NEW SILENT KOENIGSEGG

Practice makes perfect

AN INSPIRATIONAL MAGAZINE FROM A.M. ACOUSTICS AND GOTESSIONS, FOR ANYONE WORKING WITH BEAUTIFUL, FUNCTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS
SINGLE®
Sound absorbents in fabric

am acoustics
On page 18, we talk to violist Magnus Pehrsson about some challenging acoustics: the rehearsal space for the Göteborg Opera’s orchestra.

We interview Finnish company Workspace about their big project on energy company Caruna’s new offices near Helsinki. Read more about the project on page 5.

And on page 12, meet Christian von Koenigsegg, a big figure in the automotive world.

In summer it became apparent that Gotessons and A.M. Acoustics were to join forces. Together we hope to become even stronger in our acoustic solutions and interiors for public spaces. We speak to Johan Götesson and Patric Gustafsson, key members of the new team.

Johan, how did you become aware of A.M. Acoustics?
I’ve always been impressed by the company. We hardly dared approach them – I mean, they’ve worked with customers like Benny Andersson from ABBA! And then I was also the company’s first customer for their Print sound-absorbing photographic print, which is still hanging in my living room at home.

Patric, what has your experience been of Gotessons?
I remember being so jealous of their screens that zip up. They’ve always had such a good eye for what works in terms of style. And for how to stay so innovative, year after year. Since then, our contact has always felt right. One of our resellers was like, “what a team you’ll make, you’re both so great to work with!” That was a real compliment!

Patric and Johan, what’s the next step?
Patric: Of course the plan is to bring even more value to our customers, but I think those who have already worked with us will still know where they stand.
Johan: What’s new is that we’ll begin to co-ordinate and develop our product range now that we have more developers, so watch out for new exciting solutions and design products moving forward!

Patric Gustafsson
Local Manager, A.M. Acoustics
Johan Götesson
MD, Gotessons/A.M. Acoustics

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Olle Niklasson is Sweden’s leading music technology journalist. He has worked as a musician, composer and producer both in Sweden and abroad. He is now a journalist and, among other things, has been editor-in-chief at Musikermagasinet. He likes good food and is the author of an etymological cookbook, Lök på laxen (lit. “Onions on the Salmon”).

Mathias Bergeld started out as a freelance photojournalist in the daily newspaper industry. He lives in Örby, in the southern Västergötland region. He now combines his photography with writing articles and studying Arabic at the University of Gothenburg.
Facebook

NCC has built Facebook’s first and biggest server hall outside USA in Luleå, with an area of 28,000 m². A further two server halls are planned. Facebook has high demands for energy efficiency and uses system solutions which offer a much better energy performance than other equivalent facilities. The facility will also be LEED-certified. The factors that were key to its location were the naturally cold climate and availability of hydroelectric power. We at A.M. Acoustics are proud that Facebook chose the SINGLE wall-absorbents to be its acoustics solution for its meeting and conference rooms.

Screens for Deutsche Telekom

Gotessons are proud to have been selected by the telecoms giant, out of many possible suppliers, to contribute to work on the company’s office spaces throughout Germany. The choice went in favour of Gotessons’ screens because the company was able to present flexible solutions in which its attractive screens could be used on both floors and at desks and with or without feet, and that the screens could be joined together to form larger units. An additional advantage that Deutsche Telekom appreciated was how easy it was to use the screens, even with motorised standing desks.

Gotessons took third prize in Office of the Year

Gotessons are happy for the bronze medal in the annual competition Sveriges Snyggaste Kontor. The jury’s motivation: “Fantasy and playfulness have made a home in this spectacular building, which has large glass partitions and innovative fittings that are a perfect match for a design company so known for standing out from the crowd! As soon as you step into the three-storey glass-roofed atrium, you can see Gotessons’ own sound absorbers in the ceiling. It is also clear that the idea of the jungle is the concept which unifies the whole building, with colours and materials that match the company’s product range. One of the meeting rooms has a safari feel, with different wild animals on the walls – symbolising the different employees’ personalities. ‘We’ve got an interior which really speaks about who we are, one that breaks the mould. And it’s important to create that sense of pride among our staff. We also have a lot of fun at work and in this space we’ll enjoy it all the more,’ says Johan Götesson, Partner and MD at Gotessons.

White Guide to reward restaurants with good acoustic environments

Next year, the restaurant guide White Guide will start taking a restaurant’s acoustic environment into account in its restaurant reviews. The news was revealed by Mats Hanzon, Chairman of White Guide. They will award prizes to restaurants and cafes with good acoustic environments.

