



INNOVATION DESIGN CARE
SINCE 1989

25
YEARS

INNOVATION DESIGN CARE
SINCE 1989



Bellman & Symfon's founder, Peter Jungvid.

necessity
is the mother
of invention,
as Plato is claimed to have said.

No matter what the origin of the proverb, Peter Jungvid had his back to the wall and needed to find a solution. The year was 1988 and he had left the welding company ESAB. He was sitting at the kitchen table in his small apartment thinking about how he would support himself. He was 27 years old, newly-qualified with a degree in Business Administration from the Gothenburg School of Economics and with only a few years of work experience.

He sensed something in the back of his mind that would soon grow into a bigger idea.

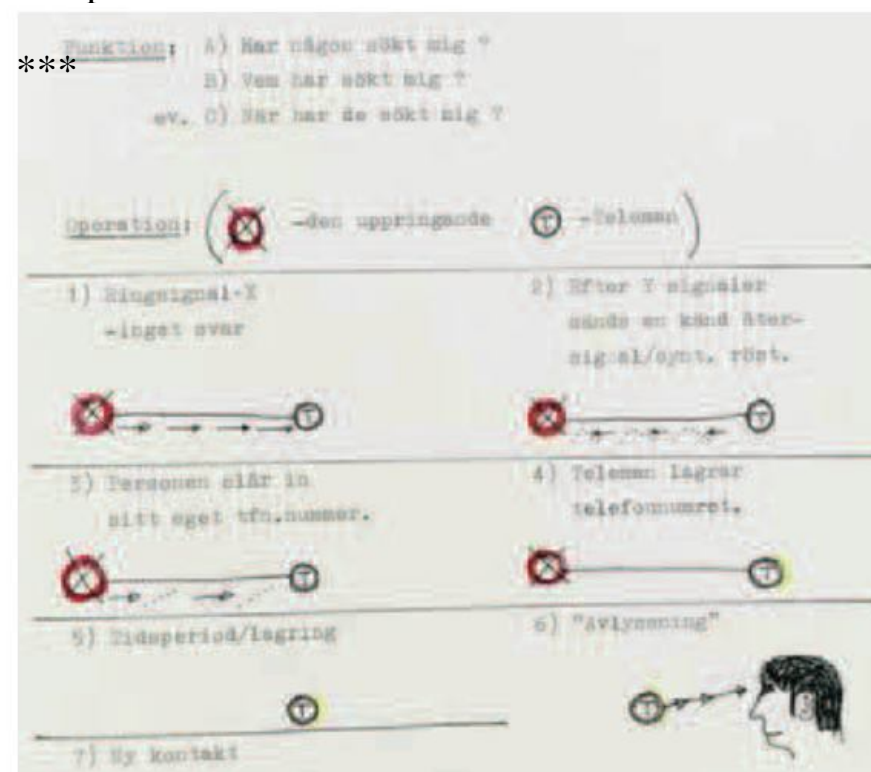
In the office where he used to work, all the telephones sounded the same. From the coffee room it was impossible to tell whose phone was ringing. Every coffee break someone got up and ran to their phone unnecessarily. Most chose to sigh or laugh it off. However, Peter had really thought about it.

Peter was trained in economics and commerce, but at heart he was an inventor and entrepreneur. Even as a teenager he had loved technology and problem solving. Just as for many young Swedes, the motorcycle was the key to freedom for young Peter. His world grew and became accessible in new ways. But for Peter this was also the first step in what is now his job: through understanding the interplay between technology and design, making life better for many people.

A few years earlier, more specifically in 1983, he had already tried his hand at being an inventor. Peter and a friend had produced a caller ID system that they called *Teleman*. After much deliberation they had been in contact with Telia, Sweden's largest telephone company, which was the industry giant at the time. The young men were met with skepticism. The large firm knew best. Nothing happened.

And now Peter was sat at his kitchen table. His wallet was fairly empty. He had sold his car and his 1000 ESAB shares to survive. The future was not particularly bright.

Until the phone rang. Then suddenly everything fell into place. The idea was hatched in an instant.



Just as The Beatles found their feet in a damp cellar, or Apple started in a garage, the beginnings of Bellman & Symfon were modest ones.

Along with a school friend, Peter created a prototype for a new product, a telephone amplifier where you could choose between ring signals. Since every phone could have its own identity, it would mean the end of unnecessary running from coffee rooms the world over.

Just as The Beatles found their feet in a damp cellar, or Apple started in a garage, the beginnings of Bellman & Symfon were modest ones. Peter's apartment on Landsvägsgatan in Gothenburg had to act as office, warehouse, assembly plant and development department in the first years. With each month that passed his apartment looked less like a home and soon Peter was forced to rent a second apartment in order to have a real home.



Verkställande direktör Tony Hagström
Telia AB
Box 1136
131 26 Nacka Strand

COPY

1994-04-18

Bäste Tony Hagström,

- mitt namn är Peter Jungvid och jag är vd och delägare i ett litet groddföretag från Chalmers vid namn Bellman AB. Bellman AB sysslar med att utveckla och tillverka hörselrelaterade produkter.

Vår första produkt heter Bellman Ringer, provexemplar finns bitogat. Med Bellman Ringer får man en extra stark och tydlig ringsignal. Jag kontaktade er organisation i slutet av 1980-talet för att undersöka om intresse fanns för vår produkt. Jag fick då kontakt med en person som, efter många påstötningar, aldrig återkom.

I stället kontaktade jag ca ett år senare en konkurrerande distributör som gav oss en fin order men som samtidigt krävde exklusivitet. När jag ytterligare något år senare, i början av 1992, kom ur exklusivtetsavtalet tog jag åter kontakt med er organisation. Denna gång med en ny person. Personen ifråga var mycket positiv till vår produkt och menade att den definitivt var något för Telia. Fem (5) st provenheter inkrävdes för att kontrollera vår kvalitet, utfallet av kontrollen var positiv och Telia ville nu göra en egen förpackning. En order skulle inkomma under våren 1992. Nu börjar tyvärr en ny period av många negativa erfarenheter. Vi fick upprepade löften om "en order inom 2 månader" som aldrig inkom, aldrig heller någon feedback som förklarade varför. Uppenbarligen osanna kommentarer som "förpackningen är snärt klar" för att inte tala om alla gånger vi blivit lovade något slags svar men aldrig hört något mer. Inplanerat möte på vårt kontor i Göteborg som annulleras via telefon från Stockholm 3 minuter före mötets start, detta trots att man visste redan dagen före att man inte kunde komma. Vidare exempel, vi visade en andra ny produkt för samma person på Telia för drygt ett och ett halvt år sedan. Kommentaren var ordagrant "mycket intressant - detta skall vi definitivt vara med på, men först skall vi klara av den första produkten". Sedan har vi aldrig hört något mer.

