

Framfart



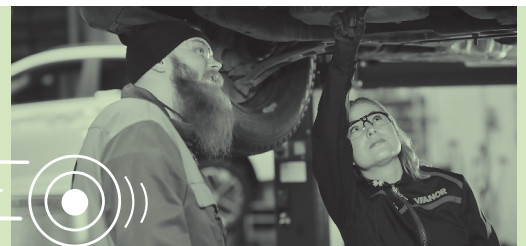
"Statistics are not just anonymous numbers"

"More women in the bus industry – a question of both fairness and survival"



"From patronized to powerful CEO"

"Better health with women in the workplace"



"It is important that men are ambassadors for gender equality"

TRANSPORTFÖRETAGEN

This is not about reversing, radically reshaping, or banning anything

text: Joakim Johansson

These are some of the “key words” that Johanna Linder, industry developer in skills supply at Transportföretagen, often uses to describe Framfart. And the work has been successful. Framfart has been praised at various prestigious events, it has received media attention and, not least, been praised by member companies.

– We will simply continue moving in the right direction and help the member companies that want to join us, continues Johanna Linder, who herself was involved in starting the initiative.

The key word for driving Framfart forward is long-term thinking. This is not a temporary initiative, but rather an ongoing effort that is finding its way into the industry in many different contexts. Caj Luoma, Director of Training and Labour market at Transportföretagen, compares it to how people talk about sustainability issues in the transport sector today.

– It is not just a change in terms of the physical environment, policy, or regulations; it is about a change in attitude. By its very nature, this requires a long-term approach.

If we simplify this initiative, it is about competitiveness, which is strengthened if we can recruit sufficient staff with the right skills.

He continues:

– When working with attitude change, the first step is knowledge acquisition, followed by dissemination. We are



Caj Luoma, Director of Training and Labour market, and Johanna Linder, Industry Developer, Transportföretagen

us in the dissemination phase. We have gathered knowledge, we have formulated what we want, and we have entered the phase where we want to spread the word and inspire others to work with this issue.

All information about Framfart is available on the Transportföretagen website, and the content is constantly being developed – most recently with a quiz where mem-

ber companies can see which parts of Framfart are relevant to them. Framfart is modular. This means that companies can choose which modules they want to work with based on where they are. This could be leadership, recruitment, or well-being, to name a few.

– The feedback from members is that they think it’s fantastic that we’re doing something. Many people I’ve spoken to have felt that they wanted to bring about change but were unsure where to start. Often, they get stuck on the question of where to begin. That’s one of the things Framfart has been good at: we shorten the starting distance, says Johanna Linder.

Johanna also encourages other companies that want to get started to get in touch:

– Just get in touch with us if this is something you want to get involved in! We also offer the opportunity to sign up for digital Framfart coaching twice a year. It’s all about getting support in the start-up phase. The whole process is also a member benefit, so it’s free of charge.



This publication has been produced within the framework of Framfart – an initiative by Transportföretagen (the Swedish Transport Association) with the aim of inspiring and engaging member companies to initiate or continue their work for greater gender equality in the transport sector. Through concrete examples from real life, the goal is to lower barriers, convey knowledge, demonstrate the benefits, and motivate concrete action – regardless of where you are in the process. With this material, Framfart wants to show that change is not only possible – it is necessary. And with the right support, all companies can be part of a brighter future.

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It is important that men are ambassadors for gender equality

text: Nicole Kling

Margareta Jensen Dickson, CPCO at Stena Lines, believes that having more women on company boards is crucial to truly increasing gender equality, as that is where the power to change lies.

– **People tend** to recruit others who resemble themselves, which means that women often have to work much harder than men to achieve the same positions, she says.

Margareta Jensen Dickson, Chief People and Communication Officer (CPCO) and part of Stena Line's group management, is not afraid to speak her mind. She has been with the company for over a decade and has fought important battles for greater diversity in shipping.