In the restaurant industry, people are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the acoustic environment in restaurants and cafes. This relates to both atmosphere and enjoyment, as well as working environment concerns. For this reason, from next year White Guide will include acoustic environment in its reviews. Hanzon says that it isn’t entirely clear how this review will be incorporated into the overall reviews, as, where sound is concerned, it is hard to find clear criteria. “We could perhaps describe whether you’d be able to hold a business meeting, or if the environment would be suitable for a sensitive conversation. In any case, we’ll obviously reward places with a good acoustic environment, rather than coming down harshly on those that don’t,” Hanzon disclosed to hotellrevyn.se.
Making the abstract visible

TEXT Mathias Bergeld PHOTO Workspace

When Workspace was commissioned to design Caruna’s new offices, the objective was not only to deliver an area where people could sit and work. Rather, it was to create a space for meetings, knowledge exchanges and wellbeing. In addition, Caruna wanted the building to have its own identity – for it to be a Caruna building.
Sometimes, an office is no more than four grey walls, a ceiling, a floor and a bit of furniture. A place that is functional, but anonymous. But it can be so much more. And that's just where the story of Caruna's offices in Espoo near Helsinki begins – in the anonymous. But through design and architecture, the company hasn’t simply tried to create a space for work; it has sought to create a space that also reflects the brand, and the values it wants people to associate with it. At the same time, it was important for this to be a functional space, and a working environment the employees could enjoy. Managing Director Jari Niemelä and interior architects Martta Suurpää och Marika Häkkinen, from the company Workspace, have been key to this process. When asked how they feel about the final result, Niemelä replies: “Before the building lacked its own identity, but now it’s got that: it’s become a Caruna building.”

Caruna was founded in 2014 after the energy giant Fortum sold off its energy distribution arm. The newly-formed company needed a new office space in the Helsinki area, and Workspace was commissioned to help in the task of finding a suitable building and fitting it out. Together they developed three functional criteria which had to be met. First of all, the environment had to promote collaboration between the different company departments. Second, they wanted to increase employees’ opportunities to learn from one another through information exchanges. Third, it was important to improve employees’ wellbeing and to have a pleasant working environment. These criteria in turn led them to search for a spacious building, to allow lots of people to easily meet one another. At the same time, they would also need space to create different types of areas, to allow both individual and collaborative

We wanted to create a space that reflected the brand.

Jari Niemelä
work. Combined with this, Niemelä explains, there was the need to build a visual identity that suited the company. The building would not simply be an office; it would reflect the company.

“When we started working on the design, our main objective was always for the building to look like Caruna. It was fantastic to design an entire office space from a holistic viewpoint,” says Suurpää.

What’s most striking about being inside the building is just how transparent it is. Here, the windows are not only on the external walls: large parts of the building have windows which look out over the large open spaces extending up over four floors, towards skylights that enable the daylight to come flooding in. The light of the office spaces and atrium are two of the best-valued details of the building, but they also present a few challenges of their own – and not only in terms of acoustics.

“Before our renovation the building had quite a powerful echo. The acoustics were really bad: high ceilings, lots of windows, hard furnishings and hard floors. That was something we had to take into account in the design,” Häkkinen recounts.

The solution was acoustic panels on the free wall surfaces beneath the skylights, soft furnishings and a special floor made of cork which retained the feeling of a wooden floor, but with much better acoustic features. We also wanted to give people access to more private areas in this otherwise open space. One of our tactics was to use something called “The Hut,” a sort of miniature house with a ceiling and walls which was designed by Workspace staff, but produced by Gotessons in Sweden. By removing the rear wall of the construction you could see right through it – thereby retaining the sense of transparency in the environment, while also being able to benefit from its acoustic features. It could also simultaneously function as a boundary leading
out onto the corridor, where there are lots of people passing by. The room-in-a-room concept, of which The Hut is an example, is something Suurpää and Häkkinen have used consistently. Häkkinen says that they wanted to make it possible to work everywhere. The atrium houses a restaurant which is open to the public, but by creating different types of spaces within that space, it could also serve as a meeting place and workspace.

If you look upwards when sitting in the restaurant area, you can’t help but be filled with a sense of space. Through the glass windows to the sides you also get a clear view of the expansive open spaces now filled with workspaces and more. In this part of the building it was important to preserve this feeling of transparency; this again called for solutions that would contribute to a pleasant working environment from an acoustic point of view. The need for transparency meant that Suurpää and Häkkinen were prevented from using things like curtains or partition walls to create a good acoustic environment. Instead they made use of acoustic panels over large parts of the ceiling. Soft rugs were placed on the floors to absorb the sound created from people walking and – as was the case in the atrium – the furniture selected had lots of soft material. Acoustic screens were fitted next to the desks.