Vad beror detta bemötande på? Jag kan dokumentera vår seriositet. Jag är också väldigt försiktig i mina tolkningar och förväntningar av löften som ges, men ändå, kontakten med Telia slår alla rekord. Ingenstans runt världen har vi blivit så tråkigt bemötta. Vi undrar nu därför om vi är för små för att kvalificera oss som leverantör till Telia AB och om vi därför skall avskriva framtida intresse avseende våra produkter och istället finna andra vägar för distribution i Sverige. Eller, om det inträffade kanske ändå är en olycklig omständighet. Din vägledning och kommentar ifråga skulle vara mycket uppskattad.

Med vänlig hälsning

Bellman AB

Peter Jungvid

After much deliberation they had been in contact with Telia, Sweden's largest telephone company, which was the industry giant at the time. The young men were met with skepticism. The large firm knew best. **Nothing happened – until Peter wrote straight to the top.**

Peter's apartment was rapidly looking more like an R&D department than a home.

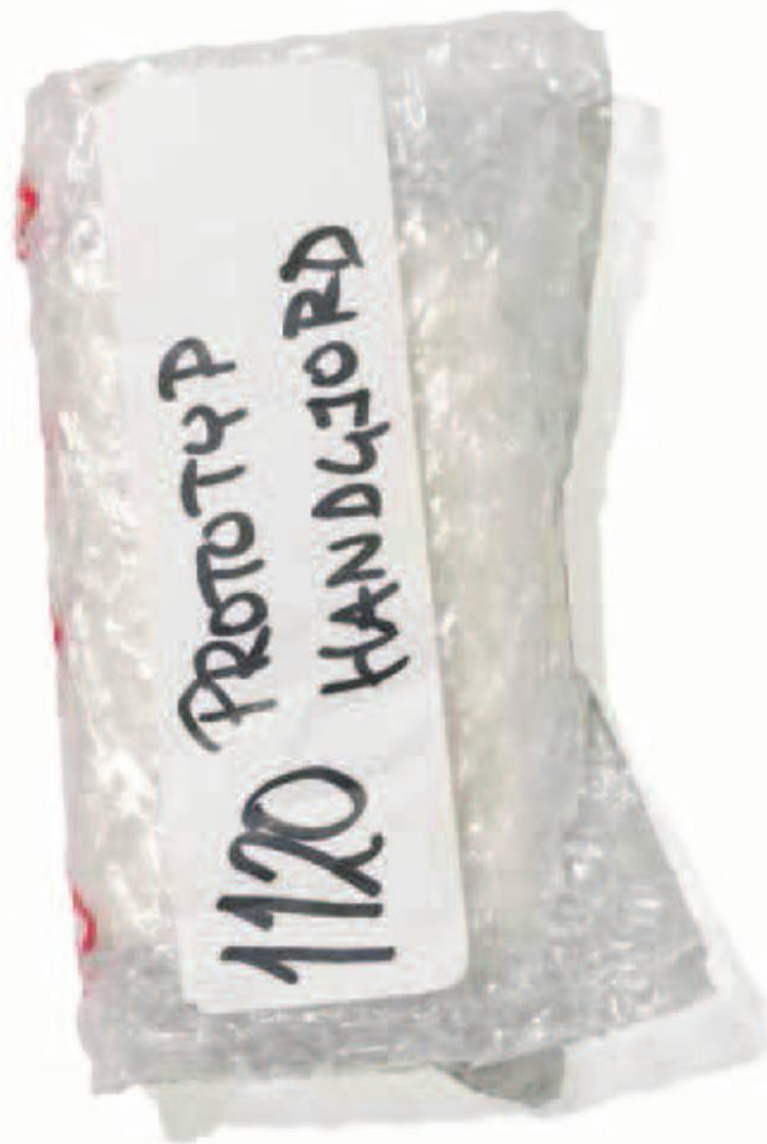




Humidity and moisture testing for Bellman Visit in Peter's bathroom, temporarily turned into a jungle lab.

One day, as the young pioneers were sitting and working, they heard a woman complaining on a local radio show: “There are such strange noises coming from my neighbor’s apartment. It goes ding-dong, ding-dong all day long.”

Even today, it is impossible to know if the woman on the radio was referring to the emerging company. However, it undeniably went “ding-dong”, when the development team was testing the different signals for their product.



