

# Interview with Mr. Hannu Saastamoinen, Chief Executive Officer of Swegon AB

INTERVIEWER: ANITA DERJANECZ, REHVA MANAGING DIRECTOR



**AD:** *Swegon is well-known HVAC manufacturer that has been producing high quality solutions for excellent indoor climate for more than 60 years. What do you see as key factors of being successful and growing to a global company? How would you introduce today's SWEGON in 3 sentences?*

HS: Our international progress from a Swedish based company to one of the main ventilation & cooling players in Europe is based on a couple of fundamental drivers. As a progressing international business, we have developed a stable and profitable base over many years. Stability and profitability needs to be applied before you can successfully grow any company. Also having a very ambitious, professional and financially sound owner, in Swegon's case Investment AB Latour, gives a solid fundament to our growth plans. As a third component, I would like to add our very strong innovation-based products and services combined with the good brand image that Swegon is having on the markets. And finally, all the committed and professional people in Swegon.

## Hannu Saastamoinen

- born in 1960 in Finland
- graduated in M.Sc. (Econ.) at Helsinki Business School.
- lived as an expat in Sweden, Netherlands and Norway.
- Chief Executive Officer of Swegon AB since 2013.
- President and Chief Executive Officer by Huurre Group Oy, between 2006 and 2012.

Swegon today, can be described as a professional and ambitious company with the aim to deliver the best possible indoor air quality, with lowest possible life cycle cost and with a high focus on our customers.

**AD: What are the most important technology and market trends that influence SWEGON and the HVAC sector in general?**

HS: Clearly one of the biggest changes recently is the very fast consolidation of the industry globally and probably much specifically in Europe. Many of the European ventilation companies (including Swegon) are active with acquisitions. Simultaneously, the big global HVAC players are also entering more actively in the European playfield.

On the other hand, basically everything around big data, IoT, AI etc. that is currently emerging, will most likely dramatically change even HVAC industry – nobody knows how specifically and into what direction, but I am sure completely new opportunities will emerge for both our customers and us as suppliers. Moreover, the convergence between cooling, heating and ventilation technologies is also a clear and interesting trend. We will most likely see more “combination products” on the market in the future. Swegon was early out – probably even too early - testing a combination product Tellus to the commercial market. Currently, we are introducing a fantastic GOLD AHU with integrated heat pump solution giving fresh air, heating and cooling, when needed in an energy efficient way.

**AD: What are the research objectives of Swegon? Which important innovations and exiting new products / services is SWEGON working on?**

HS: We are systematically continuing to develop the company towards being one of the leading suppliers of indoor climate system solutions. Hence, understanding of various customer applications and connecting this to our R&D plans is a very important driver for our research.

Moreover, we are also active in developing the connectivity of the products. The best ongoing demonstration of this is our new demand-controlled ventilation system “WISE”. It is a good example of combining modern and advanced technology; in this case wireless radio communication; to respond to a “simple” customer needs of getting the best possible indoor climate with the lowest possible installation and operational cost.



Concept of the WISE demand-controlled ventilation system.

We are also active in developing “soft services” to our customers to make their life easier. These various projects are connected to the digitalisation development and with addressing these opportunities in a smart way.

**AD: Swegon has been a true supporter of REHVA for 12 years now, and you are among the few companies that pro-actively participate in the actual REHVA activities. What values do you see in being part of the REHVA “family”? What else would you expect from the REHVA Association in the future?**

HS: In every industry, it is good for the overall industry development that competitors, or rather peers, have a structured forum to share information and competences. This will benefit in a long term for the whole industry and most importantly our customers. It is clearly our common interest to have and drive an “industry agenda” that profiles the HVAC industry in positive light when it comes to the sustainable development of our build environment and improved quality of life.

I think it is important to REHVA to continue offering this “neutral arena” within HVAC. Regarding the future agenda, I think it is important to focus on limited number of critical items and not split the resources to too many issues. In my opinion, driving the better and sustainable Indoor Air Quality for people’s health and comfort, should be high up on the agenda.

**AD: Swegon has an excellent Air Academy for professionals, where several REHVA experts have been involved as teachers over the years. SCANVAC will offer a well-deserved award to acknowledge this initiative at the REHVA Annual Meeting this year. What are the hot topics and priorities now in the academy? What are the plans and future directions of the initiative?**

HS: I fully agree that this has been a great initiative, created way before my time in Swegon. It has given us and other industry professionals a very good arena to drive the important industry questions. It has also offered a very valuable “networking arena” to many people – this is important in order to enable sharing the best practices in a positive manner. However, we have a lot of ideas to further develop our Academy. We have a clear ambition to make it not only a technology focused discussion forum but adding on features that



are connected to other competence areas as well. We will gradually introduce these to the market and they will be closely connected to our ambition to deliver superior indoor climate.

**AD: REHVA plans to launch a new initiative called “REHVA Next Generation” targeting freshly graduated engineers and young professionals across Europe. A part of this idea is to create links between companies and young professionals across Europe to develop their skills and professional career. What are your experiences and expectation of the young generation of engineers? Would Swegon be interested in joining such an initiative?**

HS: We would definitely be interested in this. This is a typical industry wide initiative that will contribute to all companies in HVAC industry. We need to understand that we as an industry are competing against other (technical) industries regarding the best young resources – and it is obvious that the more “traditional manufacturing industries” are not necessarily on the top of the mind of the young talents. We have a common interest to send a clear message to this target group that our industry is “working for the greater good of the mankind” in terms of sustainability, people’s health and comfort etc. These things are important for the young generation – which is fantastic! We also need to give them a picture of an industry that will be part of the future development of modern societies in “digital terms” as well. To put it simple; HVAC IS THE FUTURE INDUSTRY! ■

## REHVA Fire Safety in Buildings GUIDEBOOK



This guidebook describes the different principles of smoke prevention and their practical implementation by way of natural and mechanical smoke extraction systems, smoke control by pressurization systems and appropriate partition measures. In the event of fire, smoke can spread through ventilation systems, but these systems can play an active support role in smoke prevention.

Real-fire and model experiments, as well as consistently improved-upon simulation methods, allow for robust conclusions to be drawn regarding the effectiveness of smoke extraction measures, even at the planning stage. This smoke management Guidebook provides the reader with suitable tools, also through references to standards and regulations, for evaluating, selecting, and implementing a smoke control concept that is commensurate with the protection objective.

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