



Standard packaging with a personal touch

Jakodan listened to their customers and have seen 20 years of continuous growth

Jens Broch from
Sunset Boulevard

**It takes courage
to think out
of the box**

The awards just
keep coming

**The wildest
company
is based right
here in Kolding**

Brilliant idea realised

**Waste heat
from chicken
farm benefits
golf club**

VÆKST Magazine. A magazine **about** the local business community in Kolding Municipality **for** the local business community. A shared story meant to give companies insight into the local business community and activities in Kolding.

Photos – All photos were taken by a local photographer who has an eye for great pictures. **Articles** – All articles were produced by locals with in-depth knowledge of Kolding Municipality.

Printing house – The magazine was printed by From Grafisk, a local printer's who takes pride in applying the finishing touch.

Sustainable print – The magazine was printed on sustainable recycled paper. **Socioeconomic distribution** – The magazine has been distributed to all local businesses by SlotssøBadet, a socioeconomic business that seeks to upskill marginalised, unemployed citizens to help them find employment and build strength and a good life for themselves.



**Kolding
Kommune**
triangle region denmark

We design for life

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K



Passion for coffee, chocolate and great bread

By Tanja Marek

Kolding has a long, proud tradition of coffee-making – and a long-time history of producing chocolate and great bread. A passion for quality ingredients and fine craftsmanship has propelled many local businesses in the past and continues to do so today.

The first FDB factory, built in 1896, was located in the centre of Kolding, and it mainly produced coffee and chocolate. It was also the first co-operative factory in the country. In 1922, FDB built a large chocolate factory in Brostræde, which half a century later, in 1977, moved to Platinvej and was renamed Nordchokolad A/S. Eventually, the factory closed down.

Merrild Kaffe is another Kolding-based coffee business. In 1956, Møller Merrild married Vera, and together they opened a shop on Enevold Sørensens Vej, which became the cornerstone of the coffee factory they established on Lærkevej in 1969. Everyone who has lived in Kolding up until the factory closed in 2011 remembers the smell of roasted coffee, which was a constant presence in the area.

Here, you get to meet three local businesses all of which are driven by a passion for quality ingredients and fine craftsmanship. Beanster Baker and Nordic Coffee House are both rapidly growing entrepreneurial businesses, while Ole Chocolate is a family-owned business with a long and proud history.

At Beanster Baker, fine craftsmanship is key

The micro bakery Beanster Baker was established during the pandemic by Benjamin Wolters at the old grocer's shop Bjert Gamle Brugs in Sdr. Bjert. Benjamin Wolters is a real sourdough enthusiast and spends a lot of time perfecting his sourdough bread, which is characterised by a crisp crust and spongy crumb.

Making sourdough bread takes almost 72 hours. The good thing about sourdough is that 70-80 per cent of the starch is broken down, and it contains natural lactic and acetic acids, which help to maintain a healthy gut flora. The natural sugars give the bread a shiny, golden surface – and it just smells different from other types of bread.

Benjamin has trained as a cook, but has worked as a baker full-time for the past 10 years, so he knows his craft and has taught other cooks and bakers the art of making the perfect sourdough bread.

Would you like to get started making your own sourdough bread? Visit the shop, where you can get all kinds of flour and cooking utensils.





Kolding-based chocolate adventure

Ole Chocolate in Nr. Bjert is a small piece of Kolding history. The adventure began in a tiny backroom in 1966, where Marianne Ellerkamp's dad founded the business. Today, Marianne and her husband, Carsten Ellerkamp, have taken over and carry on the tradition of making high-quality chocolates with love.

But it all began with chocolate covered marshmallows, flødeboller, and the company has followed the same recipe since the beginning – except for the biscuit bottom, which has been replaced with marzipan. The chocolates are timeless classics made from the best ingredients and always with an eye for the sweetness of the marzipan, the softness of the nougat and the balance of the chocolate – and everything is handmade.