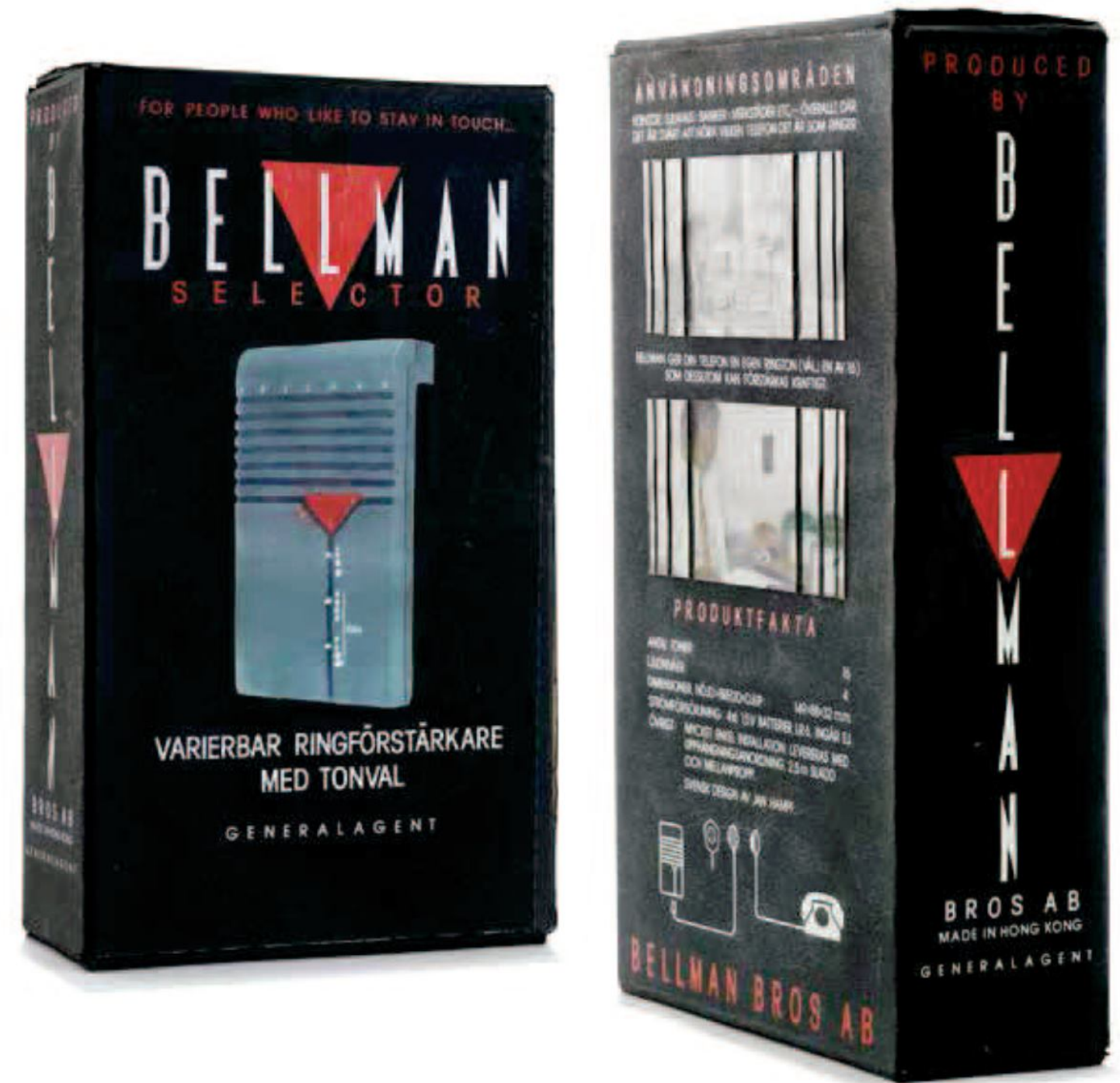
This page
The vaults of Bellman & Symfon
contain numerous handmade
prototypes from the early years.

Next page

Peter Jungvid sought assistance from an industrial designer,
Professor Jan Hampf (above right), who shaped the distinctive design
that represents Bellman’s successful and popular product design.

When naming the device, the choice was an obvious one. It was called Bellman, sounding like the popular music player, Walkman. In English, the name is very logical. Alexander Graham Bell had invented the telephone, and the word bell refers to something that rings. In Sweden, Bellman also has another meaning. It is part of the country's history, and all Swedes can at least sing a couple of verses from one of the composer Bellman's songs from 18th-century Stockholm.

The name Bellman took root in the organization and it sounded so good that they wanted to use it as the firm's name. The choice of name was not appreciated by the Patent and Trademark Office, which turned down the application. A similar case in Austria, however, had given a chocolate factory the right to use the name Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart as a company name for its delicious "Mozart balls". If a writer has been dead for 175 years or more, intellectual property ceases to apply. Peter tried the same tactic in Sweden, and applied for permission to use the company name Carl Michael Bellman AB.



Handmade prototypes of the first Bellman Ringer gift boxes.

This was approved, and so the company had its first official name. The year was 1989. That same year, the Bellman product was awarded first prize in a major innovation competition. However, the first prototype was considered so ugly that it was compared to a “Russian radio from the 1950s.” Peter – who had been responsible for the design himself – was not discouraged. On someone’s recommendation, he contacted the well-known industrial designer, Professor Jan Hampf, who created the distinct shape and laid the foundation for the popular red and white design that characterizes Bellman & Symfon products today.

The first prototype
was considered so ugly that
it was compared to a
“Russian radio from the 1950s”

Having sorted out the design, Peter Jungvid could register the company in 1989, meaning that this year it celebrates its 25th anniversary. Through the years, the original “Russian radio” has evolved from an ugly duckling into a product that has sold almost half a million.



The infamous prototype for Bellman Ringer, known as the Russian radio.



HONG

KONG

~~NOV.~~

NOV.

1989

Every morning he put on his shoes and “went to the office”
When the working day was over, he took them off again.

When one of Peter’s friends saw – and heard – the first Bellman he reacted immediately: “It would be perfect for my dad who can never hear the phone ring”. Just like Alexander Graham Bell, who spent his entire life working to help hearing-impaired and deaf people, Peter Jungvid came to the same realization: that that’s what he would be doing. This was the beginning of the new company’s direction – helping people with hearing impairments with their day-to-day lives.

With advice from one of the Swedish hearing industry’s key figures, the engineer Stephan Lyche, the company could start selling Bellman at clinics throughout Sweden. Thousands of people could suddenly hear the phone ring.

The company was still operating out of Peter’s home. He had a simple system to distinguish between work and leisure. Every morning he put on his shoes and “went to the office.” When the working day was over, he took them off again. But not before he had sent the final fax of the day to China.

From an early stage, Peter had realized that it would be impossible to manufacture the Bellman in Sweden and compete internationally. Costwise it simply would not have worked. He had a neighbor who imported alarm systems from Hong Kong and sold them on at a good margin through distribution channels. The neighbor told him about the Swedish Trade Council in Hong Kong who gave the names of three manufacturers who could take on the challenge of producing Bellman’s new product. Peter selected one of them and began to get used to the sound of the fax machine rattling in the middle of the night when the manufacturer in China was working at full speed to meet the increasing demand for the Bellman.



One important factor for Bellman & Symfon’s success has been the access to good friends and wise counselors.

Stephan Lyche is a clear example. Since the beginning, he has generously shared his time and knowledge in the company’s pursuit of even better products.

Stephan Lyche is a well-known figure as an auditory engineer and technical audiologist. Today he works at Sahlgrenska University Hospital, defining which requirements the public health system should demand when procuring technology products.

