



VILPE®

1975
2020

45 *Anniversary
Publication*

Greetings from the President of the Finnish Roofing Association Mikko Törvi

VILPE's birth is directly from the entrepreneur's handbook: you spot a problem and come up with a solution. You offer the solution to others, too, creating a new line of business in the process. Gradually VILPE's product range grew and expanded beyond building services. This trajectory, which started from fasteners 45 years earlier, culminated in the VILPE Sense smart roof system in June 2021.

Smart roofs have been a hot topic over the years. While companies have collected various data and deployed humidity alarms, making use of the information has often been difficult. Humidity measurements have often been based on various types of sheet sensors that do not react until they get wet. Depending on the roof ceiling joists, their usefulness is debatable. When a sensor's alarm goes off, you can detect the water dripping from the roof using your senses, too.

VILPE Sense is the first solution to offer property owners a carefully thought-out and tailored package that contains all the necessary components and automation. I can well imagine that the VILPE Sense system will soon start appearing in the structural plans of new projects. I consider it the biggest leap in the R&D of low slope roofs since elastomer bitumen sheets.

The trajectory from wall fasteners to VILPE Sense is a good example of what it takes to maintain the growth of a successful business. You need more than one innovation. Without R&D, your competitors will overtake you before you even notice. You must always be able to spot a new problem and come up with a solution around which you can then set up a new line of business.

What is particularly great about VILPE's story is that the company is still privately owned. This has an

important role, especially regionally. A thriving company generates wealth around it in many ways. When a company thrives, the biggest winner is always society.

This is why municipalities and the government should participate in removing unnecessary barriers to successful companies. Industrial production should be profitable in Finland, too. The road and rail network must be well maintained to allow the transport of goods. The sales team must be able to get to the world from the region's own airport. Information must move securely in a split second. Businesses need skilled employees. The government should facilitate labour migration urgently.

As a long-term member of the Finnish Roofing Association, VILPE has actively participated in the association's activities.

This says a lot about the company's values and the ambition

of its management. VILPE is ready to use its own resources to develop the entire roofing industry. This work is extremely valuable and requires commitment and sacrifices from both the company and its employees. All "voluntary work" carried out in the Finnish Roofing Association is done in spare time. The only reward is the good feeling you get after finishing a project and seeing that the roofing industry has once again taken a small step forward. We thank VILPE and all its employees for their participation in the activities of the Finnish Roofing Association.

Congratulations, VILPE!

Mikko Törvi
President of the Finnish Roofing Association

"What is particularly great about VILPE's story is that the company is still privately owned. This has an important role, especially regionally."



Photo: Mikko Törvi

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The world is changing, but our eyes are firmly set on the future

Tuomas Saikkonen, CEO of VILPE, started to work on a new strategy right before the coronavirus pandemic broke out in Finland. Despite rapid changes, he firmly believes in future growth.

It is January 2020. This is VILPE's 45th anniversary year, which starts by passing the company on from father to son. **Tuomas Saikkonen**, the newly appointed CEO, starts by working on the company's new strategy together with the Board of Directors and the Management Team. Only a couple of months later, however, the world changes like never before.

"We couldn't have chosen a better time for our new strategy. We were able to see how radical a change can really be," says Saikkonen.

The strategy process itself has also undergone a major change. Previously, the strategy was prepared for five years at a time, and it remained fairly unchanged. The new strategy does not stand still: while the framework remains the same, the strategy is constantly being reviewed and developed.

"We started by thinking about the future of the business environment through megatrends. Fairly quickly, we formed the idea that a growing number of buildings will be smart," says Saikkonen, describing the background of the new strategy.

The first main goals of the strategy extend to 2025. By then, VILPE aims to be a 30-million-euro organisation and the most ecological and attractive partner in the sector, a company that has taken a growth leap through innovation.

At the forefront of changes

New IoT solutions are at the core of VILPE's innovation activities. The

goal for 2025 is that the IoT product segment covers ten per cent of the company's revenue. VILPE Sense is the first leap towards a smart world, and it most certainly will not be the last.

"We are developing new smart products that are based on the same ecosystem as Sense. This will definitely be our leading concept during the next few years," says Saikkonen.

One of the cornerstones of VILPE's business activities is eco-friendliness, in which the company has made considerable investments over the years. For example, geothermal heating has replaced oil at the plant, reducing the building's annual carbon dioxide emissions by 330 tonnes. What is more, 93 per cent of all polypropylene processed at the plant can be used directly in end products, and more than six per cent is recycled at the plant.

"In the future, we need to be able to show not only the environment impact of our plant, but also that of our individual products. If we are unable to do this, we cannot compete equally with other manufacturers in Europe," says Saikkonen.

According to him, eco-friendliness is something the entire business world will work hard to improve in the next few years. This is where VILPE aims to be at the forefront of change.

Power in cooperation

Above all, people are an important part of an organisation. Saikkonen is delighted that employees have had

long careers at VILPE, dating almost back to the birth of the company. It is also important to find new employees, especially now that the company's products require even more diverse expertise.

"The Vaasa region is known for a energy cluster, which means that the people here are extremely skilled – and competition for them is fierce. This is a challenge we need to tackle to have the best people in our organisation. Developing and leading our employees is enormously important," says Saikkonen.

As the building sector is changing, solid expertise will increasingly also be required outside the company. VILPE's goal is to expand its cooperation networks to lead the sector forward, together with others.

There has also been power in cooperation during the coronavirus pandemic. Saikkonen is grateful that all employees have pulled together, even though it has not always been easy.

Despite all the fluctuations, the CEO has set his eyes firmly on mid-term and long-term goals. There is faith in future growth. According to Saikkonen, the building sector has even stayed surprisingly strong during the pandemic.

"We need to reconsider what the megatrends are, as some of them will only get stronger during this change. In the Finnish building sector, it has been said that the pandemic has boosted a five-year digital leap, which sounds pretty good to us," he says.

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"Our team has expertise in construction, electrical engineering, HVAC, technical production, mould making and plastics."

Many fields combine their know-how in R&D

One of the cornerstones of VILPE's success is its innovative research and development (R&D) department which the company has invested in throughout its 45-year history. Research and Development Director Veli-Pekka Lahti sees that R&D is aiming to take the construction industry forward in cooperation with customers.

Veli-Pekka Lahti has more than 10 years of experience with R&D at VILPE. He says that while R&D has changed significantly over the years, coming up with new ideas remains at its core. However, the activities around brainstorming have changed.

"Our operation has become more systematic and has been continuously developed. We have implemented various systems, such as quality control and enterprise resource planning systems. The role of strategic thinking is constantly increasing, and the company has involved other departments more closely with R&D. I think we have taken steps in the right direction, and many areas have certainly reached completion", Lahti describes the change.

12 professionals from various fields

VILPE has fostered the R&D mindset since it was founded in 1975. R&D operations began on the basis of practical experience when the company wanted to replace existing products with better solutions. VILPE's first products included fasteners, flange gaskets and underpressure air vents for flat roofs.

In 1984, R&D gained new impetus when the company's factory was completed and VILPE started its

own production. Over the years, the company's product range has expanded from flat roofs to steep roofs and walls.

The R&D team has grown, too. From the early 1990s to the early 2000s, the company had only two people developing new solutions. Currently, there are 12 professionals from various fields working full time in R&D.

"The challenge is that we operate in construction, waterproofing, roof and wall structures and the HVAC industry – all these require different types of know-how. The aims and challenges of our products vary tremendously, too. This is why we try to find as much know-how as possible: our team has expertise in construction, electrical engineering, HVAC, technical production, mould making and plastics. We are one of the few companies that can combine all of these. We have a great, inventive crowd", Veli-Pekka Lahti comments.

Customer needs at the core

VILPE's R&D is based on the idea of solving a challenge or problem faced by the end-user with a new product. Therefore, cooperation with customers is paramount to ensure that the products correspond to what was requested. R&D also calls for

extensive know-how from customers.

"Sometimes R&D involves detecting a shortcoming in the market or a risk in a building. This is when we develop a totally new product. An example of this is VILPE Sense, which has been an extremely interesting and educational project", Veli-Pekka Lahti says.

Over the years, VILPE has introduced several new solutions and improved its existing products. Lahti recalls VILPE FLOW in particular. Its production involved adopting new kinds of tools and manufacturing methods. He has also found various customer projects interesting: one joint effort with a customer was the VILPE Scoop exhaust vent, which was developed for the market in Central Europe.

