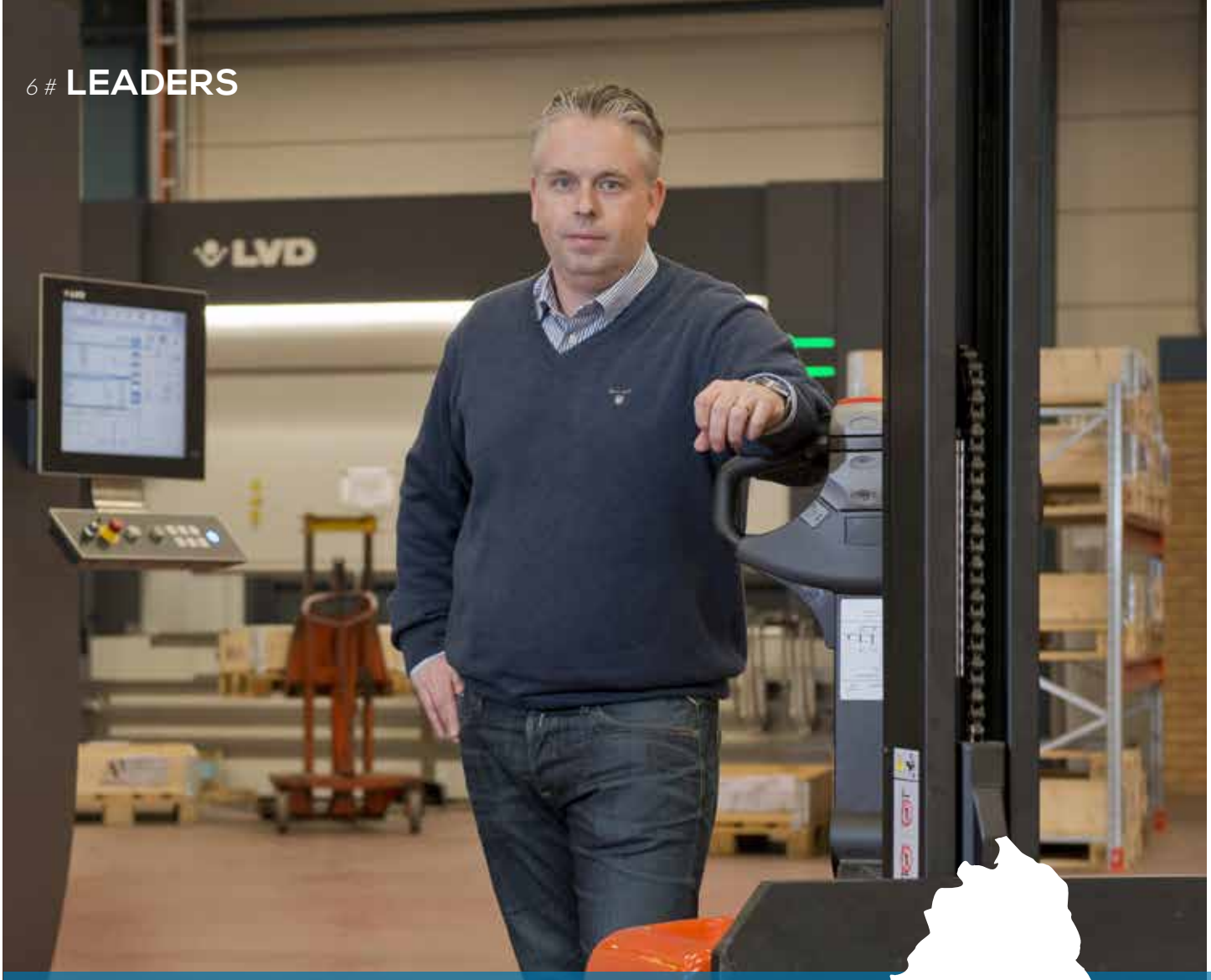



ANDRÉNVERKEN - SWEDEN

# KEEPING IT LOCAL

**Based in the small Swedish town of Smålandsstenar, sheetmetal and pressworking subcontractor Andrénverken knows what works best to stay competitive and win business in a high-cost economy.**

As Managing Director Johan Bredenfeldt explains, keeping it local is a good strategy.