The first collaboration was Bellman Ringer, where Stephan Lyche helped to modify the product technically to work for the hard of hearing. Early on, the partners also began to discuss replacing traditional fixed installations with wireless, which obviously is today’s standard.

“Peter was very quick to embrace the new. I have served as a sounding board, providing comments and pointing out opportunities – but it’s Peter who has been the driving force. Bellman & Symfon has undoubtedly pushed the development of modern appliances forward”, says Stephan. As an evident success factor Stephan mentions Bellman & Symfon’s will to seriously learn about the individual, the end users’ everyday lives, in order to create products that meet real needs and desires.

“Take something as simple as how the device actually sounds. Bellman’s gear sounds clear, and at the same time beautiful. It is important if you want people to actually use their hearing aids. You can’t have devices that sound like a wounded crow.”



The Bellman Response personal amplifier was introduced in 1994. Response was small and discreet, and the sound quality outstanding. These pictures show the prototype, where both the product and the box was handmade at the substantial cost of 50 000 Swedish krona.

“We have lots of great memories – but I’m not sure they are all appropriate for this book...”



Sisu is the Finnish word for fighting spirit, and to Juha Hakala it may well serve to describe the long standing relation between Bellman & Symfon and his two companies, Kuulotekniikka and Kuuloinva.

Since the early 2000’s the two partners have defeated almost all competition in the Finnish market. “We are firmly positioned in the driver’s seat”, says Juha who also coaches American football team Helsinki Roosters in his free time.

“We have close to 90 percent market share. I’m sure somebody would call it a monopoly, but we can’t help having the best products for most clients. We get constant feedback from clients saying how they appreciate the simplicity and reliability of the Bellman products”.

Juha Hakala points out the longevity of the relationship, where he’s had the same contact persons throughout the years. Doing business with different people all the time is not good for business.

“To me, it’s been a privilege to work with Peter and Fredrik and the others for such a long time. It is one of the keys to our success”.

These days Juha sees his Swedish counterparts as friends, rather than business associates.

“We’ve worked closely together and have become real friends. We have lots of great memories – but I’m not sure they are all appropriate for this book...”

Good news travels fast, and in 1990 he was contacted by Doro, at the time one of the largest companies in the rapidly-evolving modern telephony industry. Doro wanted to place an order – for 5000 Bellman Ringers. It was a huge order, and Peter wondered at first whether it was a joke.

It was extremely serious. The small company in the small apartment was about to take off. When the Chinese manufacturer announced that it was coming to Sweden to visit its partner, Peter realized that his company had to look more respectable. The quick solution was to borrow the office of a good friend and put a temporary sign on the door.

The Chinese didn’t suspect anything. Unfortunately, it soon became clear that they were unable to deliver the Swedish order. Peter realized this when he was visiting Hong Kong to oversee the start of production for this major order. In despair, he called the buyer at Doro and explained that he was encountering serious problems in producing 5000 units. However, instead of harsh words, he received good advice and the suggestion of a different manufacturer.

After a number of attempts, he found the right partner in the Hong Kong-based manufacturing company SMC Microtronics. It was a collaboration that would be trouble-free for two decades, and the personal chemistry between Peter and his counterpart, PM Wong, developed into a great mutual friendship.

Through increasingly close contact with people with hearing difficulties, Peter realized that most products on the market were badly designed and worked quite poorly. From his office apartment, he drew up the strategy for the professional production which was to lay the foundations for today's Bellman & Symfon. He wanted to industrialize the sector and develop solutions with good functionality and design, for distribution to the international market. He contacted the bank Wermlandsbanken, who believed in the young entrepreneur's analysis, he had already been working with the design pro Jan Hampf, and he had just got an interesting new business partner in PM Wong. Three years after the start of the company, it was time for the next product.

Sahlgrenska University Hospital in Gothenburg was looking for a solution to help people with hearing impairments in their day-to-day lives. It had to be simple to use and easy to install.

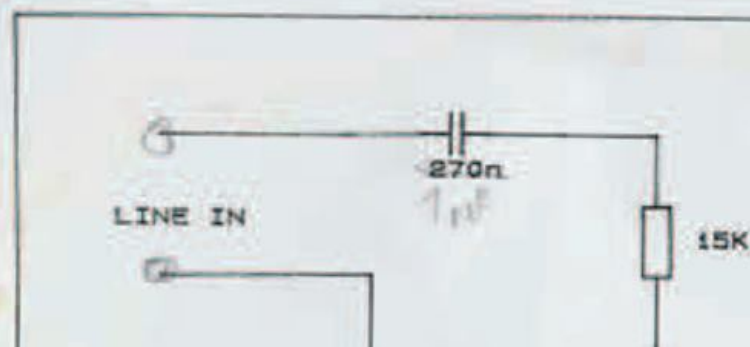
The first product was born from a spontaneous idea. Now things were getting serious. Bellman knew that its next product had to be right from the start. There was no room for failure, which would lower Sahlgrenska's confidence and expectations.

If the first Bellman had also improved the lives of people in offices, the next product was aimed, 100%, at the large number of people with difficulty hearing the phone or doorbell, usually as a result of age-related hearing problems. This was a wireless system for door and telephone sounds, where amplified sound in combination with clear light signals alert the user that he or she is wanted.

The human emotion, of knowing that someone is thinking of you, is significant to the philosophy which characterizes most Bellman & Symfon products. They are based on medical needs and technical capabilities, but also on the human condition.

The new system was called Bellman Visit, whilst the original product was renamed the Bellman Ringer. At the same time the company name was changed to Bellman AB, after three years of battles with the Patent and Trademark Office, which finally approved the name.