According to Lahti, R&D will concentrate more and more on smart solutions and, for example, wall products. A particular area of focus will be developing R&D itself. Lahti also wants to solve challenges by even closer cooperation with customers.

"Customer projects are extremely satisfying and rewarding. They benefit everyone, with both the customer and us getting something out of it. This way we can take the industry forward together", Veli-Pekka Lahti says.

Versatile solutions

VILPE Sense

VILPE Sense measures the relative humidity and temperature of structures, e.g., in roof structures or base floors, which allows possible damage or leakage to be detected as soon as it occurs. The faster hidden damage is detected, the easier and cheaper it will be to repair.

In addition, the system reacts to increases in humidity by increasing the ventilation in structures or insulation layers. When moisture is quickly removed from structures, additional damage is avoided.

The solution consists of VILPE's roof fan with an EC motor, combined with a control unit and two or more sensors.



VILPE FLOW 315–630S

One of the most important technical qualities of the VILPE 315-630S FLOW exhaust vents is their low pressure loss. A ready-made pass-through is also available for VILPE FLOW 316–630S exhaust vent, which will save you time and effort. The exhaust vents are made of light and durable polyethylene.



Roof drains

Roof drains made of acid-resistant steel have completed the VILPE roof drain selection. We have designed and tested the steel roof drains in accordance with the SFS EN 1253-2 standard.

The sizes of the roof drains are 75, 90, 110 or 160 mm, and different lengths are available for them, starting from 350 mm. Steel roof drains are suitable for all gently sloping roofs. The products can also replace old roof drains, making them an excellent choice for renovation sites.



VILPE Wive

The VILPE Wive intake vent brings fresh outdoor air into the building. The vent is designed to prevent uncomfortable drafts as the air flow is directed upwards, where the fresh outside air mixes with the warm indoor air. This keeps the room temperature at an ideal level without the sense of a draft.

The appearance of the white intake vent can be easily modified to fit the style of the project and the customer. The VILPE Wive can be wallpapered or painted to match the interior of a room.

The intake vent is installed in a wall or as a window vent.



VILPE IO

VILPE IO is an exterior wall-mounted product that combines intake air and exhaust air vents into a single, state-of-the-art package. The product allows the builder to conveniently direct both intake and exhaust air through the exterior wall. A reduction piece allows adjustment of the air flow, which makes the product suitable for apartments of different sizes.

In addition, thanks to the ambidextrous design of the product, the same unit can be used with both left- and right-sided intake and exhaust air solutions.

Croco fasteners

Starting 2021, all green Croco fasteners can be attached using either an adjustable screw, standard screws or concrete nails.

Originally, the green Croco fasteners were not adjustable and therefore the fastener selection included a separate, black VILPE Croco Adjustable fastener. As the green fasteners were updated, a separate black adjustable fastener was no longer required.

The VILPE Croco selection is now smaller, but nevertheless these products have a wider usage range. When there are fewer fastener models, the product selection process is easier. An installer can choose a suitable fastening method.



Steps towards an ecologically sustainable construction market

For a greener world

We believe that firms have a responsibility to protect ecological diversity and take action against climate change. We have therefore made ecological sustainability our core value.

When we began to implement this promise, we were not impressed by CO₂ compensations and other consultant talk. Instead, we wanted to transform our green initiatives into real actions to reduce our burden on the planet.

This is why we have invested in improving our energy efficiency, and have replaced oil with geothermal heat at our factory in Korsholm (Mustasaari), in Finland. This has reduced our annual CO₂ emissions by more than 300 tonnes.

We also have one of the largest solar power plants in Western Finland, covering 10% the factory's total annual energy consumption.

Energy-efficiency is also essential when we make machinery investments and develop products.

Our goal is also to increase the recyclability of plastic throughout the product life cycle.

The management system of VILPE has recently been evaluated, and the company has been certified with the SGS ISO 14001:2015 environmental standard. This certificate covers the development, design, manufacturing and sales of VILPE products.



Social action

We donate 0,3 percent of our annual turnover to charity regardless of our financial situation. In practice, this means a donation of over 55 000 euros a year. We support many sports teams and clubs: gymnastics club Wasa Unique, American football team Wasa Royals, ice hockey team Vaasan Sport and national e-sports series Kanaliiga.



Wasa Unique. Photo by Emma Dubb

Wasa Unique's training facilities enhance sense of community

Gymnastics club Wasa Unique had a long term need for better training facilities. In 2020, the club leased its first own facilities in the municipality of Korsholm, especially for the use of team gymnastics. The rental was possible since VILPE became the main sponsor of the club.

"Without VILPE's support, we would not have had suitable training facilities so quickly – instead, it could

have taken several years. Now we have conditions that our sport needs", **Sari Saarikoski**, the chairperson of Wasa Unique explains.

The training conditions are improved, especially thanks to the canvas installed on the floor. The canvas softens landing and prevents possible injuries. For this reason, the gymnastic teams have clearly improved their results in competitions,

Saarikoski says. Teams have also been able to train in the VILPE arena during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Saarikoski, it has also been important that own facilities have improved equality.

"It is great that the girls' and women's sport is raised to the same level with other sports", she summarises.

VILPE has extended the sponsorship with American football team Wasa Royals

VILPE has been the main partner of men's American football team Wasa Royals since 2019. At the beginning of 2021, sponsorship was extended

to junior activities and the women's team.

In junior activities, VILPE's support is given to 10 children who would not otherwise be able to play American

football due to seasonal fees. The support is directed to these families via the Hope association. VILPE is also the main sponsor of the Royals' U20 team.

"Supporting families in need allows children to have hobbies that they like. In addition, U20

team is an important milestone before moving on to the varsity team", says **Martti Kass**, chairman of Wasa Royals.

Getting a main sponsor is important as the money is spent on game trips and trainings. Sponsorship agreements are also important to the women's team. The team is established in 2020, so it needs support for purchasing uniforms and equipment, for example.

"At first I asked VILPE to sponsor us with a smaller amount of money. I was positively surprised when they wanted to become the main sponsor as on the men's team", says **Janica Nyman**, a member of women's sponsorship team of Wasa Royals.



Wasa Royals. Photo by Samppa Toivonen

Eero Saikkonen, founder of VILPE, received a Finnish honorary title

Eero Saikkonen has been awarded a Finnish honorary title in recognition of his lifelong work in the building industry and for his innovative building solutions. Honorary title “rakennusneuvos” was awarded by the President of Finland.

The founding father of VILPE, **Eero Saikkonen**, received the honorary title on June 18th, 2021. In Finnish, the title is “rakennusneuvos” and it was assigned for Saikkonen’s contribution to the building industry. Fewer than 200 people have ever received this recognition. Eero Saikkonen has contributed to the Finnish building industry with his product innovations and he has also been the CEO of VILPE for over four decades.

Saikkonen appreciates the gesture.

“This was a big surprise for me. I never thought this could happen”, he says.

Eero’s son Tuomas is proud of the lifework of his father.

“My father has managed to build a successful business that has thrived over 45 years and been an important employer in the municipality of Korsholm”, says **Tuomas Saikkonen**.

During the last years, VILPE has grown internationally and is now one of the leading European companies in the ventilation and roof product business. The company currently employs 150 people and 90 of them work in Korsholm.

Eero Saikkonen has worked in building industry for 56 years. Even though his son Tuomas has taken over as CEO, Eero continues his work within product development.

“If I stay healthy, I’ll continue to work until I’m 75 years old”, says the 71-year-old building expert.

Eero Saikkonen is the responsible master in VILPE’s factory and office expansion project in 2021.