Ole Chokolade has always been about fine craftsmanship. Therefore, they still keep the original Heidelberg printing machines in the backroom, which enable them to design, print and produce their own boxes.

Fancy a piece? Visit the shop in Nr. Bjert.

Passion for excellent coffee

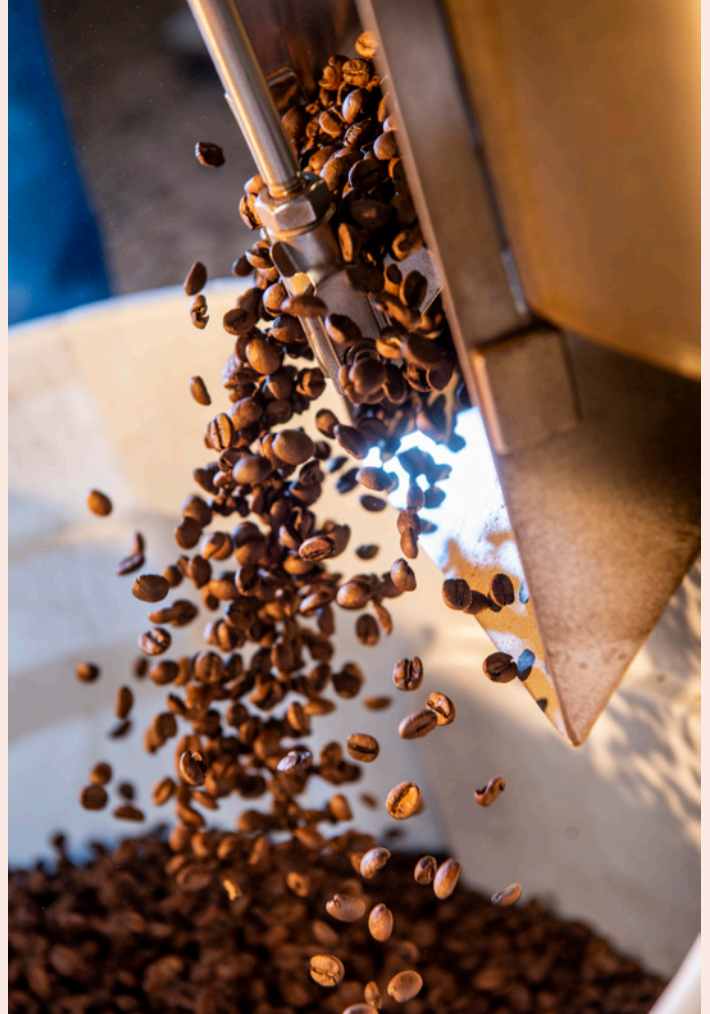
Lean back and enjoy a good cup of coffee ...

Michael Mølbæk is a real coffee enthusiast. Even before founding the coffee roastery Nordic Coffee House in Nr. Bjert, he experimented with coffee roasting, roasting profiles and tastes in his own kitchen.

To make good coffee you need high-quality, fresh green beans. The beans are then carefully roasted to preserve the sweetness and taste of the beans before the coffee is distributed to restaurants and companies.

Michael's goal is to get the Danes to drink less, but better coffee.

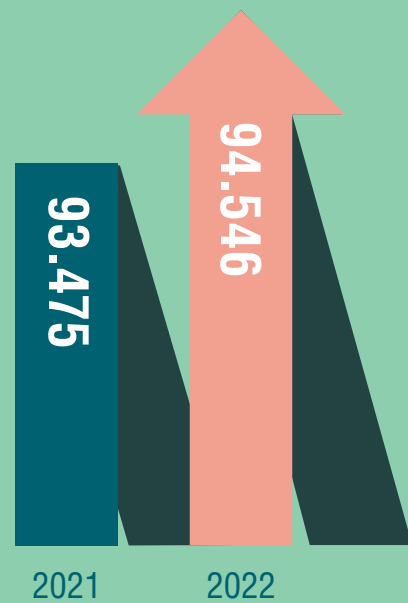
He is driven by a passion for high-quality beans. He spends a lot of time tracking down the best suppliers – usually small coffee farmers who focus on sustainability, organic farming and good working conditions for their employees.