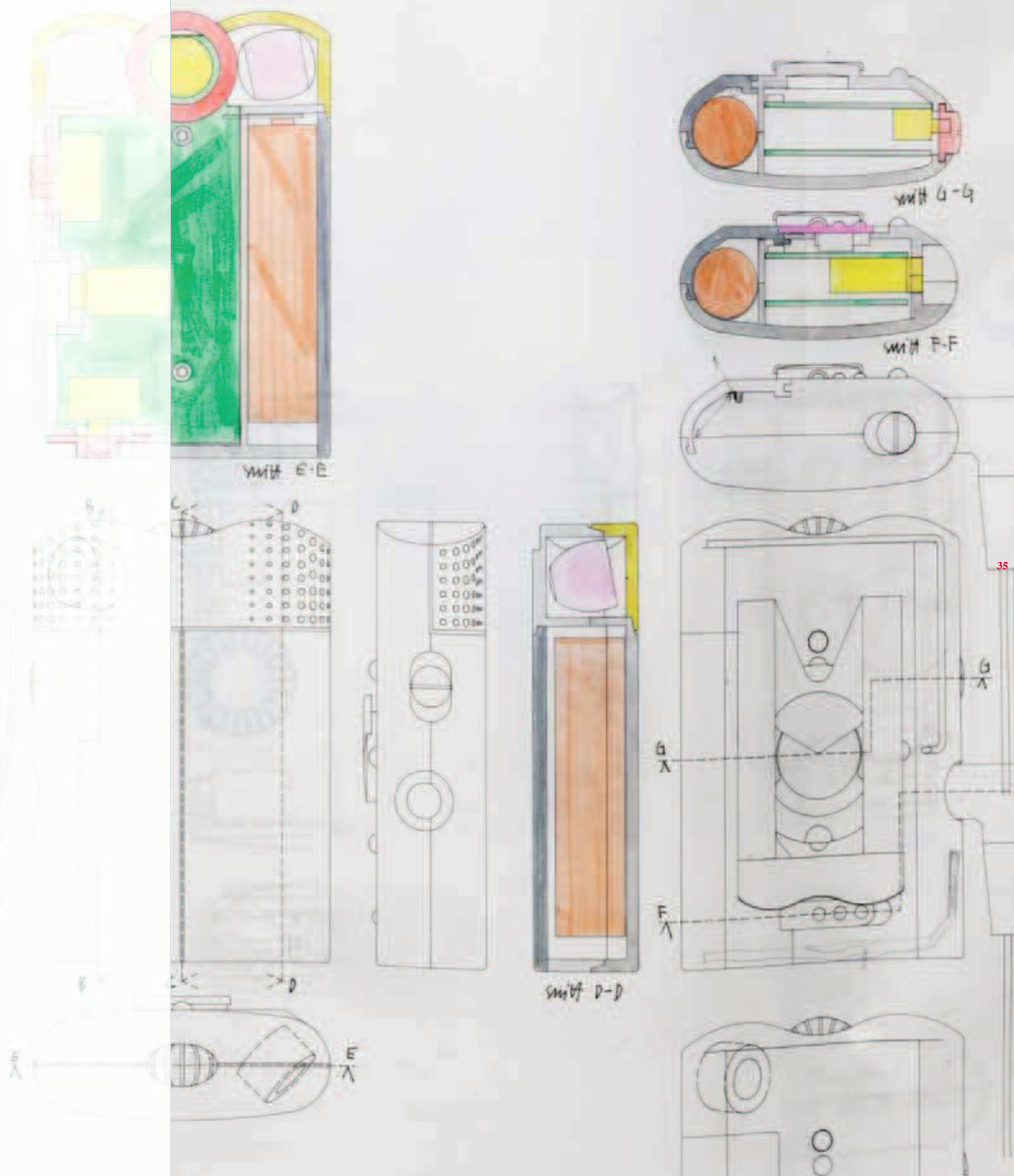
The Bellman Visit soon became a favorite. Not only for Sahlgrenska patients, but also in most Swedish hearing clinics. New requirements were discussed in close contact with hearing clinics. Through this collaboration, it was discovered that there was a great need for other well-functioning and well-designed products. The young Bellman company decided to focus on helping hearing-impaired and deaf people.



The hearing industry – at least in Sweden – was relatively undeveloped even in the early 1990s, and possibly shouldn't even be termed an industry in the commercial sense. Both the products and the players were regarded as necessary, but hardly more than that. Most patients were referred to the care that their respective regions could offer through auditory technicians and audiologists. That an individual would personally be able to choose from different products within a customer-oriented market was – if you can excuse the expression – unheard of. And even if the different products no longer resembled an old Russian radio, design and marketing was not a priority for the other players in the industry.

Bellman realized all this as it continued on its chosen path. Creating and developing modern hearing solutions based on users' needs became the company's primary business plan.

IN 1994, Bellman introduced its first personal amplifier, the Bellman Response, for people who didn't want to, or couldn't, use a hearing aid. The sound quality was amazing and the Response was small and unobtrusive in appearance. This was another step within design and product development. Bellman was no newcomer any more. Bellman was a player to be reckoned with.



In 1995 a deal was done to acquire part of the established Haggstrands Elektriska in Gothenburg. The purchase was made to acquire Haggstrand's auditory activities, which included being the agent for Unitron hearing aids from Canada. Overnight, the company grew from three to ten employees.

In 1997 came the next deal. Another Gothenburg-based company was acquired, Symfon Hörapparater AB, which had developed its own analog hearing aid. The idea behind the purchase of Symfon was to gain access to Symfon's customer base to introduce Unitron's new digital hearing aids and thus gain a stronger platform to export Bellman's products. This acquisition doubled the size of the organization and the name was changed to Bellman & Symfon AB.

Perhaps the most valuable long-term aspect of the acquisition of Symfon was its custom-molded ear protectors, which have helped hundreds of thousands of musicians, teachers and other professionals lead a less stressful working life.

Along with Symfon's ear protectors, there also followed a key figure within today's Bellman & Symfon, Fredrik Ahlström. With his roots in the music world and his personal experience of living with tinnitus, Fredrik led the company into this new business area. As a musician, he could talk to the musicians in their own language, and he was more than familiar with professional musicians' working conditions – where hearing loss has long been regarded as an inevitable down side.

Bellman ER molded ear protectors are tailored to each unique individual. The process starts with a casting of the customer's ear canal, and is then refined through a hand-made manufacturing process. To start with, it was a procedure that required patience and long delays. The casts were made by audiologists all over Sweden, while production was carried out in the United States.

Fredrik Ahlström decided to try and return the expertise to Bellman & Symfon in Sweden, thus simplifying and enhancing it for customers. He spent a couple of months on the road before returning to Sweden with both the knowledge and materials to start production under the company's own management.