“We set up screens by most of the work stations. We recommended using lower screens, which we explained by the fact that it’s important to be able to see the people around you – this automatically makes you quieter. If you feel as though you’re alone in a room, you speak louder,” Häkkinen explains.

The desk clusters are broken up by meeting spaces, social areas and places to go when you need to be alone. An example is the small rooms where you can take a seat to read or make a phone call. In an open plan office – where you are otherwise visible the
Screens, sound absorbers and other office products from Gotessons helped to create a complete solution for the Caruna office.
whole time – these spaces are important. The different areas also signify different things.

“The meeting spaces must make it clear to people that when you come here you are working in project mode; it becomes a visualisation of different working modes," says Niemelä.

One further key aspect connected to the original goals is the spaces created to promote employees’ wellbeing, including a sauna, gym, service areas on every floor with coffee and fruit, and restaurants on the ground floor.

Altogether it creates a sense of fluidity, and the different rooms in rooms all suggest some sort of movement. Mobility in itself is a key concept; one which is also linked to the original ideas of collaboration and information exchanges raised at the beginning of the project. In order to enable an optimal use of the areas, the interior architects carried out a survey of the employees at the start of the process. From this they developed two profiles: the mobile worker and the anchored worker.

“We based the layout on these profiles. Those who are most mobile in their work were placed near staircases and lifts, and those who needed things to be quieter ended up in calmer locations. At the same time, it was important to make it easier for people to move between the different areas in the office," says Suurpää.

The collaboration between those who would use the office and Workspace went really smoothly, and both were pleased with the final result. The original design was implemented without any major compromises. The Caruna brand was incorporated into the design of the acoustic screens, mats and the graphic design of the building. The final result made the spirit of Caruna – "We share positive energy" – a visual one; it made the abstract concept visible.

“This was more of a process than a project, simply because of how long it took. We were with the customer from the start right up until it was time for them to move in – and even beyond. The project was about the whole building, not just the office," Niemelä concludes.

FACTS

WORKSPACE

Jari Niemelä is Managing Director at Workspace and is well acquainted with many sectors of the business world, with extensive experience of human resources management, sales and consultancy assignments within several industries. In the Caruna project, Niemelä was Project Manager of the project and workplace concept, which included defining the best office options based on Caruna’s way of working, setting business goals for the new office and creating an office concept for Caruna.

MARTTA SUURPÄÄ has worked as an interior architect at Workspace since it began, and is currently Team Leader for one of two interiors teams. She has created functional and visual solutions for small and large companies alike, including Fortum, Nordea and Finnair.

MARİKA HÄKKİNE is an interior architect who studied at the Lahti Institute of Design. After graduating in 2010, she has worked on projects for hotels, restaurants and private homes. In 2013 she joined Workspace, and focuses mainly on aspects of working environment.
LIGHT, SOUND & AIR
THE KEY TO HEALTHIER EMPLOYEES

Clean air is more important to health than good sound absorption... but why compromise? The PAZ desk screen (patent pending) filters internal air of dangerous particles, while also reducing sound levels in both open plan areas and smaller offices.

PAZ by

GÖTESSONS

FROM WORKPLACE
TO CREATIVE SPACE™
The HANG OVER cloud-shaped sound absorbent from Gotessons is suspended from the ceiling over the engineering department out in production.
EXTREME. EVERYTHING EXTREME. down to the smallest detail. That’s one way of describing Christian von Koenigsegg’s creations in the fewest of words. Just take something like the new One:1 car: a car with a one megawatt engine (1,340 horsepower!) and a weight to power ration of 1:1 – that’s to say as much horsepower as its weight in kilos – whence the name.Even the company’s HQ is unusual: the company is housed in a disused Swedish Air Force hangar outside Ängelholm, once home to the F10 squadron. This gives Koenigsegg a unique advantage, in that they have access to the old runway which is 1.7 km long, on which they test their cars on an almost daily basis. The location’s military history – with the roaring take-offs of the Lansen, Draken and Viggen fighter jets – has also had another unexpected advantage: it has meant there are no neighbours to be disturbed by the noise of the engines.

