

The industry is changing. The heading is straight ahead.

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In a world undergoing major change, the manufacturing industry is finding new paths via innovation and strong collaboration. As Sweden's biggest industry event, this year Elmia Subcontractor has more than ever before hosted innovative ideas, pioneering contacts and a debate that goes on the offensive about the future.

Elmia Subcontractor is the suppliers' display window and an important forum for the entire manufacturing industry's important issues. On the Subcontractor Direct stage, a long series of topical subjects were discussed, such as the panel debate "Winners and losers with electric vehicles".

"We can now say that we have a huge change ahead of us, which will affect the labour market, how we do business, and how we transport both people and goods," comments Mats Larsson, expert in electrification and business developer with IUC Syd. "This type of discussion is crucial for raising the issue in our awareness and on politicians' agendas."

The third-quarter barometer of suppliers produced by Sinf, the Swedish employers' organisation for industrial and service companies, was presented at the fair on Tuesday in accordance with tradition. It reveals expectations of a coming economic downturn. But the report also confirms the mood at the fair: a purposeful targeting of the future.

"Among other things, we're seeing companies prioritising new customers, new sectors and more marketing," explains Joakim Norlén, CEO of Sinf.

To stand strong for the future, it is necessary to keep up with the rapid pace of development with cutting-edge expertise in digitalisation, which start-up companies often have. Visitors were able to meet start-ups the fair's Pop-up Expo. And through its new matchmaking service Ignite, Elmia matched established suppliers with smart start-ups.

"We operate in a traditional industry but participated in Elmia Ignite with an open mind," comments Peter Nilsson, CEO of Lideco, a maker of tool components. "It resulted in six very interesting contacts with exciting ideas, which we'll work more on."

The fair's well-established matchmaking service, Subcontractor Connect, was already fully booked a week before the fair. A record-large number of purchasers – about 30 companies, of which 12 were international – attended.

"We've had more participating purchasers than ever before and many new suppliers," says Malin Jönsson, coordinator of Subcontractor Connect. She says feedback has been very positive, both from this year's participants and from a number of companies that were matched up last year and whose contacts later resulted in business deals.

The focus on the future was also manifested in the great interest shown in the fair's various inspiration arenas. Subcontractor InnoDex attracted large crowds with its 100 or so international innovations and lectures about new materials and engineering designs. Similarly, Subcontractor IoT Arena, with its concrete successful cases in the IoT field, drew many curious visitors.

The larger the proportion of added value creation that ends up with suppliers, the more important the fair also becomes in highlighting and elevating the expertise and innovation represented by the supplier chain.

All this has enabled Elmia Subcontractor to once again confirm its position as the manufacturing industry's leading meeting place that offers the best conditions for "business unusual".

"It is clear that meeting face to face, with the entire industry gathered in one arena, fills an important function for companies throughout the business chain. I would like to thank everyone who took part and I wish them great success in future with all their business arrangements," concludes the fair manager, Karla Eklund.

Quotes:

"For us it's important to have close contact with all suppliers, and this is an excellent opportunity."
Magnus Leiner, Vice President, Global Procurement Software & Electronics, Volvo Car Corporation

"Technology is developing fast and the possibilities are huge, but for an industrial company to be able to reach the finish line it is necessary to network, cooperate and learn from each other. Smart alliances are the key driving force in this if we are to succeed."

Frank Rälq, Business Development Manager, FM Mattson Mora Group AB. Case at Subcontractor IoT Arena.

"Swedish suppliers are very interesting because they are extremely flexible and offer high quality. We are very pleased with the 30 or so suppliers we met at the matchmaking service and hope that a number of them will lead to cooperation deals."

Jérôme Pierlot, Head of Accelerators & Technology Section Procurement and Industrial Services Group CERN

"For us, it's about meeting customers and potential customers, suppliers and people who may be future employees – doing marketing 360. We see it from many perspectives, with the foundation being networking and long-term work. If anyone signs an order while we're here, of course that's good, but it's nothing we're counting on."

Andreas Ljungberg, CEO Inxide

"Sweden's unique selling point is that we're hugely skilled at cooperating across technology boundaries and in various cluster formations. Subcontractor Connect is a good example of this – suppliers meet suppliers and discover possibilities they didn't even know existed."

Fredrik Sidahl, CEO FKG

"Maintaining contact points and building continued strong customer relations is one of the fair's strong points. It's of huge value to us to meet so many existing and new customers as we do in such a short time here at Elmia Subcontractor."

Mikael Sohlberg, Marketing Manager, GT Prototyper

Source: Elmia AB