Professional musicians are a steadily growing clientele for Bellman & Symfon, which is a well-known brand in Swedish music circles. But musicians are far from the only ones living and working with noise. Teachers, industrial workers, fighter pilots and many other vulnerable professions have been treated successfully. The first order on the industrial side was from the tire manufacturer Michelin, which placed a large order for molded ear plugs to protect its workers' hearing.

The end of the 1990s was an era of change and of an uncertain future. The whole world prepared nervously for the millennium. Companies invested huge sums in "Y2K-proofing" their computer systems. Most could afford this, as the economy was thriving, and the IT revolution was promising countless advantages...



After the Eurovision Song Contest 1993, hundreds of thousands of Swedes were humming the song “Eloise” by Arvingarna, which was Sweden’s contribution in the competition. Just a few years later, several of the members were at risk of tinnitus.

Bass player and singer Casper Janebrink has played music all his life, the last 25 years full time in the band Arvingarna. Since the breakthrough in the Eurovision Song Contest, Casper and the band have performed almost constantly around Scandinavia.

Around 1996, Arvingarna had played so much that their hearing started to take a beating. They came in contact with Bellman & Symfon and were offered a hearing test. It clearly showed that the young musicians were at severe risk of developing tinnitus.

This came as no surprise to anyone in the band, given the noisy environment which is their workplace. Having to cope night after night with the sound from monitors and amplifiers, drums, cymbals, and not least the audience without getting hearing problems is basically impossible. The guys in Arvingarna knew all this – but not how to overcome the problem.

“It was not just the noise. We complained quite a lot about the sound quality on stage. Sometimes it was good but more often not. The sound is influenced by how the venue is designed, and when you can’t hear yourself you raise the volume. We were often very tired after a gig,” says Casper.



After the hearing test, individually styled in ear-systems were produced for the band. The difference was striking.

“It was totally awesome. We became tighter as a band, we sang cleaner and never lost the rhythm because we could hear everything so well,” says Casper. “Today we play more than one hundred gigs per year. It would not have been possible if we hadn’t received help in time. Bellman ER has definitely extended my career as a musician”.

“During my 25 years as an artist, I have tried a lot of different in ear systems but had trouble finding the right stuff. They were either too loose, uncomfortable or giving poor sound reproduction. Since I changed to Bellman & Symfon I have not only gained the latest technology with ambient reproduction and perfect fit, but also a discreet earpiece with great sound! Obviously, it is also especially exciting to have that “little extra” with my logo printed on the earpiece. Thanks for fantastic service and responsiveness throughout the years!”

Magnus Carlsson,
pop singer and multiple chart topper

For Bellman & Symfon, adverse winds began to feel increasingly evident.

The time around the turn of the millennium consisted of some difficult years. The acquisition of Symfon meant that two corporate cultures would become one. The digital hearing aid started to become a serious player and digital technology soon became a requirement for local authority public procurement. Unitron's digital development was delayed and it could not deliver as planned. At the same time sales of Symfon's analog hearing aids plummeted. Bellman & Symfon was not winning any contracts and was on the outside of the hearing aid market.

It was facing a great challenge – and responded strongly.

Operations were streamlined, and hearing aid servicing and private practice were sold off to enhance the focus on core business. A new board was formed and the new chairman Lars Brodd set an extremely tough goal: to more than double Bellman & Symfon turnover within five years!

There now started an intensive period of activity on all levels; product development, marketing, further internationalization. Many new activities were started, both in terms of the development of new solutions and export sales. On the marketing side, the construction of a countrywide network of private audiology practices and retailers was started, mainly providing hearing protection and in-ear monitors for end users. The distribution of Unitron hearing aids would be transformed...



Mark Catling has had a long career in the business of helping people with hearing problems. After 15 years in a number of commercial roles working for the UK's largest hearing loss charity, Action On Hearing Loss (formerly known as RNID), he is now joining Bellman & Symfon as Area Sales Manager for the United Kingdom and Ireland.

"Bellman & Symfon are a company I have always respected and once I had decided to leave my current role there was only one company I wanted to work for, so I'm very excited to be coming on board!"

Mark first came across the Swedish company back in 1989 when he was Head of Business Development at the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, based in Peterborough. Presented with the Bellman & Symfon product range, RNID decided to start offering the Visit paging system as an alternative to an existing product.

"Before Bellman, options were very limited, there were a lot of dull black boxes offered to us. With Visit we could suddenly provide our customers with attractively designed products that were easy to use and with the quality and reliability that was critical to users. It really took off extremely well", says Mark. "Bellman Visit quickly established itself as the market leader but then just went on increasing in sales year after year".

One of the bestselling products in the UK is called the Sonido, known as Maxi in other markets. This highly rated amplified listener was developed in a joint venture between Bellman & Symfon and RNID, initiated by Mark. In the new role he hopes to work closely with UK partners to help develop and introduce more exciting new products for their deaf and hard of hearing customers.

"Hopefully I will even get to improve my Swedish. After all these years, all I've learned to say are the days of the week".



Reid Technology Health Care team.
Partner in New Zealand.



Fredrik Petersson,
Bellman & Symfon, Chief Sales Officer.



Katherine Zheng,
Financial Manager at
Bellman & Symfon, China.



Jan-Eric Bergström COB,
with Sylvia Xie.

IN 2005, Unitron products were a relatively modest part of Bellman & Symfon’s turnover, around SEK 500 000. But the products were important, especially in the tough world of negotiations and assignments within the public health system. Fredrik wanted to return the company to this sector. Innovative sales practices would radically increase market share and win more contracts.

A common saying is that first impressions last. Fredrik realized that you have to spend a lot of time on the design of a tender, what it looks like and what feelings it inspires. It should be so attractive that the recipient thinks “wow!” as soon as he or she opens the envelope. It should stand out, yet at the same time radiate all the professional seriousness required. Fredrik went so far that he even hired artists to ensure the desired wow factor.

The tactic worked, and more and more Swedish audiologists began to embrace solutions from Bellman & Symfon, instead of sticking to the suppliers and the products they were used to from much larger brands.

From 2005 to 2007, turnover from Unitron products increased from SEK 500 000 to SEK 10 million per year. The following year, Unitron knocked on the door and asked to buy back the agency rights in Sweden.

Mission accomplished. Bellman & Symfon made a profitable deal, could focus even more on the core business and still has an excellent relationship with Unitron.

