

HISTORICAL SAAB :

**Article included in VIPS – (Vi På Saab),
SAAB´s INTERNAL MAGAZINE , NO 2 FROM 1961.**

THE CAR MANUFACTURER WHICH CREATED A SENSATION!



Some of the management team behind the sensation.

Sitting, Director, **Tryggve Holm**. Standing *left to right*: **Sixten Sason**, Chief designer, S-T / **Gunnar Ljungström**, Chief construction Engineer, S-T / **Tore Nilsson**, Chief Engineer, S-G, / **Rolf Melde**, Chief Engineer, S-T / **K-G Karlsson**, Chief Engineer, Saab -G / **Bengt Åkerlind**, Chief of Production, S-T / **N-G Nilsson**, Chief Engineer, Workshops, S-T / Director, **Svante Holm**, S-T / **Hans G Andersson**, Advertising, PR, Sales, S-L. / **Arne Rydberg**, Sales director, S-L / **Roy Warner**, Chief Accountant, S-T / **John Engstrom**, ANA-Sales / **Hakon Sörgardt**, Purchasing, S-T.
(S-T= Trollhättan / S-G = Göteborg / S-L=Linköping).

The following has been extracted from a 7- page article written about Saab in the early 1960's published in the Swedish magazine, 'Se'.....

In the early 1960's Saab quite sensationally took the motor industry by storm with sales reaching an all-time high.... at a time when general sales of new cars were rapidly declining.

In 1960, 13 700 new Saabs were registered in Sweden, a sensational increase of 44% over the previous year.

The Swedish magazine, 'Se', wrote that, "**No other car manufacturer has achieved such a formidable Sales success!**"

Not only did Saab increase its sales in their home market, 11 000 new cars were also exported, which was 1 500 more cars than in 1959.

So, what was it behind the Swedish car manufacturers sudden success, and which saw Saab taking a respectable 4th place in car manufacturers new car sales statistics - exceeding both German and English car manufacturers!

To gain a better understanding of what was behind the success the magazine issued a comprehensive 7-page article devoted to car manufacture at Saab and included several interviews with key management staff in Trollhättan.

Saab´s Director Tryggve Holm was asked, So, what is the success due to?

Tryggve explained,

“Mainly, I think it is due to a common philosophy. It´s a little difficult to fully explain, almost as difficult as to why a new melody, just a few notes of music, suddenly catches on to become very popular ...

I think however that our design and engineering philosophy was right from the start. We considered it very important to design a robust and safe car, having a high-degree of refinement. The car had to stand out above the rest and be appreciated for its practicality, performance and overall quality level.

Many of the mechanical problems with earlier models had been rectified and introduced into the new models – this resulted in a modern, exceptionally safe and reliable car.

Our successes in rally-competitions has helped us to gain further awareness of the brand. Our own rally drivers frequently proved for the motoring world just how good the car is”

Some believe the quality and reliability of cars has declined over recent years?

These questions were posed to Chief Construction Engineer, Gunnar Ljungström and Product Development and Quality Engineer, Rolf Melde.

Gunnar Ljungström informed, “Thirty years ago, cars were less reliable than today. Something which new car buyers of today most certainly wouldn’t accept.

Engines of this era were only capable of completing 20-30000 km before a costly service repair needed to be made. Today, car companies have all the engineering expertise and modern tooling to produce cars which are far more durable and reliable than they were in the past”.

Chief engineer Rolf Melde added, “The overall quality of the car has also been greatly improved. We now have our own Quality Control team (more than a 100 employees) dedicated to monitoring the full manufacturing process.

Each new engine undergoes a 20-minute rig test where the engine is started, checked for performance and finely tuned. All new cars rolling off the production line are given a 9 km long road test. Components arriving at the factory are also checked and a new car from the production line, is regularly subjected to a full quality and performance check”.

Valuable experience from motor sport.....

For us at Saab, motor-sport competitions and car-rallying are a valuable form of Quality Control

By participating in rally-competitions we gain valuable information of our cars performance during more extreme driving conditions. Drivers in our competition team cover more than 13000 km per year and in 1960, Saab was the most successful Rally-car in Europe, irrespective of price-class.

We now consider we have a product that is very robust, reliable, and a much safer and comfortable car for our customers to travel in.

It is a combination of all these factors that contribute towards our Sales success ...

The author of the article also wrote ... ***There are not many small countries that have their own car manufacturers ...***

The car industry is quite obviously a very intricate and complex form of business to be involved in and there are only a few countries that have managed to compete with the larger high-volume car manufacturers and establish a car industry of their own: e.g. Sweden, Czechoslovakia, East Germany.

In these countries, individual car manufacturers play a vital role for local enterprise and a source of employment. The car business is indeed complicated, but Saab have shown that they can skilfully produce quality cars appealing to new customers both at home and abroad.

In conclusion:

This very comprehensive article, written in the early 1960's about Saab, was thought to have brought about a greater awareness for the Saab brand and helped towards the sensational sales success the company has achieved over recent years.

Compiled and extracted from an interesting article published in the Swedish magazine 'Se' in the early 1960's and referenced in several articles noted in SAABs internal magazine VIPS. Relevant photos from the era have also been added. For further reading refer to articles in the Car Museums home-pages
<http://www.supportsaabcarmuseum.com>