– **There is** a big difference now compared to ten years ago. Back then, diversity and inclusion were not on the agenda, but today, there is broad agreement that these are important issues.

2018 was a decisive year for the industry, when 40 major shipping companies signed a pledge during London International Shipping Week to actively seek to increase the proportion of women working in the industry globally. At that time, the figure was a mere two percent, but today it is slightly higher.

Stena Line, which operates throughout Europe and North Africa, set clear targets for its operations. CEO Niclas Mårtensson ensured, among other things, that the group management consisted of half men and half women.

– **I believe** we are the only company in the shipping industry that has done this. For me, it is very important that this is not



Margareta Jensen Dickson, Chief People and Communication Officer, Stena Line

an HR issue and that it is the men who are ambassadors for gender equality. In male-dominated industries, it must.





Unfortunately, in male-dominated industries, men often need to be the ones driving the issue forward, otherwise it won't be credible, she says, continuing:

– **Thanks to** extensive research, companies know that they become more successful and achieve better financial results with more diverse work teams.

Being a woman in a top position in a male-dominated industry is not easy. Margareta Jensen Dickson realizes that she has had to adapt to the masculine rules of the business world in terms of both dress and communication.

– **I have** developed a thicker skin, , dress in suits, and express myself more briefly and concisely. I hope that the work on inclusion will lead to more authentic leadership where you can be who you are without having to fit into a mold, says Margareta Jensen Dickson, adding:

– **If I** can make a difference for young women who choose to work in shipping by helping to make our industry a little more welcoming, I will be very happy.

Today, there is a broader understanding of the need to change the industry and make it more welcoming to more people,

not least in order to meet the demand for skilled labor. Margareta Jensen Dickson believes that Sweden has fallen behind in terms of gender equality and calls for greater political courage. She points to the UK, where the government has actively set targets for the proportion of women in senior positions in listed companies.

– **It takes** courage to bring about change. Gender balance is not just about counting numbers, but about looking at representation in different roles and at different levels, she concludes.



Stena Estelle

FACTS: Stena Line

Stena Line is a Swedish shipping company founded in 1962. Its operations include both freight and scheduled passenger services and employ around 6,200 people. The company has ports in Scandinavia, Germany, Ireland, the UK, Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania, and 40 ferries operating on 20 routes in Europe and Morocco.



Better health with women in the workplace

text: Nicole Kling

Vianor is one of the Nordic region's leading tire and car service chains, and for them, gender equality has become one of the most important issues on the agenda.

– **It is** a myth that working in a workshop is too physically demanding for women. On the contrary, they are leading the way in working both smarter and more ergonomically, which benefits the entire industry. We want all our employees to stay with us until retirement, says Viktoria Knutsson, HR Manager at Vianor.

When Viktoria Knutsson joined the company ten years ago, she was almost the only woman among all the men. Recruiting more women was considered impossible—no one was applying to work in the industry. Today, ten years later, half of the management team consists of women, and the ambition is for Vianor to become the world's most gender-equal tire chain.

– **The top** position is within reach, and it's no secret that we want it. But there is still a lot of work to be done, including obvious things such as ensuring that there are changing rooms for everyone and that work clothes...

They must be adapted to different roles and available in the right sizes, says Viktoria Knutsson, adding:

– **It is** not enough to have a theme week on gender equality and think that you are done; it must permeate the entire organization. We can change and challenge old beliefs by daring to think and do new things.

The argument that there are no girls to recruit is heard less and less often; nowadays, most people understand that it takes active effort to attract more than those who have traditionally sought employment in the industry. Vianor has benefited greatly from Framfart, which has provided concrete tools and thought-provoking tips: what language is used in job advertisements, who is featured in the pictures, and in which channels are they published? To broaden the pool of applicants, Vianor can now write that they are looking for people who enjoy customer contact, collaboration, and problem solving. The com-



Viktoria Knutsson, HR Manager, Vianor

pany's current goal is for half of those called for interviews to be women.