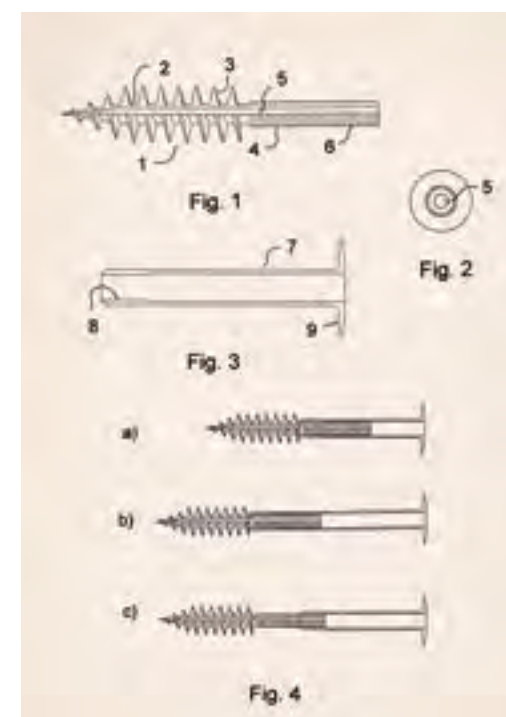


45 years of innovations

Innovativeness has been the main feature of VILPE since 1975. Founder of the company, Eero Saikkonen, is an innovator with decades of experience. As a result of his hard work, he has gained 40 patents for his solutions.



Eero’s drawing of the first VILPE sewer exhaust pipe (Ø 110 mm) from 1988. The name VILPE came into being from this product.



A drawing of Power fasteners from 1995.



A spirit level on the cowl makes the installation of exhaust vents and roof fans easier

Eero Saikkonen got the idea about a spirit level on the top of the product 10 years ago. One day when he was out riding his bike, he noticed that the exhaust vent pipes on the houses had not been installed straight and got the idea of a spirit level on the cowl. It helps you to install the vents so they are straight.

The spirit level on VILPE products has been patented in Europe, covering 38 countries in Europe as well as the markets in Russia and Ukraine. The spirit level is on VILPE FLOW 125, 160 and bigger exhaust vents as well as the FLOW roof fans.

Unique products call for unique production solutions

VILPE's automation solutions enable efficient production and better workplace ergonomics. According to Production Manager Harri Heiskanen, the future will see the company increase its degree of automation and the role of AI.



VILPE uses a comprehensive range of different automation solutions in its production and warehousing. Various kinds of robots, such as linear robots integrated to the plastic manufacturing machines, robotic arms and assembly robots, work in production. In the warehouse, tools such as automatic wrapping machines facilitate work.

The company has purchased new machines frequently since the early 2000s. The first robot, purchased in 2002, is still in use.

"We develop a lot of our equipment ourselves. Our R&D designs unique products which often call for unique solutions in production", says **Harri Heiskanen**.

The equipment also requires active monitoring and maintenance. According to Heiskanen, the firm will increase its maintenance efforts even further because well-planned maintenance reduces the need for laborious repairs.

Efficient production with top-notch occupational safety

Production aims to invest in its employees' skills and cost-efficient, low-emission manufacturing. The company also monitors and improves its production and storage processes using various indicators. These indicators are being developed continuously, and more are being created.

"We are also paying attention to people's physical and mental stress factors. We plan tasks so that they are safe to carry out. We facilitate their execution with tools such as high-level order pickers and stackers, transport equipment and hoists", Heiskanen says.

When VILPE started out in the 1980s and 1990s, work was more physical than it is now. Pallet jacks were just about the only tool available, and people carried goods by hand. Information technology was not yet available.

Heiskanen is pleased that the company's growth has made it possible to invest in technological solutions and warehousing over the years. In 2012, VILPE extended its warehouse and adopted a so-called centralised warehousing system that has made warehouse operations more efficient. The production facilities have expanded, too – and more extensions are planned.

Transparency of various interfaces plays a key role

In the future, the company will increase its degree of automation further, which means that the portion of supervision will increase. As an example, Harri Heiskanen mentions that the company is going to adopt automatic forklifts. However, warehouse automation requires developing the existing software to provide reliable data, which can then be used to integrate various systems for automatic control. The importance of reliable and transparent information is highlighted in supply chains.

"Companies are already competing not just against other companies but against supply chains. The company with the best chain gains a significant position in the market. The transparency of various interfaces plays a key role in this", Heiskanen says.

Heiskanen mentions that AI-based neural network technology will be one of the solutions adopted in the future. It can be used to design better routing in internal logistics, warehouse picking systems and in outgoing and incoming logistics, for example. The data helps to predict the future better and improve sales forecasts, for example.

"I hope the world can keep up with technology at this point. It's no use simply waiting – if it seems that things are not happening then we have to start doing them ourselves", Heiskanen says with determination, referring to the philosophy of continuous improvement.



Mixture of raw material, colourant and UV stabilator is the recipe for our colour guarantee

Harsh Nordic weather conditions place extraordinary demand on the material used on roofs and wall-mounted products. As products on the roof are constantly exposed to sunlight, rain and snow, they have to meet tough colour durability requirements.

The VILPE products are made of tinted polypropylene (PP) plastic. This means the products are coloured entirely instead of just having a layer of paint on the surface. The colourants are mixed to the raw material during injection moulding. In addition, the polypropylene is recyclable, corrosion-, weather- and impact-proof, which makes them ideal for outdoor use.

An UV protective added to the products is an integral part of the long-lasting colour. This UV stabilator prevents the products from having colour defects in the sun.

Intensive testing

Every VILPE product is tested internally and externally to ensure best possible quality. VILPE products have been tested in a weathering chamber following the SFS EN ISO 4892-3:2016 certification. A weathering chamber simulates how the product withstands heat, moisture and rain.

We supervise the colour quality by measuring the standard colours every two weeks. Also, part of the production process is that the employees monitor the colour quality.

VILPE products have a 20-year technical guarantee, a 10-year colour guarantee and a 2-year guarantee for electrical parts.

10 year
colour warranty
20 year
technical warranty

All-in-one solution

VILPE® 315-630S FLOW exhaust vents

- Quick and easy to install
- Metal flashings for excellent watertightness
- A ready-made VILPE pass-through has a built-in silencer and insulation layer with fire class A1
- Uncut baseplate allows adjustment for the ventilation duct

VILPE®
Innovative and Easy

> [VILPE.COM/FLOW](https://vilpe.com/flow)

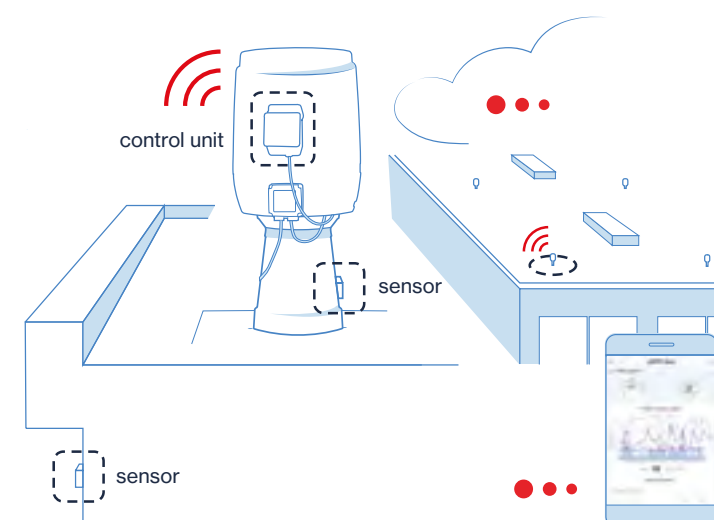


A SMART SYSTEM FOR HUMIDITY CONTROL

SMART ROOF PREVENTS MOISTURE DAMAGES

- Detects humidity and possible leaks in building structures
- Dries structures automatically, when necessary

> [VILPE.COM/EN/SENSE](https://vilpe.com/en/sense)



How VILPE Sense works

The VILPE Sense basic kit consists of two sensors and a control unit which are linked to an energy-efficient ECo Roof fan. One sensor monitors the temperature and relative humidity in the insulation layer, whilst the other measures that of the outdoor air. If the system detects excess humidity in the insulation layer, the roof fan is automatically activated to work at a higher speed until the structure is dry.

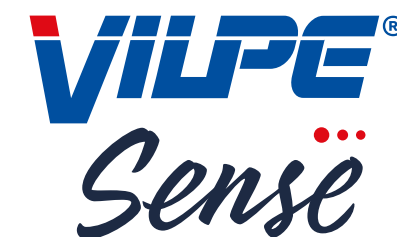
VILPE Sense removed 8 times more moisture

A school building in Kronoby – a town in Ostrobothnia, Western Finland – was equipped with VILPE Sense. From what is known, the building has never had a moisture damage and the VILPE Sense system did not detect any damages. However, despite the roof being healthy, in June 2021, the VILPE Sense system removed over 40 litres of moisture – eight times more than a passive underpressure ventilation system.