Parallel to all this was a new branding project to define and portray the company's soul, profile and market position. The work was carried out with one of Sweden's leading experts in branding, Sven-Olof Bodenfors who founded the advertising agency Forsman & Bodenfors, often rated as one of the world's best.

The project began with a thorough analysis, basically covering the entire global "hearing market." This showed almost too clearly that there was enormous growth potential, with the need for hearing aids constantly increasing. More people than ever are exposed to noise, especially young people listening to music on headphones. Demographics have changed, with more and more elderly people the world over. Increased, widespread prosperity also means that more people can actually afford to do something about their hearing problems. All this leads to the hearing market generally growing by 3-5% a year.

At the same time, the fact remains: most potential consumers do not know which solutions are available. Spreading knowledge is therefore an important prerequisite for commercial success, in the same way that the best solutions occur when listening and endeavoring to understand the needs of individual people.

In short: in order to succeed, Bellman & Symfon had to change from being a technology-based manufacturer of functional speciality products to being a company that best understands people's problems, helping them with solutions that make their lives easier – and which also loves to share all its knowledge.

“25 years is only the beginning.”

“I am convinced that Bellman & Symfon have the best ahead of them. Hearing gets worse all over the world, needs are growing steadily thus providing opportunities for new good business“, says Sven-Olof Bodenfors, advertising legend and founder of the agency Forsman & Bodenfors.

Sven-Olof, who has a background as an industrial designer, served as a strategic advisor on Bellman & Symfon's branding work for many years.

“Peter had the good judgement to hire a professional designer of the calibre of Jan Hampf to get his products sorted. It was a smart move that has paid off well. Peter is a pretty unusual person among inventing entrepreneurs. I like to see him as the warm-hearted engineer, with genuine interest in people. “

“I was probably quite hard in the beginning of our work together, and always said exactly what I thought. Today I think we have good structure for the brand. The company has a distinct identity in which the products are a consequence of the actual needs of people worldwide.”



This insight required new skills within the company. The focus had to be on the individual consumer. Henrik Kool was recruited as Marketing Manager, bringing extensive experience in consumer products from both Ericsson and Panos Emporio. It was Henrik who produced and launched the graphic branding strategy that forms the basis for how Bellman & Symfon looks and acts today.

The visual identity – how the products, packaging, printing and practically the whole company looks – was built up from the brand strategy work, with the help of design agency Happy F&B.

The distance from the “Russian radio” and the slightly awkward designs of the early years could hardly be greater. In everything, from internal guidelines to products that had to appeal to consumers worldwide, Bellman & Symfon could finally look and act like a grown-up brand. The company invented a formula, called The Star Formula®, which was to become an important foundation for how the company would deliver outstanding customer value in its chosen market position. Using guidelines summarized in “The Bellman & Symfon Way,” an increasing number of international employees had new opportunities to talk about the high-quality products from Sweden.

Product development also intensified in pace, consistent with the new boom in the market. In 2007 the new personal amplifier Maxi was introduced. It was based on brand new technology which meant not only digital

signal processing, which creates better understanding of speech, but it was also very easy to use. Suddenly, it became easier for older people to participate in conversations even in environments with a lot of background noise. Family parties, restaurant visits and an evening in front of the television – all improved for those with Maxi in their lives.

Anders Ingemarsson, who had been at Autoliv, was recruited as the new Chief Technical Officer with his first assignment being to further develop the personal amplifier product range.

Maxi was followed a few years later by Mino, a small and light personal amplifier making it easy to keep up with conversation in all contexts – and which design-wise resembles something from one of Silicon Valley’s hottest companies. Mino has a wealth of innovative and user-friendly features, such as a directional microphone and rechargeable batteries.



In 2009 the wireless Domino system was introduced – the first fully digital hearing system with both digital signal processing and digital radio communication. It offered unique sound quality by filtering out unwanted background noise and amplifying speech even when listening at a distance. Domino won the 2011 Grand Award of Design, awarded by the organization Teknikföretagen. The next year, together with Unitron, the unique Smart Alert system was launched, allowing the user to be aware of telephone signals or fire alarms thanks to a message in the hearing aid.

Two years later a new digital alarm clock was introduced, both as a freestanding product and as a receiver in the Bellman Visit system. In total five different models were developed for the first worldwide launch, under a new marketing concept called Pulse[®].

The interplay between technological product development and elegant design has become an important success factor for Bellman & Symfon. But regardless of design and quality, you have to have sales to achieve success. A case in point is the investment that the company made in Unitron products, where focused sales efforts resulted in extremely good figures.

The effort paid off. In five years, Bellman & Symfon had doubled its turnover, whilst growing into a highly respected force with innovation and renewal as its clear trademarks. Now things had taken off and the company was able to take another major step in its expansion in the market.



When, on April 1, 2008, Peter Jungvid took his seat on the plane to China, he had checked in more luggage than usual. His aim was to start up the first subsidiary of his entrepreneurial life, to cover the huge Asia/Pacific/North America market, and he knew this couldn't be done over a weekend. In fact, he was to live in China for a full three years. During this time, he had handed over as CEO to the person who had become closest to him: Fredrik Ahlström.

Bellman & Symfon had conducted business internationally since production at SMC Microtronics first started on a modest scale in 1990. They had started receiving foreign orders outside the nordic countries since 1997 when the small company's path crossed with that of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) at a trade show in Germany. The British organization was founded back in 1911 by Leo Bonn, who was deaf and passionate about helping people with hearing problems and raising awareness of these issues. Today RNID – under its new name Action on Hearing Loss – is one of Bellman & Symfon's largest clients. Their shared values are clear when you take this British statement into account:

“Our new name makes our intention clear. As Action on Hearing Loss, we're working for a world where hearing loss doesn't limit or label people, where tinnitus is silenced and where people value and look after their hearing.”

Another major step into the international arena was in 2001 when MultiCare Systems became the Dutch distributor. The fruitful collaboration with owner Haske Eshuis has led to MultiCare Systems becoming another of Bellman & Symfon's most important partners. After three years' intensive work establishing the Eastern market, Bellman & Symfon could conclude that the investment had worked. The business was up and running, with stable revenues and ever more customers. It's the summer of 2010 and Jan-Eric Bergström has been appointed as the new chairman, while Peter is thinking about returning to Sweden.