In the autumn of 2015, work on double production lines commenced, and the number of employees now nears 100 people. In order to make space, a development team has therefore moved out to the production site, and they are based on what could be likened to a bridge looking out over the factory floor. With the move came an acoustic challenge – how to find a reasonable working environment for developers and engineers, when the workplace is a factory? A significant improvement came from using sound-absorbing mats in the office sections, and by lowering the ceiling through a number of hanging sound absorbers, which improve the acoustics around each individual workspace. “You really notice the absorbents,” says Christian von Koenigsegg. “Another effect is that you don’t get as tired of speaking, because you aren’t having to shout all the time,” he continues. “Of course, we’re going to work on this some more, and find more improvements moving forward”.

When asked what his favourite car sound is, von Koenigsegg replies: “I’m an engine guy, so the whistle of the wind and the wheel suspension aren’t really what I get most excited about. I’d say it’s hearing the engine sing – preferably when driving uphill, so it has to work a bit. But I should say that in reality I like speed that doesn’t only relate to engines. Our cars have set records several times in the world’s fastest car sports competition, with speeds of around 400 km per hour. But the speed at which you can take turns, how fast the engine and driveline react, brake speed, these are all just as important.”

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION
Koenigsegg develops the cars and all carbon fibre and engine parts on site in Ängelholm. The company has an engineering team of around 25 people. The technological development and design are led by von Koenigsegg himself.

In March, the Koenigsegg CCXR was named one of the “world’s 10 most beautiful cars ever” by Forbes magazine in America. Koenigsegg has even held the prestigious German Red Dot Award and the Svensk Form Excellent Swedish Design award.
The factory is less noisy than one might expect with such operations. However, they had to divide the work areas up into zones so that the engineers working on computers would get on with the workmen putting the cars together.

To the right: Example of the precision work, in the form of pedals cast in one piece. Also, detail image from production, where unique, customer-specific upholstery is carefully fitted.
IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Benny Andersson
Studio: Rixmixningsverket

In the first edition of Akustik, we visited the (then newly built) Rixmixningsverket studio. Benny said at the time that you can never have too many studios – and if no-one would rent and record there, they would just do it themselves! But artists have come flooding to the studio on Skeppsholmen, with its peculiar acoustics that have a mix of modern and retro equipment. A.M. Acoustics helped to construct a sound-absorber which would look like broad planks, so as not to clash with the old-feel environment. You can listen to the results yourself at rmvstudio.com, including artists like Frida Hyvönen, The Hives, BAO, Fredrik Emilson, Ulf Lundell and more.

Powerhouse Kjørbo
by Snohetta

In our previous edition we met Norwegian architects from Snohetta to discuss their unique project in Kjørbo: a building which would produce more energy than what it used during its entire life cycle. It was a tough task – and one which was solved, among other things, through a good deal of sound absorbers from A.M. Acoustics, one of the few companies who could deliver environmentally-friendly absorbents made from recycled material (thus saving energy). And the results were spectacular; the building has been visited by thousands, and in 2015 it was nominated for two MIPIM awards.

Skype Stockholm
pS Arkitekter

Skype’s prizewinning office in Stockholm was revealed in a report, in which pS’s Peter Sahlin and Mari Owren guided us around the spectacular premises. In the project, everything was “special”, and the furniture and lighting were inspired by Skype’s graphic profile. Skype won silver in the competition Sveriges Snyggaste Kontor (Sweden’s Best-Looking Office), and was nominated for Best Office in the Leaf Awards in London and at INSIDE Festival in Barcelona.

Bram Roose
Nordic silence, NL

We have also paid a visit to the Dutch Bram Roose, who loves all things Nordic. Bram feels that the silence experienced in the Nordic countries is in the DNA of every Scandinavian designer and architect. In the image, we see an interior of the sports centre and swimming pool in Maarssenbroek, where A.M. Acoustics helped out with rounded sound absorbers around pillars and in the ceiling.
AIRY GADGETS

Inspiration from the four elements of air, fire, water and earth. Here we’re focusing in on air, an important aspect of everything we do.

1 Airbag cycle helmet

The Hövding is the world’s first airbag for cyclists, and is the result of intensive research. Through advanced sensors, the Hövding feels the cyclist’s movement patterns and reacts as soon as an accident occurs. The unique airbag then inflates to form a hood which supports your neck and offers you the world’s best shock absorption. So feel the air whistling past as you cycle, without ruining your hair. The image to the left shows the uninflated collar. Available to buy from shop.hovding.se from SEK 2,700

2 Pure air with EcoSUND

EcoSUND® is a unique core material from A.M. Acoustics. The material is made from recycled PET bottles and plant fibres – something that supports the environment while also offering us purer air to breathe in our workplaces. The material does not leak any gases (it contains no glue/adhesives), withstands humidity (cannot rot or go mouldy) and does not emit fibres that can irritate the skin.