At a workshop a few years ago, local managers were asked to reflect on their prejudices and attitudes about who can work in the industry. The exercise, in which participants were asked to look at photos and describe what the customers looked like — and what the employees looked like — was an important wake-up call. They realised that while their customers represented a diverse mix of people, their staff did not.





– **An awkward** silence ensued, then someone pointed to a picture of a guy in work clothes who looked strong and said, "Most of the people who work for us look like that." Customers who feel reflected, seen, and heard become loyal customers, and that's better for business, says Viktoria Knutsson, clarifying that it's not just about gender, but also age, ethnicity, and functional ability.

More and more people are noticing the benefits of more diverse work teams, in terms of both a better psychosocial and physical work environment—the jargon has become softer and work-related injuries have decreased. Viktoria Knutsson believes that women, due to their generally lower muscle mass, are forced to work smarter by using the right lifting techniques and ergonomic aids.

– **It is** not sustainable to rely solely on brute force. No one, regardless of gender, will be able to work until retirement age if they work in this manner. For us as employers, it costs a lot to recruit new people all the time; we want employees who will stay with us for their entire working lives. We work hard to prevent accidents and repetitive strain injuries, because everyone wants to be able to hear their grandchildren when they are 60, and that means it is important to use hearing protection!

Victoria Knutsson points to courage, support from management, and attitude changes as crucial prerequisites for successful gender equality work. She also emphasizes the need to continuously challenge both internal and external players in the industry to achieve long-term development.

– **I remember** a man who said that he sees a risk in more women entering this industry, because they might be better than the men. As long as the work group consists only of men, there is no threat to masculinity. I think it was very insightful and courageous of him to dare to admit that, says Viktoria Knutsson, concluding:

– **By hiring** people from different backgrounds, you gain more perspectives on things, and that way we can overcome challenges in more ways than if we all think the same way.

FACTS: Vianor AB

Vianor was founded in 1987 and is part of the Nokian Tyres Group. The company employs approximately 1,400 people and has 174 of its own workshops and a broad partner network in Sweden, Norway, and Finland. Its operations include both tire and car services.



Women behind the wheel driving change

text: Nicole Kling



Clara Sanchez Lopez, Policy Advisor, IRU

The road transport sector plays a vital role in society globally – but is still heavily male-dominated. As part of the international Women Driving Change initiative, IRU policy advisors are working to change this by promoting gender equality in legislation, culture, and practice around the world.

The road transport sector plays a crucial role in the global machinery that keeps our societies running – but far from everyone has the same opportunity to be part of it. Women are severely underrepresented, not only behind the wheel but at all levels. The International Road Transport Union (IRU) is based in Geneva, where policy advisor Clara Sanchez Lopez is working to make road transport an accessible and attractive career choice for more people.

– If we want society to flourish, both women and men must be represented—including in the road transport sector. Today, the industry lags far behind in terms of gender equality, but with increased diversity, we can bring new perspectives, skills, and ways of working that will help the entire industry develop, she says.

For the past two years, Clara Sanchez Lopez has been working to influence international regulations and improve conditions for drivers – a mission that has gradually gained greater focus on gender equality. In January 2024, the IRU launched the Women Driving Change initiative, with the aim of making gender equality a natural part of the organization's global work. The report published in connection with the launch identified several barriers to women entering the road transport sector. Clara Sanchez Lopez highlights two of these as particularly important: legal and social barriers.

– Although the EU no longer has formal laws preventing women from driving heavy goods vehicles, there are still countries where this is a reality—or where legislation indirectly limits women's opportunities, for example by prohibiting them from transporting dangerous goods, she explains, continuing:

In addition, the sector is strongly characterized by gender stereotypes and persistent notions that road transport professions are "male professions." The working environment in the road transport sector is often designed according to male norms, which means that women's needs are invi-

sible. The lack of, for example, adapted lack of toilets and safety measures during night work effectively exclude women from the industry.

