also, before doing so, it really really helps to understand quite concretely what it is you want and need help with. If you can articulate that, and what you think you can feasibly achieve yourself quite quickly vs. something you deem an unknown/unfeasible, collaboration and support will be much more efficient.



**ISABELL
AAKERVIK**

Chief Expansion Officer,
Sitoo

1 One of the biggest challenges when entering the UK is building trust and credibility as a new vendor with a modern solution. Even if your platform is more flexible or better suited for today's retail landscape, many businesses still prefer the vendors they already know because it feels familiar and safe.

The key is to stay focused and make it simple for customers to understand why you're worth switching to. In a market full of established players, you're competing with comfort as much as features. Start small, show real results early, and let strong customer cases speak for themselves. When customers see the advantages and realise switching isn't as risky as they thought, you start to gain traction. Consistency, focus, and patience are essential in the UK market.

2 Keep things focused and invest time in understanding the UK market. Local knowledge makes a big difference, knowing their challenges and what they expect helps you avoid missteps. Start small, build a few strong customer wins, and let those results speak for themselves. Stay focused and consistent, don't rush. Trust takes time in the UK.





THOMAS HENEKER

Head of Content Operations, Readly

1 The biggest challenge in the UK was finding and keeping the right audience at scale. People are increasingly hard to reach, more price-sensitive, and they don't respond to our brand or value proposition in the same way as in our other markets. What works in Sweden simply doesn't translate one-to-one to the UK.

We did not enter and grow the market with a centrally driven playbook alone. We put a dedicated UK team on the ground and their local knowledge has been crucial in decision-making and shaping everything from marketing efforts to building relationships with publishers. In parallel, we work closely with our colleagues in Sweden to evolve the product based on the feedback and insights coming from the UK.

2 Set up a proper local presence and hire people who really know the UK market, customers and rules – they'll build relationships, read local habits and help you operate with confidence. Make your Swedish roots part of the story: quality, design and sustainability are strong, trusted selling points for British customers and partners. Work with reliable partners to speed up introductions and solve practical challenges. And of course, talk to the Swedish Chamber of Commerce – they're excellent for market insight, useful introductions and hands-on support, so you can grow while keeping your Swedish identity.



CHARLOTTE HOUSDEN

Managing Director UK, Mindler

1 At Mindler, we focus on the UK mental healthcare sector, particularly the NHS and private insurance. These markets are complex, relationship-based, and regulated. Initially our success came from hiring UK talent with deep health-system expertise, and aligning everyone behind a clear vision. We

knew Mindler couldn't achieve its vision through organic growth alone, so we acquired ieso UK, a leading provider of online mental health treatment to the NHS. The strategic acquisition of ieso UK was important, as it has expanded our clinical depth, and footprint. Together, we are now one of the largest digital mental-health providers in Europe, with a model designed specifically for the UK.

2 For SMEs entering the UK healthcare market, I'd emphasise three essentials: invest early in local expertise, have a clear and ambitious vision, and build strategies that turn that vision into measurable progress. The NHS and private sectors need partners who genuinely understand how the system works and can demonstrate outcomes that matter. Surround yourself with people who know the UK healthcare landscape inside out, stay persistent, and remain adaptable. Recognise that organic growth may not always be enough; strategic partnerships or acquisitions can accelerate your impact.



SEBASTIAN GORDON

Founder, Rocket Padel

1 The biggest challenge has undoubtedly been navigating the UK's layers of planning processes, local council regulations, and general red tape. It's a market that rewards persistence – but also tests your patience. We quickly learned that success here isn't about cutting corners; it's about understanding the system, working within it, and building strong local relationships. By surrounding ourselves with great advisors and maintaining a proactive dialogue with councils and communities, we've managed to turn obstacles into progress. Once you embrace the process, you realise it's less about bureaucracy and more about building credibility.

2 Don't be afraid – and don't give up. The UK can seem complex at first, but it's also incredibly open to those who show commitment. My advice is simple: ask for help. I've never met anyone here unwilling to assist if you approach them with genuine curiosity and respect. The market rewards collaboration, transparency, and long-term thinking. Learn how the system works – from planning to financing – and then play by its rules. It might feel slow at first, but the momentum you build will be real and sustainable.



NEW MEMBERS

Founded in 1906, by business for business, the Swedish Chamber of Commerce for the United Kingdom is the ultimate business platform connecting Swedish and British companies and entrepreneurs across the North Sea.