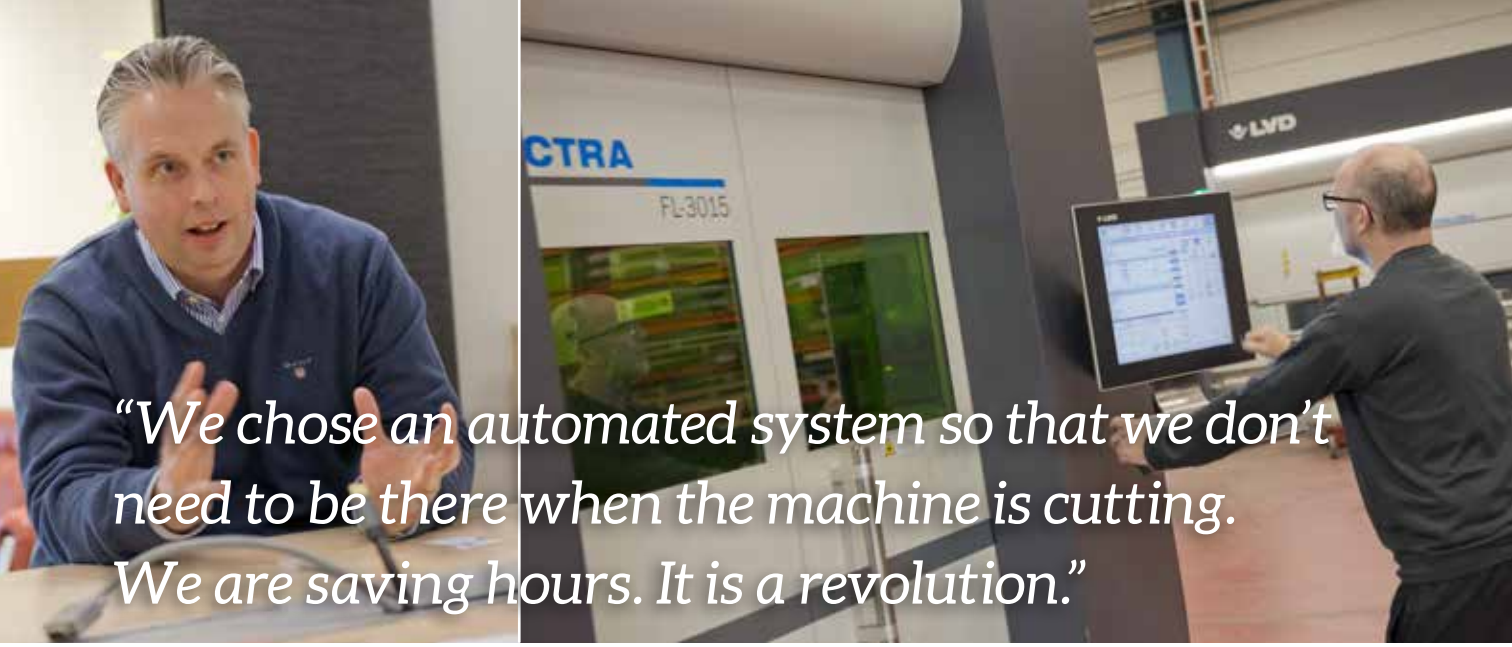
"We only work with Swedish customers and that is deliberate. Our biggest customers have a policy that they only work with the contractors that are around them. It gives short communication chains and fast response times."

Local is relative though, Sweden is a big country, and it is as far to Andrénverken's customer Luleå Generatorservice as it is to Milan – and it takes two days by truck to deliver parts.

Another customer is Skeppshuts Guteri, which makes cast iron cookware just a few kilometres away. Its Production Manager Erik van Dijk puts the benefits of thinking local in a nutshell: "Long distances and different cultures can cost more than it says on the price tag."

