

GOODWILLE NEWS

Matching your culture with local knowledge

Taking your corporate culture into new territories

By Sophia Ahrel

A strong corporate culture can build your reputation, attract the right people and influence management styles in your organisation. Establishing your corporate culture and successfully translating it across borders can be a challenge, so Goodwille News spoke to two Goodwille clients, who run international businesses in the UK, for their advice on what it takes to succeed.

Industrial group Atlas Copco is a world leader in compressors, construction and mining equipment, power tools and assembly systems. The company manufactures in 20 countries and distributes in 170, combining local knowledge with a strong corporate culture based on Swedish values.

UK managing director Karljohan's Börjesson is proud of his company's cultural heritage while respecting how business is run and managed in the UK. "It's perfectly possible to run an operation based on Swedish values while still working on the basis of local knowledge in the UK. Obviously, respect is a two way thing, and the basic business principle of rolling up your sleeves and getting on with it applies everywhere, regardless of market or sector."

One of Karljohan's roles is to develop and coach new managers and business leaders about the core principles

"You have to understand the market and listen to what your customers are saying: among other things, it's about customer service, customer service, customer service."

of the Atlas Copco culture: flat structure, openness to challenge, and room to manoeuvre. He says: "A business leader cannot be an expert in everything, but has to carry the responsibility for an organisation, and needs to be open to critique and learn from his team to improve performance.

We encourage our employees to challenge senior managers to help them make positive change and progress the business".

This bottom-up approach to management is not common in British businesses, but it's a key aspect of Atlas Copco culture and one of the ways in which the company lives its global tagline "there is always a better way".

Karljohan says the foundation of Atlas Copco's strong culture is an appreciation of differences combined with mutual respect between employees and employers. The constant flow of applications from job seekers is proof that Atlas Copco's strong values and management style attract expertise, skills and specialists in their industry.

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The Vital Importance of Company Values

For some time we felt a need to identify Goodwille's company values. Though we instinctively felt we were all heading the same way and shared similar ethics and corporate goals, actually pinning these values down seemed rather daunting. Yet the more we grew the more we wanted to be sure we all had the same vision in common. In an ever-changing world I think the knowledge that values are shared gives us a vital sense of security, community and direction.

We sought assistance from an expert, Vanessa Lindén, and decided to have a weekend away in the Bucks countryside. The result far exceeded my expectations. My biggest (unexpressed) worry had been that we might collectively come up with a set of values with which I could not personally agree! In hindsight a silly thought – why would anyone willingly work with people whose values differed significantly from their own?

“Values are the way we do things, the behaviours by which we are judged!”

Values are the way we do things, the behaviours by which we are judged! In trying to identify them everyone opened up with new approaches. What was equally rewarding was that new ideas for making Goodwille a better workplace were generated. One of the most important was the creation of focus groups run entirely by staff in which everyone is encouraged

to participate on a rotating basis. Since their inception in April five important issues have been dealt with. This achievement truly typifies the values we identified over that successful weekend. We now regularly discuss how our

values fit in with our work environment and how they influence our daily life.

I wonder what my family would say if we did a similar exercise at home and what impact it would have!

Find the Goodwille values in 'about us / visions and values' at www.goodwille.com.

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Investment research company Morningstar is another example of a company that has successfully translated its strong values from outside the UK. Craig Ellis, VP International Financial Operations, is now based in his native Australia after a spell in London. He says Morningstar already had a successful global brand, so he was focused on operational improvements to help enhance brand value, but it was hard to get to grips with the different cultures across Europe.

“We already had operations in many countries, including seven in Europe, and the biggest challenge for me was understanding

how countries in such close proximity that were all part of the EU had such individual cultures, laws and ways of communicating.”

Craig says one of the biggest challenges of adjusting to business life in the UK was the lack of speed that it takes to get anything done! “It took six weeks for one of the major banks to issue a credit card; I'm just not used to that type of delay.”

In terms of cultural barriers, Craig admits that he found people in the UK less open than Australian's, this maybe because there is such a diversity of people and languages particularly in central London. “That being said, the UK offers such a wealth of culture and history not available in Australia and with its proximity to Europe it makes the UK such a wonderful place to live in.”