But who would become head of Bellman & Symfon Asia Ltd?

For the company, this wasn't difficult. It was quite natural to offer the job to the man who for twenty years had acted as the Swedes' right-hand man in Asia. PM Wong accepted the job as general manager and at the age of 62 left his job at SMC Microtronics for a new future in the office at Huang Shi Dong Road in Guangzhou.

Alongside the start-up of Guangzhou, there is currently also a Bellman & Symfon in Hong Kong, managing the rest of the Asian market. In total, Bellman & Symfon AB currently has over 45 international partners and resellers in Europe, the USA, the Middle East, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.



The Asian Big Bell-Man, PMWong,
General Manager of Bellman & Symfon, Asia Ltd.

Sylvia Xie, Area Sales Manager for Asia Pacific.



Jirutsu Com, Bellman & Symfon's partner in Japan, with Fredrik Petersson.

Former chairman Lars Brodd, at partner event in Hong Kong.



Anders Ingemarsson, Bellman & Symfon's Chief Technical Officer with responsibility for Human Care Markets.



Word of Mouth. Partner in Australia.

Fredrik Ahlström, Francesco Maragliulo, Yuan Tian and Luca Bizzoca at Amplifon headquarters in Milan.



All for one, one for all! Bellman & Symfon team building in Hainan.

SAAB SPACE

Peter
 → åtgärder jag gjort
 * = ska göras
~~missade saker~~
 → (Jag har bytt brytare)
 * Volymbrytaren saknar "tillfilad topp"
 * Motståndet för volymen ska dimensioneras om, ty högsta och näst högsta volym låter lika starkt
 * modulkontakt ska kopplas riktigt,
 (Jag kommer inte ihåg, och är osäker på hur den skulle kopplas - kommer det)
Klart!
 * Flänsen som ska hålla upp kortet (Flänsen vid IC:n) flyttas 10 mm framåt mot brytaren till. Och kortet sägas "runtom" brytaren så så att kortet vilar på flänsen enl. markering på ny kortet
 Jag har flyttat in ingångskondensatorn
 → (470nF) mot switcharna på nya kortet
 * Kortet sägas enl. markeringarna, och mallarna
 * ... as m. 0,2 bror (1mm)
 sitta mellan emitter och ... slutar den låta i ...
 ... läge yänd

Natalie Leung and Sylvia Xie in a snowy Gothenburg.



1991-07-01

To: Nick Yang / SMC Microtronic Co. Ltd.
Fr: Peter Jungvid / Bellman AB

fax 910702
0027

URGENT

1991-07-05

To: P.M. Wong / SMC Microtronic Co. Ltd.
Fr: Peter Jungvid / Bellman AB

Thanks for your fax of today.

1. Shipping. Please note that UPS is to be used for this shipment (pls see our fax 91-05-10).

Also, Williams Sound is to pay for this freight so please use their UPS account number # MN 5-55-555. For some reason WS have been very keen about using UPS and since they pay for the freight please do.

2. Price. Please use "USD 16.25 / fob Hong Kong".

Best regards

Peter Jungvid

Thanks + Best regards

The long relationship between P.M. Wong and Peter Jungvid has produced an endless amount of faxes during the years.

**"Good quality,
nice design
and a fair price
– it's hard to beat",
says Haske Eshuis**

"I started working with Bellman & Symfon on the Dutch market in 2002. I had another supplier that I wasn't really satisfied with, so I ran them side by side for a few years. My sales rose drastically with the addition of Bellman products, and after two years I decided to go all in with Bellman. It was a decision I've never had to regret. In The Netherlands, we have a new legislation that allows us to sell more in the reimbursed market and I expect growth numbers around 300% for 2014. The future is looking very bright on the Dutch market and I'm happy to have the Bellman products as an advantage.

Good quality, nice design and a fair price – it's hard to beat. So is the spirit of Peter Jungvid. I like to describe him as tough on content and soft on the persona. Our relationship has always had that nice mix of business and friendship.

Like myself, the Bellman people love boats and boating. That is one of the many reasons I really like coming to Sweden. A few years ago we had a fishing contest.

It was a nice and sunny day but with no fish. All I got was a star fish. Since I was the only one who caught anything I was declared the winner, and won a bottle of whisky. An hour later all the whisky was gone, without me having a single drop!"



Haske Eshuis is the owner of Multi Care Systems, Bellman & Symfon's Dutch partner since 2002.

Designed for ears

Alerting products

The Visit alerting system has helped millions of people with hearing difficulties over the years. A new generation of Visit products will be released in 2015 and we have just started our venture into a product line for the human care sector.



Audio products

Distant sounds and noisy environments have always posed a demanding challenge for hard of hearing people. Our range of well-designed and easy-to-use personal amplifiers and wireless listening systems help people to overcome these difficulties.



In-ear products

Sound is our passion! This has led us to build a strong portfolio that ranges from custom in-ear monitors and individually tailored ear plugs to first-class earphones and headsets for the most discerning and quality conscious audiophiles.





2014 >

Solutions for tomorrow

The so-called "Russian radio" was given a bad reception, mainly due to its rudimentary design. But it has also served the company well, constantly challenging Bellman & Symfon to invest in high-end industrial design and to identify this as one of the most important factors of success.

Today our portfolio ranges from body-worn to wall mounted devices and they all share the same basic principles: simplicity and ease-of-use. Featuring a timeless design with clean Scandinavian lines, the products are made for the homes of today and tomorrow.

Nowadays as we live longer and are more exposed to harmful noise, the number of people with hearing loss is unfortunately increasing. The need for qualified and accessible hearing solutions will therefore also increase, and our venture to provide the world with new outstanding hearing solutions will continue.





Ah, the absolute joy! An elderly woman gets to hear for the first time in many years as a result of the work by the volunteers in the Tsum Hearing Program in Tibet. One of the partners in the program is Bellman & Symfon's Australian partner Word of Mouth Technology, the leading supplier of assistive devices for deaf and hard of hearing people in Australia.



Last but definitely not least, I extend my greatest thanks to all the fantastic people who have helped to make this journey possible. Friends, colleagues, business associates, advisors, suppliers, buyers, agents, representatives – and of course all the individuals whose lives we've had the privilege of improving.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Xen", is centered below the main text. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