The large amount of moisture is not caused by hidden damages but the efficiency of the VILPE Sense. The VILPE Sense system only removes moisture when conditions are ideal, i.e., dry weather conditions. In comparison, the air flow when using underpressure ventilation is constant: air circulation in structures is constant both in humid and dry conditions. The advantage with demand-controlled ventilation is that it allows for minimizing the ventilation when the weather conditions are humid. This makes sure that the structures do not get exposed to unnecessary moisture.

The VILPE Sense system was installed in spring 2020. The system has removed more moisture than underpressure ventilation each month. The results are calculated using average pressure difference.

In cooperation:



A sense of solidarity is a resource at VILPE

We have a large number of skilled professionals working at VILPE. Four VILPE employees with long careers behind them describe what it is like to work in our company and how things have changed over the years.



Ella Osipova

*Export Manager,
Russia and the CIS countries*

We have a democratic and equal work environment and a very nice team here at VILPE. Over the years, I have seen a small business grow into a company this big. However, it doesn't feel like a long time because we face new challenges every day.

When I started out in 1996, the industry was completely different. For the first 15 years, we only carried out direct exports to customers, which had its own challenges. When we established our own subsidiaries, our tasks and challenges changed. This was before the Internet, so we also had to find our contacts in the phone book. However, the atmosphere has remained relaxed and creative at all times.



Pertti Kristo

Technical Specialist

We are like one big family here. Everyone shares the same goals. The best thing about this job is independence – no one is given orders, but everyone is guided, of course. VILPE trusts its employees. I was first hired in the erstwhile screw factory in 1989, and soon afterwards we experienced the 1990s recession and got through it together. Experiencing both the good and the bad times has been great and informative.

Over the years, the firm has grown, hired more people and introduced more machines. I never get bored here because the job and its challenges keep changing all the time. I look forward to the future as I constantly feel that there is something even better coming up around the corner. I'll probably want to stay here when I reach retirement age.



Tanja Stenroos

Warehouse Worker

Colleagues and the work community are what make a company – that's why we enjoy ourselves here. When I joined VILPE in 1997, the company only employed about a dozen people. Today, women and men of varying ages are working at the warehouse. The warehouse has expanded frequently over the years, and the IT systems and production methods have changed. Much of the work is still carried out manually, but we are using more tools.

VILPE is a fair employer: employees are encouraged by bonuses paid on top of your salary, for example. It is also important that the company takes care of its employees' well-being even during busy times. Now and then we spend our spare time together in social functions such as summer and Christmas parties organised by the company. VILPE has always put a lot of effort into these parties.



Mika Järvinen

Technical Salesperson, Finland

VILPE's work environment is fascinating. The well-being of employees and other similar matters are in order. The low turnover of staff has brought the team together. We are like an anthill where everyone has their own important role to play. You learn to know your colleagues here, and it's nice to see how a common goal can make different people work in the same direction. Everyone is helping each other out.

Over the years, we have seen the change through several expansion projects. The walls of our facilities have moved in all directions. While my core duties have remained the same over time, my job has become involved in many tasks related to the maintenance of sales systems. New challenges arise as the products get more technical. A relatively long career also gives you a certain perspective on what makes good customer relations.

Life of production and warehouse

How are VILPE products exactly made? Peek behind the scenes to our factory in Korsholm, Finland.





"I feel that field sales are our antennae. Our salespeople are close to our customers, and they are quick to notice changes and opinions."

"Our partnership with three wholesalers is like a marriage no one wants to break"

As a sales manager, Nina Tyni has invested in field sales and customer relations. In the future, new smart devices will provide many opportunities, but their adoption poses a challenge to the technical know-how of the entire HVAC industry.

Nina Tyni has been responsible for the Finnish market since 2014. From the start, she has invested in strong field sales and recruiting.

"We needed salespeople who are close to customers and not just processing orders. We are rolling out new products all the time, and their successful launch calls for good customer contacts", Tyni says.

Another significant factor is the ability to deal with increasing competition. In this case, too, the solution was to invest in field sales.

"I feel that field sales are our antennae. Our salespeople are close to our customers, and they are quick to notice changes and opinions. Thanks to them, we can react in a timely manner", Tyni says.

"When the customers are doing all right, we are doing all right"

At the time of writing this in June 2021, the poor availability of raw materials and price increases were a source of concern. These issues have caused delivery problems and

uncertainty about the future.

"VILPE's industry is very sensitive to economic fluctuations. When the customers are doing all right, we are doing all right. In Finland, we are cooperating with extremely good and well-known partners. HVAC wholesalers are contributing to the development of our product range. Their efficient logistics ensures prompt and timely deliveries to the end-customers. Our partnership with three large wholesalers is like a marriage no one wants to break", Tyni says.

Developing the HVAC industry is a shared responsibility

Despite the supply problems and price increases, Nina Tyni sees the future of the industry as positive in Finland.

"I believe in VILPE's success both in traditional products and in new innovations. However, launching new products in a traditional industry is a slow process that requires long-term effort. This is why we need

cooperation partners. I want to involve our customers even more closely with R&D," she says.

Tyni considers smart products and their possibilities particularly interesting but adds that they are still poorly known.

"I believe in the future of smart products. At the same time, smart products challenge the skills and technical expertise of not only the salespeople but the entire chain. I think developing the entire HVAC industry is a shared responsibility", Tyni concludes.

Thanks to the employer

Nina Tyni has been given a free hand in developing sales and contributing to R&D. She also praises the team spirit and equality at VILPE.

"We have a low-hierarchy organisation. I can have a chat with anyone whenever I feel like it because we have few formal hierarchies. What's more, all the employees have a strong willingness to help", she comments.

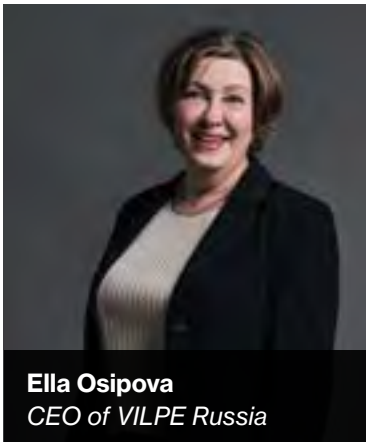
VILPE’s subsidiaries

VILPE has grown from a ten-person family business to an international corporation. VILPE entered the Russian market in the 90s, and today Russia is our most successful export market. Currently we have six warehouses in Russia. We also operate in Sweden, Poland, Ukraine and the Baltics, and today, over half of our turnover comes from our export markets.

RUSSIA

”Our salespeople want to succeed”

In 2020, VILPE Russia’s sales increased by 26 per cent from the previous year. Rapid growth in Russia and Ukraine has been possible even though the Russian construction sector has been in an extensive decline and the conditions in Ukraine are even more difficult than in Russia.



Ella Osipova
CEO of VILPE Russia

While **Ella Osipova**, CEO of VILPE Russia and Export Manager of CIS countries, estimates that success in Russia is the sum of its parts, she would like to mention three factors: building a strong and credible brand, having active salespeople, and selling consistently to small and medium-sized enterprises.

“I do not want to use the word “aggressive” because we are not an aggressive company. We rather want to be people-driven and dependable – help people in questions related to ventilation,” Osipova says.

“We have succeeded in building a reputation of a dependable company, and I feel that people in Russia know that we are the ones to contact regarding ventilation. Mechanical ventilation in small-scale housing is only taking its first steps in Russia. Even though the construction of new buildings is slow at the moment, there is a high demand for our products in the existing building stock to improve ventilation. In Russia, the coronavirus pandemic has especially made

people understand how important ventilation is,” says Osipova.

SMEs are eager to grow

For Osipova, the second important factor is having active salespeople. In Russia and Ukraine, salespeople provide their customers with various online training and webinars and they also participate actively in creating content in social media channels.

“Our salespeople have a drive to succeed. They help our customers by telephone, by visiting them on-site, and by teaching fitters. It is hard work. Our salespeople are so hungry for success that it was practically impossible to have them limit in-person meetings with customers during the coronavirus epidemic,” says Osipova, laughing.

The third important factor is the sales strategy and its consistent implementation. SMEs that seek growth through new methods and technologies were selected as the initial target group.