Craig has some practical advice for business leaders and entrepreneurs who are looking to expand and successfully transfer their brand values into new markets: “You have to understand the market and listen to what your customers are saying; among other things, it's about customer service, customer service, customer service.”



Craig Ellis

Goodwille Product News



Credit checks and monitoring

In today's uncertain economic climate, more and more companies are giving careful thought to their suppliers' and customers' credit worthiness. To help, Goodwille is launching a monthly credit monitoring service that will keep you up-to-date and provide reassurance that your targeted companies can live up to their promises. Credit checking is also a useful tool for your finance department, enabling you to keep an eye on your own credit rating.

For more information about this service, please contact our team members Oskari (oskarit@goodwille.co.uk) or Maria (maria@goodwille.co.uk)

Virtual office

Using a virtual office as your official place of business, or 'trading address', can save you many of the costs normally associated with retaining your own premises. It also gives you the opportunity to locate your business somewhere that enhances your reputation – a well-known location that's easy to find, convenient to get to and perhaps even prestigious. As part of our virtual office, we offer mail forwarding, phone answering and many other PA-related services, as well as the use of our meeting rooms, the largest of which accommodates up to 14 people.

Please contact Felicity van Look for more information about this service. (felicity@goodwille.co.uk)

Agent for service

Goodwille has over 10 years' experience acting as an Agent for service – helping companies operating in the UK as well as those who deal with UK financial institutions and require a registered UK address for legal proceedings or other notices to be served. Appointing an Agent for service of legal process is advisable whenever there is a contract governed by English law between two or more parties without a place of business in the United Kingdom.

Please contact Jenny Ellerd-Styles if you wish to receive more information about this service. (jenny@goodwille.co.uk)

Keys to Success

- A strong corporate culture can build your company's reputation, attract the right people and influence management styles in your organisation.
- A bottom-up approach to management is not common in British businesses, however with the right management support structure endorsed by the Country Manager it is possible to create a flatter structure and a two-way communication flow.
- One of the biggest challenges is to understand how countries in such close proximity that are all part of the EU have such individual cultures, laws and ways of communicating.
- "You have to understand the market and listen to what your customers are saying: among other things, it's about customer service, customer service, customer service."



TRAVEL HOTSPOT ABERDEEN

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The Business Travellers Hot Spots in Aberdeen

Where to lunch: The Albyn Restaurant, West End, Good food in a relaxed atmosphere. During summertime you can eat outside.

Where to stay: Rosemount, Whitehall or Holburn, Skene House Hotel Suits, all three with central location.

Where to dine: Mal Brasserie @ Malmaison Hotel, West End. Probably the best steak in town.

Where to meet: Dizzy's Bar & Restaurant in the West End, a popular meeting place for business people.

Off the beaten track: Gordon Highlander Museum, West End. Relives the story of one of the British Army's regiments. The museum can also be used for corporate events or private dinners.

Bättre.

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Scandinavian Airlines

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*Discount is calculated before taxes and charges. Terms and conditions apply visit flysas.co.uk **Source : Flightstats.com. SAS in 2009.



Demand for Modest Business Leaders

The paradox in business cultures

Leadership development specialist Michael Green is a Senior Lecturer in Executive Development at Newcastle Business School, part of Northumbria University.

Q: How successful are Scandinavian businesses in transferring their company values into the UK?

A: Scandinavian businesses have an immediate advantage with their ability and willingness to speak excellent English! However, I do not believe that all Scandinavian values are easily transferable to the UK. In particular, the intensive work ethic in the UK means frustrations may occur with what appears to be a rather relaxed approach from the Scandinavians. The most successful businesses take the best from both cultures, combining UK business pace with Scandinavian attention to detail.

Q: What are the differences between the values of Scandinavian and UK businesses?

