

Lasita's journey: Embracing Digitalization and Focusing on Customer Value

Interview with Karl-Martin Rammo, Managing Director AS Lasita Aken

Lasita is the oldest and one of the most renowned industrial wooden window manufacturers in Estonia. We interviewed Karl-Martin Rammo on how the company has developed and which role digitalization plays today and in the near future.

I: How did Lasita start off?

KMR: The company was founded in 1989 making it the oldest industrial wooden window manufacturer in Estonia. Initially the company was a joint enterprise between Finnish and Estonians producing glazing units and Finnish type windows.

I: As a company, Lasita has experienced a remarkable development since then.

KMR: Yes, in 1998 the production of DK windows started and has evolved ever since. Nowadays we have 75 employees and concentrate our efforts fully towards producing DK windows and Lift-And-Slide doors.

I: Does your sales concept include online or do you work with sales representatives and retailers?

KMR: Lasita has a very healthy balance between many customer segments. We do not have any direct online sales. However our products are present at various retailer webshops. Today we have a highly competent team of representatives in Estonia, Finland and Latvia and have our sales focussed mostly on the Baltics and Scandinavia. We offer complete installation at the customer's site. We hold the idea of giving the customer a full package in very high regard.

I: Which product groups do you offer - is the window clearly the focus of your business and do you offer other products to complement it?

KMR: The focus of our business is solving the customer's problem. Although we produce DK windows and Lift-and-Slide doors, the emphasis for the company as a whole is to find solutions that would add some comfort for the end customer, hence creating more value than merely a product that fills a hole in the wall.



I: How would you describe your typical customer? Would this be a home owner, or do you work with property developers and contractors?

KMR: Our portfolio is well balanced between all three. It is important to note that regardless of the customer types, they are mostly building a residential building rather than a commercial one.

I: What makes Lasita special? Is there something about your company or the products or services you offer that would set you apart from your competition?

KMR: From what I have seen in the window business, the focus in industrial production is usually on producing products as efficiently as possible. We have approached the same processes from the other end, so our focus is on the client. We are very passionate about creating value to the customer and to make this happen efficiently, it is important to know exactly where you are, what is needed and how to make things happen.

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We like to say that what is standard for us is special to the customer, which obviously takes us right back to the production line where things have to run efficiently with processes well organized to make it all happen.

I: You produce Wood and wood aluminum windows. Do you purchase other products such as roller shutters, etc. directly from the supplier or do you manufacture the components and assemble them individually?

KMR: It depends on the specific component and the values possible suppliers carry. As we like to attain a certain quality in our own supply chain where deliveries are fast and reliable. In some cases we tend to do things in-house to keep a firm grip over what our lead times are. We do have a wide range of great suppliers however, so we like to keep ourselves concentrated at our core business of producing windows where most extras are supplied by third parties.

I: You have been working very long with the same ERP solution. How did you become aware of 3E Datentechnik?

KMR: That was a very long time ago and we've stuck to 3E ever since, so this serves as a compliment towards a good partnership.

I: What convinced you that 3E-LOOK is the right software solution?

KMR: We were in a need to make our processes more intertwined, connected and automated and were looking for options on the market ranging from MS Dynamics to many ERPs and MRPs around. As we have been using the order management module from 3E for years where all data regarding products flows through it anyway, the decision to double down with 3E as our primary digitalisation partner was weighed heavily. In the end, while some other ERPs may be more intuitive, LOOK covers a wide range of our needs and was a logical choice moving forward.

I: Regarding digitalisation, which processes would you say are already sufficiently covered with the ERP, e.g. e-procurement, paperless production?

KMR: As we are a company that is always looking towards the future, I can assure you that none of our digitalisation processes are where we want them to be. We have implemented paperless in key areas of our production at record pace and are already seeing the upside of it, both in information flow on the floor as well as in managing the flow.

There is always room for improvement as some areas are not yet working as we'd like and take time programming as well as our staff getting acclimated to the program through a learning process. Alongside paperless, we have made strides in the material module, which also has been a project on the shelf for us for years. Now, we have actually made a breakthrough and things are looking very positive. As the pace of implementing different 3E modules has been quite high, we haven't been able to apply as much modules as our plan intends for this year just yet, but we will keep making progress. I believe that in a digital world the process of digitalisation is never ending the same way product development has been in our sector throughout history.

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Who do you contact if you have questions about the software and how quickly do you receive support?

KMR: 3E has an incredibly skilled representative in the Baltics that is our daily support whose services are great.

Regarding Paperless Production, how do you benefit from the information terminals in manufacturing?

KMR: Other than the tip of the iceberg of not using physical paper anymore there is obviously a whole world of benefits regarding information flow. All stations have up-to-date factual information at the time they start the production of each element as well as the date collected for better management of the production process as a whole. If everything has been thought through and implemented, it is a tremendous tool to have.

3E-LOOK offers an overview with tile design and the use of dashboards to display various information during order processing. How do you benefit from this and use this functionality at your company?

KMR: As all processed orders flow through LOOK, it is the basis of what we do. It is vital to follow the KPI's and with the 3E dashboards it is almost automatic, where the data I need to make decisions is a few clicks away.

Are you considering digitalizing further workflows and if so, which ones?

KMR: We are always searching for ways to digitalise as many workflows as possible. With the development we've done, a few of our manual positions have become obsolete within the last few years. We are continuing down this path where more and more repetitive actions are not done by humans or avoided altogether.

What benefits does the software offer you in your daily business and in collaboration with customers and suppliers?

KMR: The biggest thing is keeping all the data on one platform as much as possible. As all order related data for us is in LOOK, I think this is a relatively big thing. From this principal idea a variety of different modules become relevant with order management, paperless production, materials module, capacity planning etc. Something we haven't tapped into yet is possibly collaborating with suppliers who also have 3E capabilities for order management, article installation to the master data etc.

I: Thank you!

Reference information AS Lasita Aken

AS Lasita Aken was founded in 1989 and is the oldest manufacturer of wooden and wooden-aluminium windows in Estonia. With over three decades of experience, the specialists place great emphasis on quality and a constantly innovative approach. An automated industrial production line, managed by top specialists in their field, ensures the highest precision and consistently high quality products. AS Lasita Aken is a family-owned company with 100% Estonian capital. Find more information here: www.lasita.ee