“We started at the grassroots level and from small companies, instead of sitting down to wait for wholesalers to become suddenly excited about our products. We visited one customer after another, showing them our products and teaching them one step at a time. SMEs helped demand for our products to pick up, which also attracted wholesalers. We still regard SMEs as important customers because they want to grow”.

What does VILPE’s future in Russia look like?

“The Russian construction market is expected to decrease during the summer, but I cannot see it having any impact on us. We have recently moved into a larger warehouse in Krasnodar, and we are building a new larger warehouse in the Urals where we can better assemble our equipment and where we will also recruit new employees,” she says. “We operate in seven locations in Russia, six of which are offices, warehouses and training facilities.”



BALTICS

”Customers trust our products”

Early on, the sales strategy of the Baltic team was to meet potential customers face-to-face and steadily grow the demand for the products.

Janis Abolins, Sales Manager of VILPE Baltics thinks the method of meeting face-to-face is more effective than any web-based activities.

“When we meet one-on-one, we have a better chance of explaining the function and benefits of the products. Therefore, the situation with Covid-19 has disturbed our approach to operating. Luckily, we have managed to do well despite these challenging times,” shares Abolins.

The sales teams in Latvia and Lithuania have continued to work actively to create demand and trust for the products, for example, by arranging training seminars for designers and installation companies.

Tough price competition

The Baltic construction market is characterised by several players

and tough price competition. When selecting products for their project, many firms tend to only consider price. Since the Baltic markets have many players, the partner network becomes sensitive to disruptions and competition. Therefore, the team in the Baltics had to plan their moves carefully when they started to develop their distribution network.

“We have now established a network with worthwhile and reliable clients. We have introduced partners one by one to avoid creating competition between partners and to ensure excellent customer satisfaction”, shares Abolins.

Stable market position

Despite the challenges following the Covid-19 pandemic, Abolins perceives the development of sales in the Baltics as a positive. He feels that the team has managed to build a stable position in the market.

“We have been able to reach our targets every year. But I do think we

can still grow and get an even bigger market share. I see possibilities especially with our new products: IO, Wive and our larger exhaust pipes are now selling successfully. I have big hopes for VILPE Sense because we know that there are many problematic roofs in the Baltics. The new metallic roof drains are also good for our market. We are planning to work with architects and designers to explain to them the benefits of our solutions,” explains Abolins.



Janis Abolins
Sales Manager, Baltics

VILPE’s export were approximately 51 % of the company’s turnover in 2020.

”VILPE Sense is the future of the company”

VILPE Poland is growing annually by 15–30 percent. Good staff and excellent product quality have been success factors on the Polish market and a recipe for combating tough price competition, according to Andrzej Janusz, CEO of VILPE Poland.

The daughter company VILPE Poland has existed since 2011. During his career at VILPE, **Andrzej Janusz** has focused on creating a good team.

“Nine years ago, there were only three of us and today we are 11. I am really proud of our staff. We have recently got a new warehouse and office. All of these things have had a positive impact on our sales and this year we have grown fast”, shares Janusz.

The biggest challenge for VILPE on the Polish market has been fierce price competition. However, the Polish team has, during the last three years, noticed an increased interest in VILPE products both among professionals as well as consumers.

“People like the quality and the range of products that we offer. We have become known for offering solutions for the most challenging building projects. Another strength is that we can offer quick delivery times. We really invest in creating good long-term customers. Consumers like our silent kitchen solution with the fan on the roof and silent cooker hood,” declares Janusz.

”Our customers perceive us as an innovator”

When this text was written in June 2021, Janusz was worrying about the fast price increases on the market and the raw material shortage. The current sales numbers look good, but the situation can change fast. Apart from these worries, Janusz believes that VILPE will continue to succeed in both the Polish as well as the Central Eastern European markets.

“I see that the future for VILPE lies in new innovations. Our customers perceive us as an innovator. I believe that VILPE Sense is the future of the company and its launch was a very big step,” Janusz mentions.



Andrzej Janusz
CEO of VILPE Poland



VILPE Sense is a smart system for humidity damage prevention.

”On the verge of a break-through”

The Scandinavian market has posed big challenges for VILPE, mainly because Sweden is a traditional steel roof market. Lately, Leif Fredriksson has noticed a change in the market.

Leif Fredriksson, CEO of VILPE Sweden, is pleased with the development on the Scandinavian market. During the 10 years that VILPE has operated there, the number of strategically important products has grown and thereby also the experience of using VILPE products has grown.

He is also particularly proud of the packaged solutions on the Scandinavian market. This means solutions with either a roof fan or exhaust vent as well as a pass-through.

“Introducing packaged solutions for the Swedish warehouse was a success as single product codes make it easier for customers to understand and handle. The Swedish warehouse makes the logistics easier and customers get the products both cheaper and faster,” he says.

According to Fredriksson, one key success factor has been the professional sales team in Scandinavia.

Jonas Rydén has a broad experience of ventilation and products with larger duct sizes, and Nisse Hedberg knows ventilation industry as well. Fredriksson’s background is in the ventilation entrepreneur distribution chain.

Different building cultures pose a challenge

Breaking on the Swedish market has been difficult, mainly because the building practices in Sweden and Finland differ. For instance, steel roofs are more common in Sweden than in Finland. Lately, Fredriksson has noticed a change in the market.



Leif Fredriksson
CEO of VILPE Sweden

“We have now focused on roof entrepreneurs, house building industries and industrial builders. We prioritise these customer segments because they give quicker sales results. The Covid-19 pandemic has shaken the business and lead to more actors looking for alternative solutions. We have noticed that more actors have become interested in our products,” says Fredriksson.

Fredriksson sees a bright future for VILPE in the Scandinavian market.

“We are on the verge of a breakthrough in Sweden. The reason for this is that we can offer products with larger duct sizes and people are more used to our products”, he says.

”There are positive vibes in European markets”

European markets have traditionally been challenging for VILPE. They are dominated by large and stabilised companies, and it has been difficult for a relatively small and less-known company like VILPE to challenge the large giants. However, **Ville Hellström**, Export Manager of Western Europe, has witnessed a change in recent years. As more airtight buildings are being built in Europe, there is also a higher demand for effective ventilation products. Energy consumption is a hot topic, and markets have slowly opened their eyes to VILPE’s solutions.

“Customers particularly appreciate the quality and technical properties of our products. Our products are a guaranteed choice because they are designed to operate with a broad range of systems,” says Hellström.

Positive vibes

The largest challenge in European markets is the lack of visibility, but there have been improvements in that area as well.

“I believe that our recent investments in our image and communication are starting to pay off. Our message of being an advanced technological pioneer is clearer and more concrete now than it was five years ago. As a result, we are now seen as a true specialist in terminal equipment for ventilation in many market areas,” says Hellström.

He sees positive development in sales in European markets.

“We have been on a productive growth track in recent years and clearly increased our visibility in many European markets. There are positive

vibes. We are putting the coronavirus behind us, and trust in the future has re-established itself,” says Hellström.



Ville Hellström
Export Manager,
Western Europe

Digitalization has facilitated business for Onninen



Photo by Onninen

The whole sale firm Onninen has been in the building industry since 1913. The building industry is in constant change. Construction and building engineering today have become more and more technically sophisticated and automated and the work itself has become more hectic.

“Today, people work under a strict time-schedule and construction sites are very crowded the same time, requiring well-functioning logistics on the site”, says **Markku Vauhkala**, International Category Director of Ventilation Products from Onninen.

During weekdays, Onninen’s logistics service delivers goods all over Finland and the deliveries usually arrive the next day. In case a customer needs something urgently,

it is also possible to arrange faster deliveries and deliveries during weekends.

“Increasing digital sales does not replace one-on-one customer relationships”

Digitalization and increased e-commerce have changed the building industry. The popularity of Onninen’s web shop and mobile app are clear signs of this. Onninen’s digital services continue to grow strongly. One of the reasons for the success is that customers can easily check availability and product prices in shops.

Despite efforts to digitalize, the company has over fifty Onninen Express stores in Finland and the

number of shops is increasing every year.

“The e-commerce is growing but it does not replace the need for personal and one-on-one customer relationships and contacts. Locality is definitely a strong success factor”, Vauhkala says.

Locality is not the only advantage. Onninen has a long tradition, very extensive warehouse product selection and strong know-how of the building business. Onninen and VILPE have cooperated for a couple of decades.