A: Recent studies have shown the two cultures have similar values in terms of performance, profit, innovation and gender equality, although the Scandinavian work/life balance is more in equilibrium than in the UK. But there are key differences. UK businesses are assertive, while Scandinavian businesses are cautious and risk averse. Scandinavian businesses tend to be product focused, analysing data and making decisions based on facts. The UK is naturally focused on sales, marketing and services, where forcefulness, risk acceptance and a 'just do it' attitude are assets. Scandinavian businesses, in particular Swedish, also tend to be highly collective, involving employees in consultation. UK businesses are relatively low on collectivism, so while they may view Scandinavian practices as complex and long-winded, Scandinavians may view UK business practice as undemocratic and even reckless.

Q: What are the key criteria for a good business leader in the UK, and how does this compare to Scandinavia?

A: Both cultures prefer leaders who are team orientated and involve others in decision making. In the UK, leaders with charisma, vision and a strong focus on performance are highly admired. Scandinavians, particularly the Finns, value integrity and honesty in their leaders above all other attributes and scorn status consciousness and self-centred

behaviour. The UK notion that conflict can sometimes be constructive is not shared by Scandinavians; the Danes especially value leaders who discourage conflict. Paradoxically, leaders who are modest are preferred more in the UK than in Scandinavia - something to bear in mind when making a first impression!

Q: Does being a Scandinavian business in the UK add to a company's value proposition?

A: Scandinavian businesses have a great deal to gain from operating in the UK, with the potential to capture the dynamism and market orientation of the business culture here and marry it with the rationality and pragmatism of their home countries. This combination is powerful but difficult to achieve and requires mutual understanding and concessions.

"The most successful businesses take the best from both cultures, combining UK business pace with Scandinavian attention to detail."

Q: What advice would you give to Scandinavian businesses running a UK subsidiary?

A: Organise a transfer of cultural knowledge through education and allowing key employees to experience both cultures first hand. Don't assume that what is normal practice in Copenhagen, Stockholm or Helsinki will automatically be welcomed in London (and vice versa). Be sensitive to key cultural 'flashpoints', but don't encourage people to behave contrary to their own cultural values in an attempt to fit in. Better to be a conventional Scandinavian who appreciates British humour than trying to be 'one of the boys'.

International business thrives on local knowledge

When visiting Warwick, a city in the West Midlands region of England, what do you think you'd be getting if you were offered a 'chip batch'?

- (a) A warehouse full of microprocessors
- (b) A bread roll full of French fries
- (c) A lesson in hitting short golf shots.

The answer is (b) – effectively a potato sandwich – known elsewhere in the UK as a chip butty, a chip bap, and many other names besides. It's local knowledge like this that sets Goodwille apart, which is why we are so pleased to have expanded our geographical reach across the UK during 2010.

Our new Warwick office can serve our clients with order handling and sales processing as well. The location opens up opportunities for manufacturing clients as well as companies in need of the large storage facilities available in the region.

Meanwhile, in Guildford, Surrey, our joint venture with HFS Goodwille is already proving to be a real success. Incoming enquiries from foreign companies are on the increase, seeking advice on staff benefits, insurance and financial planning. Underlining the importance of local knowledge, HFS Goodwille Managing Director Rod Milne says: "Deciding on the best benefit strategy, suitable for UK employees, is an integral part of a successful company. This is specialist knowledge that will enable your company to attract and retain the skilled personnel you need to prosper."

Michael Green: Biography

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- Michael has 27 years experience in the forest products and engineering industries.
- In addition to his native UK he has lived and worked in Helsinki, Brussels, Amsterdam and Paris.
- Until 2007, he was a Senior Vice-President of leading paper supplier M-real Corporation in Finland.
- He joined Newcastle Business School in 2009. His teaching specialities are developing authentic leaders, intercultural leadership and organisational development.
- Michael has just completed his PhD thesis on cross-cultural leadership.



Staff profile: Klothilde Ganzer

As Goodwille's new HR Consultant, Austrian born Klothilde plays a key role in co-ordinating the day-to-day activities of the outsourced HR functions we provide. She has a background in generalist HR and international law, and in her spare time likes to 'indulge her friends with home-baked Austrian desserts'. Funnily enough, she's had no trouble settling into the Goodwille team.