To address the growing skills shortage in the road transport sector, a broader recruitment base is needed. Including more women is not just a gender equality issue – it is a strategic necessity to secure the future of the industry. Clara Sanchez Lopez highlights the Swedish initiative Framfart as a role model.

– Real change is created by giving companies concrete tips on how they can become more inclusive. These are exactly the kind of down-to-earth, concrete, and practical solutions we need more of, she says, noting that Framfart is now being translated into English so that it can be distributed internationally.

When asked what her dream scenario looks like, Clara Sanchez Lopez has a clear picture in mind:

– That women don't need a special place – because that place already exists. The goal is, of course, for women to feel that road transport is a realistic career choice, with good conditions and respect.

This is the IRU

Name: International Road Transport Union (IRU). **Founded:** 1948.

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland. **Offices:** Also in Brussels, Beijing, Washington D.C., Moscow, and Istanbul.

Activities: IRU is the global road transport organization representing companies and associations in the freight transport, bus transport, taxi, and logistics sectors. The organization works to influence international legislation, promote sustainable and

safe mobility, and support its members in matters relating to industry development, training, and innovation.

Role in gender equality issues: Through initiatives such as Women Driving Change, IRU works to increase women's participation in the transport sector globally, with a focus on identifying and removing legal, cultural, and structural barriers.

Slogan: Drivers are our heroes

The supply of skills drives the need for gender equality

text: Nicole Kling

In order to meet the demand for skilled labor and remain internationally competitive and innovative, Swedish companies must tap into the full potential of the labor market – regardless of gender.

Sweden is at the forefront of gender equality work internationally, particularly with regard to women's employment and representation in management roles and on boards. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the proportion of women on stock exchange boards has increased sixfold and the gender pay gap has almost halved. In her role as gender equality expert at the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, Isabelle Galte Schermer sees that companies are generally positive about gender equality. However, she believes that one problem is our understanding of the actual development is outdated.

– If the prevailing perception is that gender equality is declining and that the measures being taken are having no effect, it becomes difficult to justify continuing the work on gender equality. It is also important to have a common understanding of what we need to focus on in order to fur-

ther increase gender equality, so that we do not devote resources to problems that have already been solved, she says, adding:

– It is crucial to understand what drives development if you want to have a positive impact, not least by asking yourself what has worked so far and what you want to achieve in the future. Companies want equality; they want competence.

One area where developments are moving in the wrong direction is women's entrepreneurship. The entrepreneurship gap between women and men is growing in Sweden compared to the rest of Northern Europe. Isabelle Galte Schermer sees this as one of the most important gender equality issues in the business world.

Not taking advantage of women's ideas means missing out on the innovative power of half the population. It is important from both a socio-economic and a business perspective to have a gender-equal labor market where everyone can reach their full potential. For the business community, it is quite simply, the search for talent is what drives the need for gender equality: all companies need to have the right person in the right place, regardless of gender.

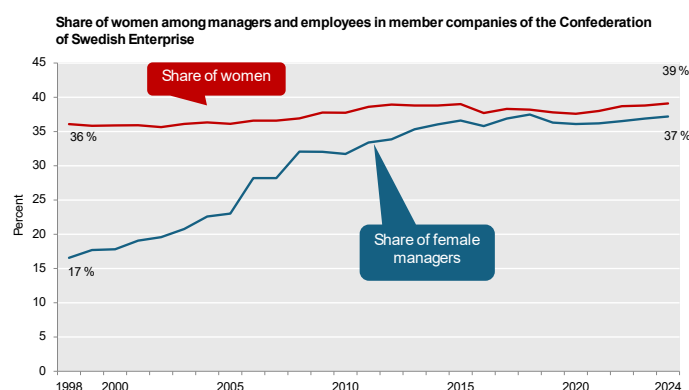


Isabelle Galte Schermer, Gender Equality Expert at the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise

Isabelle Galte Schermer about Framfart

“I think Framfart is a hugely inspiring initiative that shows it is possible to promote gender equality in a concrete and engaging way. The concept listens to what members need and how companies want to work with the issue, and provides them with concrete and clear tools that work and are easy to start using. The transport sector is still male-dominated, and Framfart really gives momentum to gender equality work, and what they are achieving is impressive to say the least.”