We are a nonprofit organisation, and help businesses establish, grow, and develop in the UK. Our focus is on providing relevant and informative forums and meeting places, forging new and exciting networks and ecosystems, offering valuable training programmes for personal and professional growth, and to enable business development.

We bring value to member businesses across all sectors and industries, from large corporates to SMEs, entrepreneurs, and scaleups, in the United Kingdom as well as in Sweden.



Would you like to learn more about the membership?

Contact Selina Johansson
Membership & External Relations Executive
selina.johansson@scc.org.uk





BioIndustry Association (BIA)

The BioIndustry Association (BIA) is the voice of the innovative life sciences and biotech industry, enabling and connecting the UK ecosystem so that businesses can start, grow and deliver world-changing innovation.



CMS

CMS is a Future Facing organisation of independent law firms. With 80+ offices in over 45+ countries and 6,800+ lawyers worldwide, we combine deep local market understanding with a global overview, giving us the ability not only to see what's coming, but to shape it.



Drottningholms Slottsteater

Drottningholms Slottsteater Foundation manages the theatre and each summer presents opera, concerts, guided tours, and events for children. The unique theatre building retains its original interior; the stage's world of painted scenery is tailored to an eighteenth-century repertoire, and the hand-operated stage machinery is still used in performances.



Groth & Co

Groth & Co has been creating and optimizing intellectual property since 1869 which makes us Scandinavia's oldest company in the industry. Back then we were a patent agency. Today we are a modern IP law firm offering personal advice in all areas. By continuously developing new services, we strive to strengthen our clients' positions.



ICEHOTEL AB

Icehotel – the original – a world famous hotel and an art exhibition made of ice and snow. Open year round! Founded in 1989, it is reborn in a new guise every winter, in the Swedish village of Jukkasjärvi – 200 km north of the Arctic Circle. We proudly create events all over the world, build ICEBAR's, offer a vast variety of adventure travel all over Swedish Lapland and northern Norway.



Isobel Gardner Psychology

Are you seeking support to navigate life's challenges? If you're dealing with stress, anxiety, relationship struggles, trauma, or a host of other issues, I'm here for you. My compassionate and holistic approach is designed to help individuals and couples navigate some of life's most challenging times.



K2 Corporate Mobility

Every day, talented employees settle into their new role in a new location, distraction free, thanks to the expert help of our K2 global mobility, immigration, HR & advisory specialists. From some of the world's biggest brands through to the latest small businesses, we're trusted to fulfil our clients' global mobility needs.



Monitor ERP

In the 1970's Monitor ERP took on the mission to help manufacturing companies to improve productivity while keeping costs low. For businesses, this is important when their costs rise, the competition gets tougher and customers increase the demand for quality. With over 40 years of experience, we are the leading supplier of ERP systems in our market segment.



Turner & Co

Expert support for overseas companies trading in or with the UK. Whether you're setting up a UK subsidiary, sending employees on assignment, or hiring UK-based staff from abroad – we'll help you stay compliant, efficient and confident in your UK operations.

UPCOMING EVENTS



FEBRUARY

12

Nordic Chambers Business Forum

Explore how Nordic principles of trust, equity and sustainability turn happiness into strategic advantage, as leaders share how happier workplaces drive innovation, ethical leadership, sustainable growth, and business success.



MARCH

11

International Wine, Spirits, and Beer Tasting

Join fellow professionals in the City for CFCC's 16th International Tasting, featuring wines, beers, and spirits from eight countries, plus cross-chamber networking with 300 guests and diverse suppliers attending.



MARCH

12

People & Talent Forum

Join the inaugural People & Talent Forum to explore practical ways to attract and retain talent, build people-first cultures, navigate new technologies, and connect with peers who shape today's and tomorrow's workplaces.



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nordic
m&a
forum

TECH
2026
FORUM



MARCH

26

Nordic M&A Forum

Discover Nordic M&A opportunities at this forum, uniting investors, corporates and advisors to explore market dynamics, sector trends, regulatory shifts, and cross-border dealmaking through panels, insights and networking.

JUNE

04

Tech Forum

Tech Forum is a thought-provoking conference exploring today's evolving tech landscape, bringing together key stakeholders for expert talks, sharp panels, and high-value networking at the intersection of technology, society and future innovation.

NOVEMBER

26

Outer Thinking: Swedish-British Summit

This is a full-day conference exploring contemporary leadership beyond the usual boundaries, bringing together 200+ business leaders, entrepreneurs, politicians, and academics from Sweden and the UK. **Discounted tickets are available until 31 January.**





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