“We have common goals and we are both able to benefit from our cooperation. Our cooperation has always been excellent and we will continue to develop and improve together”, Vauhkala says.

Tutustu VILPE:n
tuotevalikoimaan
Onnisen verkko-
kaupassa



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Plastics is common within the construction industry

The construction industry uses plastics for a range of different things. For instance, in a new house plastic is needed for everything from different types of fasteners to pipes. Also, the range of different plastics material is larger within the construction industry in comparison to other fields. The requirements on the plastics also differ, for example a sewer pipe needs to last for 50 years and plastics used for electronics needs to fulfill safety requirements.

When one selects a raw material for a product, the point of departure must always be its intended use and requirements, such as durability of the material, how it should withstand harsh weather conditions and its color.

"Plastic as a material have several good properties. It is a safe and cost-effective material that can be used for different purposes", says director for plastics business **Petteri Martikainen** from Telko. Telko is an expert and distributor of plastics, industry chemicals and lubricants in Finland as well as abroad.

The good properties of plastics are easily forgotten, when plastics is accumulated to places where it does not belong, such as oceans. Plastics is a durable and slowly biodegradable material and does not belong in the cycle of nature. The infrastructure around plastics recycling should be improved and plastics should be made into a household recycled product.

"Telko has for example introduced biodegradable plastic



Telko's Petteri Martikainen and Svitlana Pahlman. Photo: Telko.

products and plastic material that has been produced from recycled material", says Martikainen.

Cooperation for several years

Telko and VILPE have cooperated for years and VILPE purchases plastics raw material from them. Cooperation is especially intense when developing new products.

"We want to support our customer in all stages of the process to ensure that the product will be of good quality. If customers have problems, we solve them together. Our whole international team of expertise is available for our customers", says Martikainen.

"We are happy to be a long-time partner of VILPE, and we will continue to develop our business relationship. On the behalf of the whole Telko team I would like to congratulate VILPE for the Anniversary!"

Dahl: a strong local actor

Toni Orela, Procurement and Marketing Director at the wholesale firm Dahl, explains that his company is genuinely focused on serving HVAC professionals:

"Our customers appreciate our wide product selection, expertise and excellent service", he says. Dahl employs over 500 professionals across over 30 locations throughout Finland, and Orela considers this local presence one of Dahl's strengths:

"We can recognize and predict what local customers need. Our customers' wishes are taken into account in our local product selections."

Expert service from trained professionals

As this product selection is often highly technical, customers usually require personalized service even though product information is also available online. New products in particular often raise questions, so continuous training is provided to keep the sales team's expertise up-to-date:

"Our salespeople are trained professionals; VILPE and other partner companies often provide additional product training for our staff", says Orela.

According to Orela, VILPE and Dahl's cooperation is smooth, and a strong and reliable partner network is another key factor in Dahl's success:

"Cooperation with strong professionals is the basis of our work", explains Orela.

Toni Orela from Dahl. Photo by Dahl.



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Growing popularity of smart control systems

One of VILPE partners, lecon, commercialises KNX smart homes: they develop and provide ready-made product concepts and brands for smart homes. The platform for the ready-made concepts is called KNX and it is a smart automation and control system for homes and other buildings.

The main target group for lecon's home automation system is owners of single-family houses. More and more single-family house owners have discovered the benefits of smart control systems and, as a consequence, lecon has noticed an increasing demand for their solutions. lecon also provides smart systems for industrial use.

The KNX automation system comprises ventilation, lighting, heating, blinds and audio, making it possible to control these both in-house as well as remotely.

According to lecon's CEO **Jani Heinonen**, the success factors of lecon have been their ability to offer price-competitive smart homes in a relatively short time. This is possible

with lecon's ready-made home automation concept.

"Even though we mostly do traditional electrical work, the ready-made KNX concepts make us stand out on the market", says Heinonen.

lecon operates on the electricity installation market and their success is based upon excellent and professional staff, high customer satisfaction and reliability. The relationship between VILPE and lecon began already in 2008, and ever since the cooperation has been deeply grounded in shared values, such as, high quality, reliability and customer satisfaction. Over the years, lecon has been VILPE's partner in larger projects and maintenance work. One of the latest projects was the installment of LED lighting in VILPE's factory. Today, 90 percent of the lights at VILPE are LED.

"In comparisons to other firms on the market, lecon is able to offer a wider service range," says Heinonen.

The company has the capacity to offer customers full-range service,



Photo by lecon

from electrical installation and planning to electricity user services, inspections and maintenance. lecon operates in the Ostrobothnia region in Finland. In addition to building system engineering, the company work with larger commercial and industrial building projects.

Ruukki roofs and VILPE pass-throughs are a perfect match

Ruukki Construction and VILPE have cooperated for several decades. This close cooperation is based upon high levels of innovativeness to produce high-quality roofs with high-quality roof products and accessories. Ruukki offers steel products and services.

"If there is a building with a Ruukki-manufactured roof, there will also be VILPE pass-throughs ", says **Jouni Metsämäki**, responsible for the roofing business at Ruukki.

Snap lock standing-seam metal roofs are popular in Finland, with Ruukki Classic and Tiilikainen as the most popular roofings. According to Metsämäki, snap lock standing-seam metal roofs are both timeless and trendy at the same time. They fit both modern architecture and older style buildings. Especially Ruukki Classic has several technical properties that makes it stand out. Classic is 100 percent waterproof, but it is also a more silent

alternative because of its soundproofing roofing felt. Metsämäki believes that snap lock standing seam metal roofings will be popular also in the future.

Snap lock standing seam metal roofings are not the only products that are gaining popularity. In the future, Ruukki expects longer gently sloping roofs to trend whereas gable roofs are expected to become less common. Ruukki and VILPE have found the Classic Viro pass-through to be a convenient solution for this kind of pent roofs with only one sloping side.

Reliability and quality combined with a desire to be a pioneer on the market is the secret behind Ruukki's success. Long-term experience and good partners have made Ruukki a market leader.

"Our common innovativeness has boosted the building industry", says Jouni Metsämäki.



Jouni Metsämäki, director of roofing business in Ruukki Construction. Photos by Ruukki



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JanLa considers sustainability as a competitive advantage on the market

A strong focus on quality products is a common denominator for the business of VILPE and JanLa. JanLa is a wholesale firm within the building sheet metals business. Since quality is the first priority of both companies, cooperation has always been easy.

They have together developed pass-throughs for JanLa's Jalo standing seam metal roofings as well as JL Lux/Grand tile roofing sheets. In addition to a strong focus on quality products, excellent technical service and reliable deliveries have made them a leading wholesale firm of building sheet metals in Finland.

"People consider green values"

In Finland, JanLa was the first company to be accepted as a SSAB's Greencoat partner. Green values and sustainability are important for the company. Its steel metal roofings are made of recycled high-quality steel which is manufactured ecologically and with technical durability.

The steel coating is based on Nordic rapeseed oil. Other advantages of steel roofings are lightness, fire safety and waterproofness. This roofing is also easy to maintain and keep clean. The most popular JanLa products are standing seam roofings.

"The covid-19 pandemic has caused a disturbance on our market but I hope and trust that green values are becoming even more important for people. The future of steel roofings seems bright," says Janla's CEO

Janne Lahtela.

In spring 2020, the company was awarded with the Key Flag symbol as a sign of Finnish work.

"It is important for us to manufacture Finnish products made of Finnish material", Lahtela states.

JanLa congratulates VILPE for its success and wishes happy 45th anniversary!

Photo by JanLa



JL JanLa Oy

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Active product development unites ebm-papst and VILPE

Frank From,
CEO of ebm-papst Finland.
Photo by ebm-papst



The future looks bright for ebm-papst, the world's largest fan manufacturer. Nowadays people are more informed of the problems with bad indoor air and its effects on wellbeing of people and buildings. "There is nothing more interesting than good air", says their CEO, Frank From.

One of the most important trends in ventilation and fan manufacturing is to minimise electricity consumption, and ebm-papst has been successful in responding to this trend. Today, the fan motor efficiency is as high as 97 percent and ebm-papst is developing low energy consuming products.

"The products are so energy efficient that they are starting to defy the laws of physics. The next step to reduce electricity consumption even more would be to develop the products' aerodynamic properties and make them even more efficient", **Frank From** explains.