3 Wireless from B&O

BeoPlay A9 is like a sort of cross between a mini UFO and a satellite dish, but behind its fabric front sit 5 speakers and an amplifier powerful enough to turn your living room into a mini disco. Music is downloaded wirelessly from a network, via a tablet, mobile phone or computer. Design by Øivind Alexander Slaatto. Price around SEK 18,000
PAZ by Gotessons is a desk screen which improves your productivity and health. PAZ stands for Pure Air Zone. PAZ combines the functions of sound absorption and air purification in a patented construction. It creates a bubble of clean air via the front of the screen. Draught-free. Silent. Energy-efficient.

**An airier desk**

For anyone bored of skydiving, wingsuit offers you the chance to really fly like a bird. They are used both when BASE jumping and skydiving from a plane. Before you can get started with a wingsuit, most organisations require you to have carried out 200 parachute jumps. They are available to buy for from USD 1,800 on squirrel.ws. Photo: Squirrel LLC

**Wingsuit Aura 2**

One toy which can now be used professionally is drones. With Blades Chroma you can film in 4K resolution, for up to 30 minutes per battery pack. Available to buy at horizonhobby.com from around USD 1,100.

**Drones**
Gothenburg Opera

Acoustics in a can? Yes, it actually works, and with well-balanced insulation and a hefty dose of electronics it’s possible to transform both the volume and the overall experience into something completely different to what the builders left behind.
W hen Göteborg Opera was inaugurated in 1994, having the best possible acoustics had been a guiding principle of the building. In the auditorium, that is. That their ambitions were not quite so high when it came to the rehearsal spaces, or that costs had had to be cut, became clear from a very early stage. Both the orchestra and choir’s halls were small with regard to the number of musicians and chorists. They tried to solve this problem by all manner of measures, but had no success in creating a tolerable working environment. It even got so bad that the choir hall was reported to the Swedish Work Environment Authority in 2011. The high noise levels meant that members of the choir risked damaging their hearing.

Magnus summarises his first year in the orchestra’s rehearsal hall:

“Too many people with too many instruments playing far too loud in a room that was too small. Not only was the volume too loud; people also had problems hearing one another between the sections, which meant that it was hard to find a natural dynamic in the orchestra. Internally, it also led to friction; those who played instruments that are tonally softer – such as the strings – were constantly getting annoyed at the brass and percussion sections for playing too loud.”

Later, once they gave up on finding the right acoustic measures, more and more of musicians started bringing hearing protectors to rehearsals. And if you play with hearing protection, then you lose control over your own dynamics – what Magnus calls “skipping the subtleties” – which serves to drive the volume up even more.

“If you play with hearing protection, then you lose the subtleties”
Magnus Pehrsson, Viola

Unfortunately we fell into a downwards spiral. Yet I still felt like I had a long life ahead of me as an orchestral musician. And I wanted to stay at Göteborg Opera.”

But a solution was in sight. In 2013 a new electro-acoustic system from Yamaha was tested at the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm, where they had had similar problems, and after paying the latter a study visit the Gothenburgers decided to install the system at Göteborg Opera too.

The concept is simple. First, it is ensured that the actual room has a controllable base acoustic – dry without being mute. Then a microphone system is installed, which captures the sound in the room and sends it to two processors: one takes care of the first reflections and the second adds a faint echo. Then the sound is sent back to the room where it is played out through a large number of speakers to give a sense of natural reverb.

Ingemar Ohlsson at Audio Datalog made the first acoustics calcula-
visions and, with the help of a mix of diffusors and absorbents, insulation in the ceiling and cladding to the beams, they managed to reach a 0.5 second reverb in the room. After that, Stockholm company Audile installed the electronic rigging. Four omnidirectional condenser microphones were suspended in a small square over the orchestra, with four cardioid microphones in a larger square out towards the corners of the room.

There were 16 wall-mounted speakers, symmetrically positioned approximately three meters up and facing inwards, supplemented by 20 further speakers on the ceiling facing downwards – all to cover the room as evenly as possible. The 36 smaller speakers also had some help in the lower registers by four subwoofers, hung from the ceiling in a large square.

In order for the sound to feel as transparent as possible, it was also split up into 40 channels; one per speaker.

Using a control panel it is then possible to select the reverb based on the number of musicians in the room: whether it’s an orchestra, orchestra plus choir or a small ensemble, in which case the reverb goes from 1.1 up to 1.5 seconds.