“We need to ensure that women and men train for professions that are in demand in the labor market and that we have less stereotypical educational choices. The goal is to make it feel natural for a girl to choose vehicles or transportation in high school.”



FACTS: The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise brings together 60,000 companies and 49 industry and employer organizations. It represents the business community in Sweden by influencing laws and regulations, spreading knowledge, and providing information.

More women in the bus industry – a question of both fairness and survival

text: Nicole Kling



As the skills shortage becomes increasingly acute, there is also a growing awareness of the importance of gender equality in the bus industry – not only as a value, but as a prerequisite for survival. Two experienced industry representatives – Sara Borg and Tomas Byberg – talk about how they are working to encourage more women to choose, enjoy, and stay in the profession.

Despite high ambitions, the gender distribution among bus drivers in Sweden has not changed significantly. Sara Borg has worked in the industry for 16 years and is responsible for skills provision as administrative manager at Byberg & Nordin. To attract more women, Sara Borg and her colleagues have arranged special information meetings—by women, for women. Together with training providers, the Swedish Public Employment Service, and other bus companies, they invite women with a B driver's license to talk about the profession and dispel prejudices.

– **Several of** the participants have worked in healthcare or home care and want to continue in a service profession, but under better conditions. A large proportion of the women who enter the industry do so through retraining later in life, which gives them a shorter professional career, says Sara Borg, adding:

– **Nevertheless**, employee surveys show that women generally enjoy their work more than men in this profession. This indicates that we are doing the right things. Women feel welcome, and it is important that we highlight this.

Tomas Byberg, CEO of Byberg & Nordin and chairman of the board of Sveriges Buss-företag (Swedish Bus Companies), reflects on why women's represen-

tation in the bus industry has not increased at the rate hoped for. He points out how the profession previously imposed physical requirements that excluded many people, but that today's modern vehicles have evened out those conditions.

– **In the** 1970s and 80s, the bus industry was completely different. Back then, before power steering existed, it was quite physically demanding work that required a lot of strength just to turn the wheel and handle a manual and extremely heavy gearbox, notes Tomas Byberg, adding:

– **We have** lost time and should have come further, but it is not too late to start now.



Tomas Byberg, CEO, Byberg & Nordin

Attracting women to the profession is only half the battle—getting them to stay is just as important. That's why the organization works purposefully with what Sara Borg calls hygiene factors: work environment, leadership, and the opportunity to combine work with family life.

– **We try** to work with individual schedules so that people can be parents of young children, hockey parents, or have other commitments on the side, she says.

Tomas Byberg has been part of the Framfart reference group since its inception and emphasizes the importance of sharing experiences in order to find new ways forward. Unlike some other industries in the transport sector, Tomas believes that there is no widespread macho jargon in the bus industry; most people agree that the bus profession is for everyone, and striving for equality is not controversial. To attract more people to the industry, regardless of gender, Tomas emphasizes the importance of creating pleasant break rooms and social areas—something that affects both the work environment and gender equality.

– **The atmosphere** in the break room changes noticeably when it becomes more diverse. It improves both the dynamics and the corporate culture.

A major challenge is that there are almost no high school programs for prospective bus drivers. While other transportation professions, such as truck drivers and machine operators, can begin their careers after elementary school, the bus driving profession is, in practice, a retraining profession.

– **This means** that we are always one step behind. We are dependent on adults choosing to change careers in the middle of their lives, says Sara Borg.

In addition, the driving licence age is an obstacle. Today, you can only get a bus licence at the age of 24 without going through upper secondary school or upper secondary adult education.

– **This slows** down the influx, especially of young women, says Tomas Byberg.