VILPE is one of the company's many customers and VILPE's roof fans are equipped with fans from ebm-papst. According to From, the cooperation has always been excellent. He also considers the

VILPE FLOW product series to be a good example of how crucial it is to develop low-energy ventilation products.

Every product should be more sustainable than its predecessor

ebm-papst aims to be involved in everything related to developing something new. Approximately every fifth year, over half of the product assortment is renewed. Product development has a central role in the company. The cooperation with VILPE is straightforward as innovativeness is also one of VILPE's core values.

"VILPE's ways of doing business warms my heart", says From.

The core idea for ebm-papst is that every product should be more ecologically sustainable than

its predecessor. The company's production methods have been designed to be as ecologically sustainable as possible, the materials are recyclable and the electricity consumption is minimised both during the production phase as well as in the products themselves. In Germany, ebm-papst has been acknowledged for their environmentally sustainable actions for good reasons.

In Finland, ebm-papst is the market leader. The success stems from multiple factors.

"The products are designed according to the customers' wishes. Naturally, the products have to be functional with a good price-quality ratio", From explains.

ebm-papst congratulates VILPE on the 45th-year anniversary and wishes all the best for the years to come!

ebm-papst fans produce *good wind.*

The world's leading blower and fan manufacturer ebm-papst wishes Vilpe Oy lots of success and a breeze of fortune to the coming years! Let the cooperation continue in good spirits!

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engineering a better life



Automated injection moulding machines inform users when service is needed

The current trend with injection moulding machines is automation and self-optimisation. In the future, injection moulding machines tell the user when they need service, if a screw is wearing out or the hydraulic pump is experiencing wear.

These trends have been noted at Engel. Engel manufactures both hydraulic and electric injection moulding machines as well as horizontal and vertical machines.

According to **Graeme Herlihy**, president of western Europe at Engel, the company basis is finding customer solutions, not just standard products.

“We are strongest when a customer puts a plastic part on the table and asks how do you propose we make this product. Our philosophy is to deliver complete solutions, not just machines,” Herlihy explains.

Engel's injection moulding machines are needed in different business areas from packaging industry to automotive industry. Engel's machines are also used to manufacture VILPE products.

Plastic is not the problem – lack of recycling is

The raw material used in injection moulding machines is plastics. For example, VILPE products are made of durable polypropylene. However, plastic products have been the subject of public discussion since plastic waste management has been insufficient especially in certain countries.

According to Herlihy, plastic as a material is not the problem. The problem is the missing recycling infrastructure. “Replacing plastic material is not simple. Plastics have

many benefits compared to other materials, for example smaller carbon footprint than metal products. In the end, it is a very green material that can be recycled all over again. We just need to get a functioning recycling infrastructure,” Herlihy says.

In the future there will be increasing use of compostable and bio-degradable materials. Using green polymers made of e.g. vegetables, is still in its infancy.

Family-owned business invests in R&D

Just like VILPE, Engel is a family-owned business. The Engel family has always been eager to grow business. Gradually, by reinvesting the profits from business back to research and development, Engel has become a market leader.

The company has large market share in Finland. The Finnish market is diverse and Engel machines are used e.g. in packaging and medical industry. Technical moulding is still dominant business line in Finland and other Nordic countries.

The company has an office in Finland and subsidiaries all over the world.

“We don't operate through an agency. “Think global, act local” is a cliché but it describes how we want to do business,” Herlihy says.



Engel's factory.
Photo by Engel



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Saint-Gobain intends to be a pioneer in low-carbon construction

Saint-Gobain, a global construction product manufacturer, invests in low-carbon construction and circular economy with a focus on energy efficiency. In Finland, the company is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2035.

According to **Mika Pulkkinen**, the product manager of Saint-Gobain Finland, the company wants to be a pioneer in responsible construction. Working towards being a low-carbon company is constant in different areas – but without risking the health, safety, economy, longevity and energy efficiency of buildings.

“For example, we have introduced biogas in production and our electricity has been renewable since 2018. In the insulation sector, 80 percent of the glass wool raw material is recycled glass, which has a big impact on reducing the carbon footprint,” Pulkkinen explains, mentioning examples of sustainable development solutions.

Since the 1990s, a third-party has verified Saint-Gobain products with environmental statements that are based on life cycle assessments. They are a reliable way to report a product’s environmental impact throughout its life cycle.

Five well-known brands under the same roof

The Saint-Gobain corporation, founded in France, currently operates in 67 countries. In Finland, Saint-Gobain’s offering consists of five well-known construction brands: Ecophon, Gybroc, ISOVER, PAM and Weber, which manufacture various construction products ranging from insulation to gypsum boards, dry products and piping systems. According to Mika Pulkkinen, merging many industries has been the key to the company’s success.

“We also aim for smooth customer service. We have

developed the customer’s path so that they can order products from all of our brands with one contact. We are deepening this cooperation on a continuous basis,” shares Pulkkinen.

The Covid-19 pandemic has not notably affected Saint-Gobain Finland’s industrial operations. According to Pulkkinen, construction in Finland has remained at a reasonable level.

The company believes that in the future, the role of locality will be highlighted in the construction industry as the pandemic has disturbed the world market. The locality is already visible in Saint-Gobain Finland’s operations: 98 percent of the tonnes the company has sold in Finland are also manufactured in Finland.

Years of cooperation with VILPE

In addition to low-carbon construction, Saint-Gobain wants to be involved in promoting innovative solutions for the construction industry. The company supports the smart VILPE Sense system for humidity control.

VILPE and Saint-Gobain have been cooperating for decades in the insulation sector.

“VILPE is a logical and reliable partner that knows the industry and customers well. We have always been able to trust that VILPE will provide innovative and industry-friendly solutions,” Pulkkinen summarises.

Mika Pulkkinen, the product manager of Saint-Gobain Finland. Photo by Saint-Gobain Finland



We Care about Building Better.



Strong belief in innovation is the key to Renson's success

If a company wants to grow on an international level, partnerships are extremely important, believe Frank Goudman and Rien Laverge from Renson Ventilation. VILPE and Renson have been partners for several years. Five years ago companies started close collaboration in the Russian market and this business has grown well.

Export Sales Director **Frank Goudman** from Renson sees that both Renson and VILPE Russia have strong belief in innovation, which has been the key of success. Additionally, Goudman has a wide personal network in Russia since the early 90s.

"Renson is extremely innovative in the same way as VILPE, which means that we have to push the innovation into the market. That's why it is very important that people in the companies are believers, as we say", he explains.

Renson is specialised in manufacturing high-class solutions for ventilation, sun protection and outdoors. The collaboration with VILPE Russia is based on selling complete concepts. One of Renson's main products in Russia is a smart ventilation unit *Healthbox* that can be combined with VILPE's exhaust and intake vents, for instance.

"Russian market is very important for us. Commercial Director Mikhail Balagurov from VILPE Russia and his team have managed to combine the Renson story and the VILPE story. Our concept is very strong and I hope that we will continue and expand further to other CIS countries. At the moment we are also working closely with VILPE sales team in Poland and in the Baltic states", Goudman explains.

The last six months have been a real boom as more and more buildings are asking for active ventilation in Russia. Goudman says



Export Sales Director Frank Goudman, Renson Ventilation.



Business Unit Manager Rien Laverge, Renson Ventilation.

Photos by Renson

that the awareness of ventilation has significantly changed in Russia – probably thanks to the pandemic.

Expertise in the fourth generation

Renson is more than a 100-year-old Belgian family business that is currently managed by the fourth generation. Business Unit Manager **Rien Laverge** thinks that the key of Renson's success is a combination of many factors.

"First is the strive from the CEO Paul Renson. He is still active within the company – he has a sixth sense for seeing opportunities before the market. The second thing is our innovative atmosphere and people that dare to go against the stream to make the market, rather than just taking the market situation. We also try to sell concepts rather than just products", he explains.

The relation with VILPE's main company started in 2013 when Laverge met VILPE's current CEO Tuomas Saikkonen at ISH fair in Frankfurt – and they found common ground immediately.

Laverge thinks that the most important factor in collaboration is mutual respect.

"We strengthen each other since VILPE has been able to provide us with the good products. By being different and complementary, we have actually changed the roofing market. We still want to continue for another 100 years working together with VILPE", Rien Laverge summarises.