Since installation in August 2014 different degrees of insulation and reverb have been experimented with, and Magnus Pehrsson says that the sound environment in the rehearsal room was really noticeable when the orchestra would then come out to play in the auditorium.

“When it was at its most insulated it could get a bit screechy when the orchestra sat in the pit, and the conductor had to do a lot of work to tighten up the dynamics.”

Of course, the best thing would have been to have the same acoustics in the rehearsal room as those out in the auditorium, but the laws of physics are pretty uncompromising in that respect. The room is too small for a full orchestra – no electronics in the world can change that – but the fact that they were nevertheless able to improve the musicians’ experience is clear when Magnus points out one detail not directly linked to hearing, but which still shows the effect of the added reverb.

“That little extra reverb means that it feels more like in the auditorium; that you can loosen up a little, play a little bit more relaxed. A number of musicians still use hearing protection, both during rehearsals and in operas with a full orchestra, but the number of those who do so is considerably less than previously. I ask Magnus Pehrsson to rate the difference before and after based on the ten-grade pain scale used in hospitals.

“It could probably have been a 7 or 8 during certain powerful passages, but we’re probably down to a 4 or 5 now. I wouldn’t say that the problem is entirely solved, but in making the orchestra’s daily work that bit easier it has made a huge difference, and seeing as we sit there every day, every improvement means a lot. Now I go home with more energy and less of a headache.”
WIN PRIZES

TRAVERS TO THE SUN! CHECK OUT STAND A35:02 & A40:18

Take part in our competition!
In our two stands you can win travels to exotic locations.
See you at our stands.

STOCKHOLM FURNITURE AND LIGHT FAIR. FEBRUARI 9-13, 2016
Gotessons

2nd runner up in Sweden’s Office of the Year competition, filled by in-house design.
Gotessons and Joy of Plenty, or how a company can create spectacular design with a well-balanced sound environment – and be voted Sweden’s third-best-looking office into the bargain.

SPACE AND AIR are the dominant impressions I get when I meet Anette Roy Williamson, the person responsible for Gotessons’ new interiors, at the entrance to their new offices just outside of Ulricehamn. We are surrounded by glass and it looks as though the ceiling is at least ten metres high. Besides the huge glass walls which erase the boundary between the outside and inside, you are struck by two things: the custom-built white steel staircase with flashes of sponged-on green which leads up towards the upper two floors; and the outlandish starfish-like seating in the middle of the entrance hall.

It is clear that this is an office like no other.

“We wanted to create both a calm space, and one with a sense of playfulness – a glint in the eye – to tie it in with how MD Johan and everyone around him works,” Williamson explains.

She comes back to words such as fantasy, inspiration and stimulation when she produces the guidelines used for Joy of Plenty’s work on the office. The Borås-based interiors company became involved at an early stage of the project – at a point when there wasn’t much
more to the offices than a site and an outer shell – and Williamson believes that this was one of the keys, not only to a good end result, but also to saving a lot of money along the way.

She also describes how her interiors concept was approved the very first time she presented it to the management team. After her presentation, you could have heard a pin drop in the room. Then Johan Götesson said:

“This was not what I had expected.” But after a pause – which must have felt like an eternity for Williamson – he continued.

“It’s a hell of a lot better.”

**BOTH SHOWROOM AND OFFICE**

From humble beginnings manufacturing wire baskets and dish racks in the early days after the company was founded by Johan Götesson’s father, Gotessons has grown to a strong brand for a multitude of different office solutions. The product that first put the company on the map was a cable holder which was a registered design, but for many years now Gotessons has been primarily known for its acoustic solutions. Two of them can be found right here in the entrance hall: the amoeba-shaped Hang on pouf, and the Hang over solution suspended from the ceiling in a cloud formation.

The office is intended to show off Gotessons’ own products in their proper environment, but a number of furniture from Gotessons’ resellers are also on display. Williamson takes me on a tour, and after the first meeting room – decorated with wildlife wallpaper, a wall absorbent with a Serengeti motif and lamps with wild goose feather lampshades – we pass between the cell office and a number of workspaces, spaces which all showcase samples of Gotessons’ different absorbent screen solutions.

In a short corridor on the way to the lunch hall, the rubber mat has been replaced with a plush, grass-like rug and paved concrete slabs to step on. Williamson stops and explains.

“This is another example of how Gotessons are prepared to go that step further. Most would probably have said ‘no thanks’ to the grass rug, thinking it would be impractical.