Despite the challenges, there is a palpable sense of optimism about the future. The shortage of drivers is acute and creates a strong incentive to broaden recruitment, which has led industry organizations, bus companies, and educational institutions to Organizers are increasingly joining forces.



*Sara Borg, Administrative Manager,
Byberg & Nordin*

– **Ten years** ago, gender equality projects were a one-off initiative, but today they are part of our long-term work, says Sara Borg.

The dream scenario? Within ten years, they hope to see 40 percent of drivers being women.

– **It is** absolutely possible, but only if we work actively and showcase all the good examples we actually have, concludes Tomas Byberg.



FACTS: Byberg & Nordin Busstrafik AB

Byberg & Nordin was founded in 1927 and is one of Sweden's largest privately owned bus companies. The company has nearly 600 employees and a fleet of over 300 vehicles. Its operations include everything from regular bus services and school transport to express bus services, charter trips, taxis and transport services for the disabled, as well as travel arrangements in Sweden, the Nordic region and Europe.



From patronized to powerful CEO

text: Nicole Kling

When Madelené Hjelm founded IB Transport Mälardalen AB in 2002 she met with so much resistance that her husband had to take over as CEO. It was only three years ago that she finally formally took over the role that she had been performing in practice all along. "The time was ripe, and things are getting better every day," she says.

Madelené Hjelm has an unshakeable belief that change is possible. She is not only proof that women belong in the transport sector – she is one of those who has actively changed the rules of the game.

– **When I** started the company in 2002, it was basically impossible for me to be taken seriously in the industry. I called around to offer our transport services and heard things like, "Little lady, you can't do this, give it up," and "The transport indu-

stry isn't for girls," says Madelené Hjelm.

The harsh response meant that her husband had to take over as CEO—but Madelené ran the business behind the scenes. Strategic planning and corporate culture have always been based on the conviction that gender equality is the only way forward.

– **It's not** about filling a quota, but about finding competent and committed people. For us, gender equality means looking at function and willingness – not gender, Madelené Hjelm asserts.

IB Transport Mälardalen is now a genuine family business, where both children work alongside Madelene and her husband. Although developments are moving in the right direction, her daughter, who is a traffic manager, has also encountered obstacles in her work. To test how the response might differ, she and a male colleague sent identical messages to colleagues – and the results spoke for themselves.



Madelené Hjelm, CEO, IB Transport Mälardalen

– **He received** immediate and helpful responses, while she was questioned or ignored. It hurts my mother's heart, but at the same time, I see how she grows from standing her ground, says Madelené Hjelm, continuing:

– **We have** also had employees who refused to take orders from a woman. In such



Hampus, Nathalie, Arnt and Madelené Hjelm, IB Transport Mälardalen



cases, we have had to talk to them, try to find a solution – and sometimes part ways. It's unfortunate, but necessary.

Madelené believes that gender equality efforts could take a big step forward if more women were represented on the industry's boards and decision-making forums. She believes that change does not only happen on the floor or in the truck – it happens to a large extent in the rooms where strategic decisions are made. But progress is undeniably being made, and more and more women are participating in industry meetings and training courses.

– **Just ten** years ago, there were perhaps five women at a meeting with a hundred haulage company representatives; today, there can be as many as twenty. That makes a difference, she says.

The pandemic was a turning point for the transport sector, not least in terms of the general public's perception of the industry's importance.

Madelené Hjelm describes how IB Transport Mälardalen faced major changes in both consumer behavior and business conditions during the COVID era. With a sharp increase in e-commerce and uncertain access to goods, the focus shifted from "free shipping" to the value of the transport itself.

– **Suddenly, society** understood how crucial our function is. Previously, it was difficult to even charge for shipping, but during the pandemic, access to delivery became more important than price, says Madelené Hjelm.

IB Transport Mälardalen seized the opportunity to raise the status of the profession and has since continued to work closely with schools, industry organizations, and educational institutions to secure the skills of the future. Madelené

Hjelm is convinced that the transport industry has a bright future—if it dares to continue changing.