Andrénverken's biggest customer though is industrial lift truck manufacturer Toyota Materials Handling. And if the volumes aren't the same as for Toyota's automotive business, 10,000 parts a year rather than hundreds of thousands, then the expectations and quality demands certainly are.

Says Johan Bredenfeldt: "Just in this area we have 200 competitors, the same size as we are and doing the same things as we are doing. It's not easy. But all of us have one big customer – in our case Toyota.




*"We chose an automated system so that we don't need to be there when the machine is cutting. We are saving hours. It is a revolution."*

"It is hard to have more than one big customer because they tell us how they want us to work – we can't tell them. And if you have two big customers it's going to be very complicated because they will want different things."

He says that working the Toyota way means a focus on Kaizen – continuous improvement. Daily shop floor meetings focus on identifying ways to do things better, reducing waste and minimising costs that do not add value.

"When you are supplying a large company like Toyota, delivering kits of parts to the production line on a just-in-time basis, you can't afford to get things wrong.

"If we fail to deliver on time they have a big problem – and we have a bigger problem. We can't risk getting into the situation where they are missing parts for assembly."

Mr Bredenfeldt joined Andrénverken three years ago and his mission is to double the company's turnover.

As well as getting out into the market to win new customers, he has also instigated investment in new production systems to increase its capacity and production efficiency. These include an LVD *ToolCell* automated tool changing bending system with automated tool setup and *CADMAN®* programming software and a *4 kW LVD Electra FL 3015* fiber laser with a *Compact Tower*, an automated load/unload system with a 6-pallet material storage, which complement an existing *Axel* $CO_2$ laser system.

Mr Bredenfeldt says: "We bought the *Electra* because it is designed to cut thin metal very quickly and 95% of what we cut is thin material. With the Electra we can cut sheet up to 5 mm thick at twice the speed as we could before, so we are more competitive – and we are winning more business because of this."

He adds: "We chose an automated system so that we don't need to be there when the machine is cutting. We can leave it unmanned and leave it overnight, so it is very cost-efficient. We can put at least a shift's worth of work in the tower. The driver for this is that wage costs here are high, so we want to have as few people as possible running the machines.

*"CADMAN software means we are now processing work in a completely different way."*

"It is also difficult for us to find skilled employees with the right training. Smålandsstenar is just a small town and the young people don't want to stay here. They want to live in the big cities like Gothenburg."

This makes it even more important for Andrénverken to exploit technology to the full – and integrated programming using LVD's *CADMAN*® software suite has made a big difference.

"The new laser made us more competitive, but it didn't really change the way we worked," says Mr Bredenfeldt. "But the *CADMAN* software means we are now processing work in a completely different way. The software automatically creates the program, tool setup and bend sequence for us from the 3D CAD model."

Taking the technology to the next level, Andrénverken chose to combine integrated programming with the automated tool changing capability of the *ToolCell*.

"It was the same thinking as for the software. On small-volume series we are much more efficient and we can handle the work in a completely different way.

"In the past it took from 30 minutes to an hour to change the tooling. Now it takes maybe five minutes and you get the program directly from the database. So compared to programming on the machine and changing tools manually we are saving hours. It is a revolution."

*"When you are supplying a large company like Toyota, delivering kits of parts to the production line on a just-in-time basis, you can't afford to get things wrong."*

## *Profile*

**Company:** Andrénverken

**Website:** www.andrenverken.se

**Since:** 1923

**Works with:** steel, 95 % thin metal

**Industry:** Sheet metal and press working subcontractor to world-leading industrial companies, including lift truck manufacturer Toyota Materials Handling

**Equipped with:**

- 4 kW *Electra FL 3015* fiber laser machine with a *Compact Tower* (CT-L), an automated load/unload system with a 6-pallet material storage
- *ToolCell* automated tool changing press brake
- *Axel* $CO_2$ laser cutting system

**Software:** *CADMAN*®*-L*, *TOUCH-L* control