“But despite this playful touch, Joy of Plenty has not passed up on the genuine. The chairs in the lunch room are leather-upholstered, the worktops in the kitchenette are of stone, and draw handles within are all brass. On the way back to the staircase, Williamson suddenly dips into one of the office rooms. She has caught sight of a brand new wall absorbent from A.M. Acoustics, which has recently been bought up by Gotessons. It looks like it is built out of cubes on different
levels, and is completely black. In contrast to many wall absorbents nowadays which bear photographic or lithographic motifs, Nivå feels somewhat cocksure. Almost saying we mean business.

**PLAYFUL ENVIRONMENTS**

Floor two has the same mix of office and open spaces, but we also find Gotessons’ room here too: The Hut – pronounced “hutt” in the Gotessons’ way, is an absorbent the size of a play house with side walls and gable roof which can be fitted with either one or two gables, with or without a window. Hut works either as a secluded, interruption-free zone for conversations – either face-to-face or over the phone – or else it is otherwise possible to move the entire workplace into the Hut. The second floor also holds Johan Götesson’s office, with a natural cork wallpaper on two of the walls and a continuous sweep of curved glass as walls three and four.

Next to this is the huge conference room, with a ceiling height of seven metres and an entirely glass wall which faces out onto the entry hall and the motorway outside. The thought comes to mind that both concisely listed agendas and discipline are required from meeting participants to prevent their attention being caught up in the panoramic view.

The room has an inner wall which hides a little kitchenette which has space to dish up a buffet, and a sound system which looks as though it could fill a moderately sized club with sound.

The long meeting table fits ten people, but the room also features additional seating through poufs and a soft, joinable sofa pieces with back support placed in the middle of the seating cushions. Despite the size and the shape of the room, the sound environment feels pleasant; softened by not silenced. Helping to do this is the plush, full-floor carpet which can also be found in the other office spaces, and full-length drapery on a rail. These are also helped by suspended Hang over absorbers and a combination product: a circular absorbent with an LED lamp at its centre, which lights up the conference table like a flying saucer, while also contributing to keeping the sound reflections in check.

**CLEANER AIR**

After a quick look at the third floor of the office, which is a space for expansion, we are back at the starfish of the entrance hall, the Aster model by Italian brand Edra, which despite its soft cushioning has a somewhat rough feel, not unlike that of a real starfish. Inside a glass wall sit the customer service team, who have a few other Gotessons.
specials at their work desks: Pure Air Zone, which combines an air purifier and absorbent, and the SMS box – a stool, storage box and mobile charger in one.

Williamson begins telling us about the office's acoustics and introduces what we are standing on, the brushed concrete floor.

“There’s always a risk of the sound echoing with so many hard materials here in the entrance hall, but the fact is that we have worked in several environments with concrete floors, and there isn’t nearly as much as clip-clopping with these as with parquet or wooden floors, for example.”

And she attributes the success of the sound environment as a whole to her own experience.

“I’ve been around for some years now, so I know which materials will work in a given environment. We will often choose a wallpaper with a softer surface over a painted wall, soft carpets, lots of textiles and furniture that dampens sound. And with Gotessons’ own products, we also know that we have a lot of sound absorbent materials to work with. Otherwise I would probably say that we consult Gotessons more when we work on other offices than we did when we were working on this one.”

When I, as a final question, ask what she has taken from this project onto her next clients, I expect a general response about the benefits of working closely with the client or something similar. Instead Williamson replies, lightning fast and with a chuckle:

“The black sound absorbent from A.M. Acoustics.”

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NIVA
Sound absorbent wall panels
Red Bull

pS’ architects focusing on light and sound

Text Mathias Bergeld PHOTO pS
ON 17 NOVEMBER, the winners of the competition for Sweden’s Best-Looking Office 2015 were announced, in which Red Bull’s office in Stockholm won fourth place – beating off record numbers of competitors to do so. The office’s architects are pS Arkitektur and, according to the company’s MD Peter Sahlin – also head architect on this project – the company’s culture is a key concept in their work. This concept encompasses how the company works, how they are organised, what their brand stands for, what they need in order to be able to work in their premises and – not least – where they are heading in the future. At the same time, it’s important not to forget aspects of functionality.

“Having worked with office renovations and reconstructions for over 20 years, we have noticed that light and sound can never be forgotten. The consequences of doing so are a flat, boring, noisy project,” Sahlin explains.

Red Bull’s office is therefore the result of a great understanding of the company culture, and a real attention to functionality. How the company works reflects which acoustics solutions have been used. It’s about finding what’s best for that individual client.