– **It's getting** better and better, I notice it every day. We have a different tone, a different climate, and more women in schools, management, and on the floor. It's no longer a lonely struggle; now there are many of us.

When Madelené Hjelm is asked about her dream scenario, the answer is clear:

–**That we don't** talk about gender at all. That it's obvious that you can be exactly who you are and work with what you enjoy. Because when people are allowed to be themselves, that's when they are at their best.

FACTS: IB Transport Mälardalen AB

IB Transport Mälardalen AB was founded in 2002 and is a family-owned transport company based in Mälardalen. The company has around 60 employees and offers transport, courier, and logistics services throughout Europe.



Statistics are not just anonymous numbers

text: Nicole Kling

A good social working environment means that employees are happy and sick leave is reduced. At Börjessons Bil, the company is reaping the rewards of its gender equality work in the form of satisfied employees.

– **We are** committed to having an inclusive work environment where people feel safe and dare to speak up if something doesn't feel right, says Virpi Gullstén, HR manager for the group.

For Virpi Gullstén, the work as HR Manager for the group, is responsible for ensuring an organizationally and socially sustainable working environment within the various companies. Gender equality is a cornerstone of this work and must permeate the entire business, she believes.

– **Framfart has** been incredibly helpful in clarifying what gender equality truly involves. It's not just about gender balance—it's also about norms, attitudes, and workplace language. Framfart has many educational examples that make our work on these issues more concrete, says Virpi Gullstén.

Börjessons Bil has seven facilities in southern Sweden and is part of a group that also includes Börjessons Lastbilar, Börjessons ATV, and Däckcentrum. The business consists of sales, service, and repairs—historically male-dominated professions, notes Peter Gudmundsson, service marketing manager for Börjessons Bil in Ängelholm.

When Peter reflects on developments in gender equality issues, he sees that a lot has happened in the 28 years he has been working in the industry.



*Virpi Gullstén, HR Manager, and Peter Gudmundsson, Service Marketing Manager, Börjessons Bil.
Photo: Johannes Wallin*

– **A lot** has happened in the area of gender equality since the early 2000s, but we still have a long way to go before we achieve our goal, as gender equality work today has a slightly different focus than when we started our journey.

When Virpi reflects on her eight years at the company, it becomes clear that her goal has always been to focus on how employees treat each other, regardless of their role.

– **Inclusive norms** that contribute to improving attitudes and jargon make us all feel better during our working days, she asserts.

In order to examine the work environment, which is part of systematic work environment efforts, Virpi Gullstén intro-

duced employee surveys several years ago at the entire group. This allows managers to learn about their employees' experiences and work together to improve areas that are not satisfactory. Statistics are not just anonymous numbers, but represent employees' experiences, she emphasizes.

– **A structured** approach has made it easier to identify key issues in different contexts. It's about working with personnel issues in depth, such as really listening to someone who has been on sick leave, says Virpi Gullstén.

When asked why gender equality is important for the transport sector, Virpi and Peter agree on the answer: because it increases job satisfaction. A more diverse workforce contributes to a better atmosphere with more mutual respect. Since Börjessons Bil began its in-depth work on gender equality almost two years ago, job satisfaction has improved, sick leave has fallen, and more women have applied to the company.

– **It is** extremely important that employees are involved in gender equality work and learn what the concept actually means. More and more people are realizing the benefits of inclusion, and it is absolutely essential if we are to meet our skills needs, concludes Virpi Gullstén.

FACTS: Börjessons Bil AB

Börjessons was founded in 1955 and the group includes Börjessons Bil, Börjessons Lastbilar, Börjessons ATV, and Däckcentrum. In total, the group employs around 470 people and its operations include sales, service, and repairs. Börjessons Bil has facilities in Alingsås, Helsingborg, Karlshamn, Karlskrona, Ronneby, Ängelholm, and Klippan.