What led you to a career in HR?

I was working as in-house lawyer for an international company when I was offered the chance to take over the HR Department. I immediately thought, 'Oh, that's easy; it's just employment law!' But I soon realised that HR is more about effectively managing people and helping to improve overall company performance, which is so much more creative and challenging than just providing legal advice. After that, it was an easy decision for me to stay in HR.

How does UK employment law compare with German-speaking countries?

It's actually surprising how different it is. For instance, in the UK the relationship between employer and employee is much more superficial and flexible than in German-speaking countries, where a tradition of codified law leads to a shared understanding of obligations and a more cooperative approach. This is reflected by the fact that, in the UK, trade unions don't play such a big role. It's left up to the employees to protect their own rights, which means more frequent claims for compensation for things like unfair dismissal and discrimination.

What's your main focus at Goodwille?

With many of our services – company secretary, payroll, financial administration – it's easy to see how they benefit the bottom

line, but people tend not to think of HR like that. So I'm focusing on showing how HR can play a role in driving sustainable organisational success. I want to demonstrate that HR is not just a 'soft' discipline – that it is guided by facts and figures, and that it can add real value, supporting the business strategy and driving long-term performance.

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Klothilde Ganzer

Daniel Parry,
Managing
Director



“At Goodwille we believe that the businesses with the greatest potential for success are those who understand and address the operational challenges as early as possible.”

Culture or vulture?

By Daniel Parry, Managing Director
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The old idiom, “What you don't know won't hurt you” is all very well, but in business it couldn't be farther from the truth. Expanding into a foreign country is a hugely positive experience, but can you really afford to jump head first into the unknown, exposing your business to the risk of being caught out making mistakes and losing face – or worse, losing business?

I am blessed with a fascinating job where I get to work with many brilliant businesses, gifted specialists and ambitious entrepreneurs, but I am often puzzled by how few companies and people actually look at the practicalities of operating in the UK. In my opinion this question must be viewed

in parallel to the market planning. All too often do we see fine companies failing in their plans simply because they believe that the UK's internationality means that they're free to do things the way they are used to doing back home. Legal contracts, payment terms, targeted stakeholders and business etiquette are all matters that have caused companies to fail, yet very few take the time to understand them.

At Goodwille we believe that the businesses with the greatest potential for success are those who understand and address the operational challenges as early as possible. Why not let Goodwille help you? As company secretaries we have a great understanding of board work and can contribute to the process of expanding your business abroad.

Don't let the unknown bite you, come prepared.



Mingle & People

Goodwill Spring Drinks

Annika Goodwille, right with Camilla Persson

Helena Whitaker & Colin Harmer

Guests attending Goodwille seminar in Gothenburg

Hans Kjellberg from UK Trade & Invest (UKTI) speaks at Gothenburg seminar

Our website photographer Erica with her husband Per Lauritzen

Vanessa Linden has worked with us building the Goodwille team spirit!

Goodwille staff party

Peter and his wife Niomi

The Panel in Gothenburg

Oskari with his wife Silvane

Sara with her boyfriend Johan

GOODWILLE

Goodwille has been busy recruiting!

We want to welcome the following members to our international team of experts. To read more please visit goodwille.com

Klothilde Ganzer, HR Consultant

Christina Skyldal, Financial Trainee

Nicholas Nilsson, Treasury Assistant

Maria Lazzarro, Company Secretarial Administrator

Clare Holland, Assistant Office Manager

Marie Karlsson, Purchase Ledger Assistant

We are looking for...

Business Development Consultant

For more information please visit goodwille.com

About Goodwille: Goodwille helps head offices minimise uncertainty and reduce the strain on management and resources when entering foreign markets. We specialise in offering operational advice and service support to high growth new market entries and businesses expanding internationally. We have a pragmatic and holistic approach to looking after your company's Corporate Legal, Company Secretarial, HR, Employee benefits and Financial Accounting needs – allowing you to keep focused on your core functions and primary objectives.

GOODWILLE

Your Business Partner, Every Step of the Way

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