HealthyAir Supply

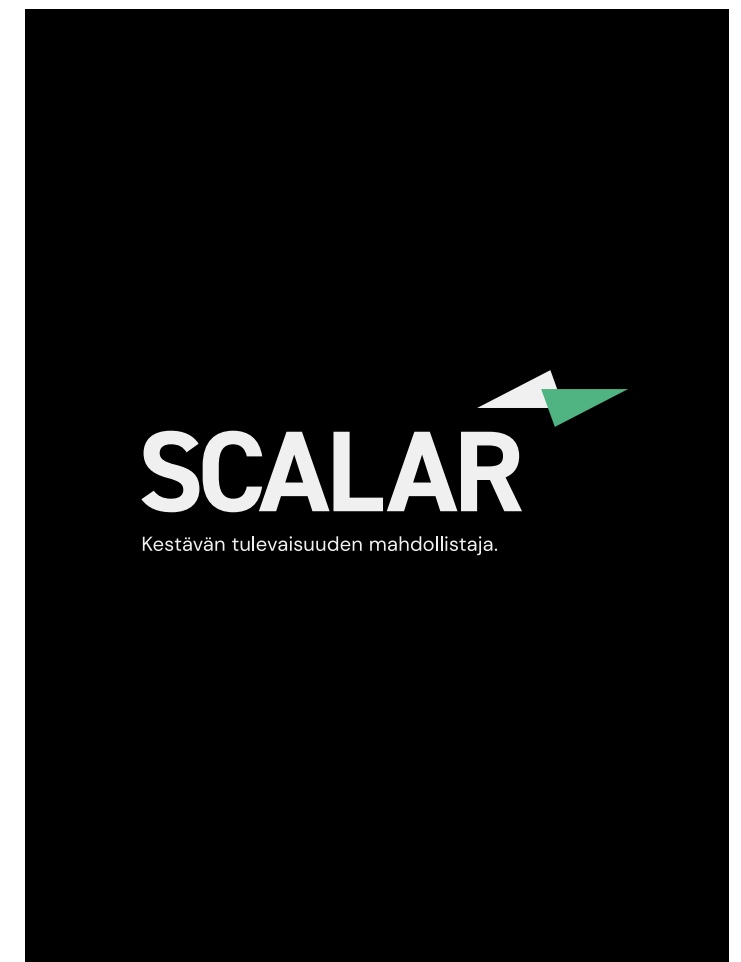
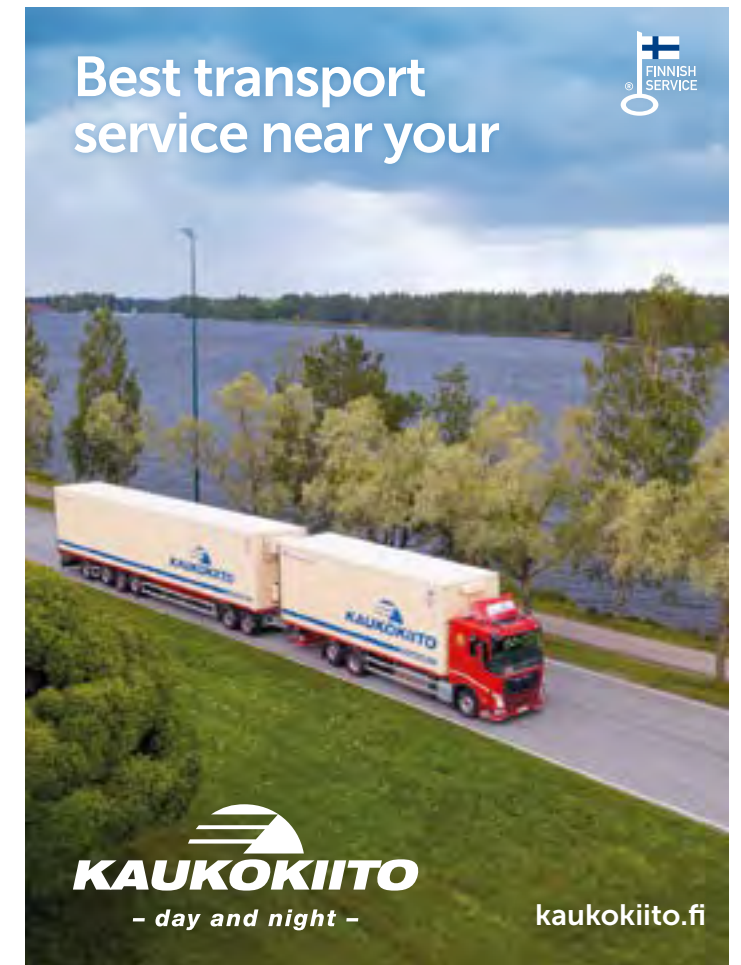


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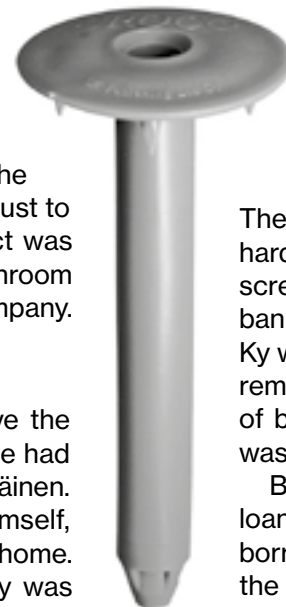
VILPE's factory in 1984.

Our story started with a single innovation

During the summer of 1973, Eero Saikkonen – then a student at Vaasa Technical Institute – started looking for a solution to a practical building problem. He had noticed that roofing felt and insulation, which at the time were glued together with bitumen, did not stay in place, and the heads of screws often penetrated and damaged the felt layer. To solve this problem, he developed a new type of fastener that would adjust to the weight which was applied to it. The product was ready on April 1974 and it was named as a mushroom fastener. This innovation was the start of our company.

Finland-based production

When Eero founded VILPE, he did not yet have the resources to start production on his own, and he had to outsource it to the Finnish company Lemminkäinen. Later, when he was able to begin production himself, Eero wanted to build his factory close to home. Construction of the 1200-square meter factory was finished in 1984.



The factory has been expanded several times over the years. Eero has often been asked whether VILPE will move its production to low-income countries, and the answer has always been a firm no. Hopefully, the number of factory expansions will convince doubters that VILPE is here to stay.

Through difficulties to victory

The recession of the 1990s hit the construction industry hard. Demand for mushroom fasteners collapsed. The screw factory, which was owned by SK Tuote Ky, went bankrupt in 1994, taking the parent company SK Tuote Ky with it. Only the plastics factory SK Fastening Ltd Oy remained. The plastics factory had guaranteed the loans of both the screw factory and the sales company and was now forced to repay them.

By 2000 we had repaid all the guarantees and other loans. Then we decided that the company would never borrow money again. Since then, we have financed all the investment ourselves.



VILPE's factory in 2021.

Timeline of VILPE

1970s

Eero Saikkonen invents the mushroom fastener in April 1974. In 1975, SK Tuote Ky enters in the trade register. Sale of roof drains and sealing collars begin in 1977.

1980s

VILPE's factory was established in Korsholm in 1984. Production was handled by two machine operators and four packers. A separate company, SK Fastening Ltd Oy, was set up to run the factory. In 1987 the office moved from Vaasa to the factory premises.

The VILPE trademark was introduced in 1987 as was the first patented VILPE product. Making products from plastic raw material was completely new solution, as other manufacturers used glass-fibre. However, glass-fibre was not durable enough.

1990s

In 1990, the factory was expanded by 2,400 square metres. The warehouse and packing department moved to the factory premises. After the mid-1990s, the emphasis in production shifted from fasteners to VILPE products.

2000s

The company repairs its last loans in 2000. The factory is expanded about every couple of years. Operations are becoming more international, for example due to new subsidiaries.

2010s

The name of SK Tuote Oy is changed to VILPE Oy in 2018. The name was changed so that the VILPE product family will be better connected to their manufacturer. One of the largest solar power plants in Western Finland is installed on the factory's roof.

2020s

Tuomas, son of Eero Saikkonen, start his work as CEO. Investments in renewable energy increase since a geothermal heating plant is installed to the factory. The ninth expansion begins. When the expansion is completed in 2022, the factory size will be 21,215 square meters. The factory in Korsholm has over 90 employees and the entire corporation employs about 150 people.



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