Chronicle by Anders Rydheimer:

Gender equality is not just a matter of fairness

It is strange, really. That we, in an industry that is undergoing one of its most radical transformations ever, are still lagging behind when it comes to such a fundamental issue as gender equality.

We are seeing electrification, digitalisation, new business models and changing customer behaviour reshaping the entire playing field.

But despite the rapid development of technology and business, efforts to create true diversity and inclusion are lagging behind.

When I first became interested in the issue, it wasn't primarily for ideological reasons. It was for business reasons. I clearly saw how our customers were changing, how their expectations were growing – and how the next generation of employees was beginning to make demands that were completely different from before. Demands for flexibility. For clear values. For the opportunity to contribute to society.

At the same time, I saw that the customer base was changing. Today, around 30 percent of all privately owned passenger cars in Sweden registered to women, and

We know that women are increasingly involved in the decision-making process, even for many of the cars registered to men – which makes it even more important for the industry to reflect the reality in which we operate.

And so we arrived at the figures: 9 percent women in the automotive industry. Nine. Because how can we talk about skills supply, innovation, and growth – while excluding half the population from truly being part of the development?

For several summers, we have gathered in Båstad during the Nordea Open women's tennis tournament for discussions between industry leaders and other initiators with the aim of turning gender equality from a vision into reality. Five areas of focus emerged: broadening recruitment, building an inclusive culture, enabling work-life balance, challenging prejudices and, not least, measuring progress.

There are no more excuses.

Various studies point to the same clear pattern: companies that invest in gender equality perform better. They are more profitable, more innovative, more sustainable, and find it eas-



Anders Rydheimer, Business Development and Communications Director, Bilia

ier to attract and retain talent. These are not assumptions—they are recurring results.

There is no "but" after that. We can no longer say that "there are no female applicants" or that "this is how the industry is." This is our industry. And we are the ones responsible for shaping it.

Much of this has to do with how we view competence. If we repeatedly seek out the same background and the same experience, we will also get the same results. But the challenges of the future require new perspectives.

Sure, things look promising at the top – 40 percent of our group management team are women. But we still have zero female CEOs, and there are too few women in day-to-day operations. When some leave, it often becomes too lonely for those who remain. And then it is easy for more to leave. If we are to suc-

ceed, we must build community and security – not only at management level, but in every work group. Some departments are more challenging than others to change, so such as engineering, as fewer women choose this field, but let's start where we can.

Let's drive a cultural shift.

We are in the midst of a technological shift – let us simultaneously drive a cultural shift. A shift where equality is not seen as a soft issue on the sidelines of business – but as a prerequisite for success.

FACTS: Bilia AB

Bilia is one of Europe's largest full-service providers for everything related to car ownership, with a leading position in the service and sale of passenger cars, commercial vehicles, and trucks. Bilia offers car owners service and repairs, drive parts, car washing, rental cars, tires and wheels, wheel refurbishment, car accessories, car care, painting, glass replacement, car dismantling, and more. Bilia has approximately 180 facilities in Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, and Belgium, as well as an auction site in Sweden.

Framfart

Framfart is a strategic initiative aimed at increasing gender equality in the transport industry.

It is not about tearing everything down and starting over, but about helping companies take steps in the right direction: towards inclusive, attractive, and sustainable workplaces.

Equal companies are not only fairer – they also have lower sick leave, greater job satisfaction, better conditions for retaining skills and often higher profitability.

Creating gender-equal workplaces requires courage, determination, and perseverance. It is a process of change that must be initiated by management and involve the entire organization.

With Framfar's support, it is possible to take concrete steps – towards a transport industry where there is room for everyone and where differences become a strength.



Transportföretagen - the Swedish Confederation of Transport Enterprises
– the transport industry's trade and employer organisation
which brings together around 9,000 member companies with 200,000 employees

Box 5384, 102 49 Stockholm
Visiting address Storgatan 19

Tel 08 762 71 00
E-mail kompetens@transportforetagen.se
Website transportforetagen.se

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