“I’m always thinking that the particular challenge of working with offices is finding the right balance of sound level – both high- and low-level frequencies – based on what the company works with,” says Sahlin.

Certain earlier projects had on occasion been demanding acoustically, requiring very controlled sound levels. When they worked on Skype’s office, for example, the reverb times in the meeting room came in at under 0.5 seconds – an incredibly low figure. But as Red Bull use their offices in an entirely different way and also provide a different type of service, the acoustics requirements were completely different. Here, the focus was instead on group work, and how the premises looked and the message that they conveyed were important. Achieving extremely low reverb times was not something they had to prioritise. However, Sahlin says that both he and the client are very satisfied with the sound profile they have created in the office.

They wanted large swathes of the building to have an industrial character, which meant that they opened up the concrete ceiling and gave half of the premises concrete floors. The acoustic discs don’t cover the entire ceiling, so as not to hide the electrical trays and other installations. To achieve good sound absorbency, there is textile flooring in the office spaces and in those areas where more sound insulation is essential. In certain places they have also chosen to put up curtains. Thérèse Svalling, managing architect on the project, recounts that they also used sound absorbents on the walls. By printing images onto them or by selecting specific fabrics, they have been able to get the most out of their acoustic benefits while also obtaining the visual feel they were after.

“I was in contact with Ann-Catrin Björnhede at A.M. Acoustics, she helped me with technical advice, samples, etc. Our collaboration worked really well,” says Svalling.

According to Sahlin, it’s important that solutions such as acoustic curtains or sound absorbents on walls are considered early on in the project, so that they don’t get cut for economic reasons later on. A bonus in the Red Bull project was the availability of images that could be printed onto the absorbents; images which additionally convey something the client would like to get across, something that reflects the company culture.
MOST OF US – who left the school desk behind long ago – probably have a specific memory of the various sounds of the school cafeterias of our childhood: the sound of cutlery scraping on porcelain; hundreds of voices planning the upcoming break time; feet running and walking in a never-ceasing flow; and chairs being dragged back and forth over the floor. These sounds were often spread and reinforced by the hard floors and furniture, as well as a lack of sound-absorbent elements. Every day, around 480 students plus teachers and other employees eat their lunch in the newly-renovated lunch room at Rostaskolan in Örebro. In addition, the kitchen not only delivers food internally, but also to other schools in the area. Maud Söljén, School and Preschool Head, says there was a need to change the sound environment in the cafeteria, as the previous space was often acoustically not fit for purpose.

Rostaskolan is a school that takes in children from pre-school ages up to the age of 13, and the renovation of its cafeteria was part of a larger redevelopment. Today, acoustics are obviously something that are borne into consideration when a school environment is being planned and created.

“Now we have directives for sound adaptation, and we are always thinking of acoustics with our new purchases,” says Söljén.

When the lunch room was renovated it involved a range of measures being carried out to improve the sound environment. Acoustic panels were fitted to the walls, the ceiling was lowered, sound absorbent tables were bought in and the room was subdivided through the use of acoustic screens. Altogether, the different measures created a good, calm sound environment. This is something of great importance, not least in schools – for both students and those working there.

“A calmer environment has a positive effect on learning. Then there are also medical factors such as headaches and tinnitus which it can help to counteract,” says Söljén.

The idea of screening off and simultaneously splitting up the children into smaller groups in the lunch room was something that had previously been done in the cafeteria, by doing things like putting out flowers. The idea was to create a calmer environment for the children to eat in. During the redevelopment, the need arose to not only screen off different areas, but also to gain a sound-absorbing function, and so the choice was mad in favour of the Block screen from A.M. Acoustics. It is a relatively large screen, but it’s lightweight, which is often used to split up larger spaces. By using the screens, small rooms were created in the space where smaller groups could sit and eat.

“The children probably think it’s nice to sit by a wall, because then you don’t see everything and you can have a bit of your own rhythm when you sit and eat. It’s a nicer feeling, that bit more security around you,” Söljén explains.

The employees at the school, children and parents have all been able to get involved in shaping how the school environment should look and be. According to Söljén, the different acoustic measures have led to a better, calmer environment for everyone who spends time in the space. In spite of all the sounds of the cafeteria, it is now an environment in which you can speak easily, and it has had a positive effect on education, health and the working environment. This acoustic focus may perhaps also lead to today’s batch of schoolchildren having entirely different recollections of their school cafeterias, recollections quite removed from those of previous generations.
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