K

Kolding has never been as popular as it is today: Net population increase of **1.071** in 2022 to a total population of 94,546

(Source: Kolding Municipality)



980

More people have found employment. In 2022, the number of people in employment increased by 980 compared to the previous year – calculated as full-time positions

(Source: Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment)

More newly qualified Kolding inhabitants find employment

E.g., the unemployment rate of UC Syd graduates has dropped from 9 to 2 per cent

(Source: Kolding Municipality)

New perspectives and new insight strengthen local businesses

Each year, a new group of design students graduate from Campus Kolding, and even though their line of work sounds very different from yours, it can be a good idea to hire one of them.

By Rie Nielsen

Because designers can make a difference in industry, too, and newly qualified designers have insight into the latest new trends and production methods. Kolding is home to several design-related study programmes, all of which grapple with the fact that businesses are unaware of their potential. Therefore, the local job centre and Business Kolding work closely together with the schools and organise yearly events to give companies insight into the skill sets of newly qualified designers.

Companies eager to live up to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals or to make their production more sustainable can invite newly qualified designers to help them change procedures or find alternatives.

In recent years, the unemployment rate of design graduates has plummeted, and more have found employment. Nevertheless, graduates still have difficulties gaining a foothold in the labour market and unemployment rates therefore continue to be high.

Read more and learn how a design manager has put his skills to good use in a local development department and how a special collaboration between the University of Southern Denmark and Design School Kolding helps to bridge the gap between business community and design graduates.

Kolding-based study programmes in design

- Design Management
- Design Studies
- Industrial Design
- IT Product Development
- Communication Design
- Fashion and Textile
- Web Communication Design
- Sound Design

Ambitious concept and bridge builder

Students helped Mos Mosh develop a design process that supports recycling.

Even though businesses and schools are next-door neighbours in Kolding, they often have trouble finding each other.

The University of Southern Denmark and Design School Kolding are trying to change that with a project called SPIN-IN for Sustainability. The idea is to invite students and newly qualified designers to help a local business solve a specific problem.

Circular fashion design

In fall 2022, five graduates and students joined Mos Mosh and the company's CSR Manager for a SPIN-IN project. Three came from Design School Kolding and two from the University and they had trained in fashion, circular design, finance and business development.

Dorthe Tørngren asked them to answer the following question: How can we make recycling part of the design process at Mos Mosh? The group were given an introduction to the company and then set to work. Four weeks later they were ready to present a series of solutions.

"When you work together with people from other professions, you get different perspectives on a given problem. It has been fun to get so many different perspectives on sustainability," says newly qualified designer Amarins Abma who has trained in circular design.

Among other things, the group emphasised the importance of dialogue across the organisation to avoid situations where one person is responsible for implementing the changes required to support more sustainable design.

"The management should make it clear that everyone needs to work together on a more circular design concept. There-

fore, we encouraged them to appoint a sustainability team comprised of one person from each department to make sure everyone is informed and contributes to the transition," Amarins Abma explains.

Collaboration is a muscle

Dorthe Tørngren was impressed with what the five participants were able to accomplish in such short time and with limited prior knowledge.

"They were able to look at the problem from above and to explore it in depth. They recognised that the focus of the entire organisation has to change if we are to successfully implement this cultural change. They pointed out that the green transition is a lengthy process, and they gave me a set of new tools."

Lone Toftild is facilitator and instigator of the SPIN-IN concept. She is Head of Development with the Department of Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management at the University of Southern Denmark in Kolding:

"Learning should be tested in real life. The concept bridges the gap between school and business community, but due to its cross-disciplinary dimension it also adds something extra. It is important to give the young people a chance to practise cooperation with other professions. It is a muscle that needs to be trained, and the business community needs this muscle," says Lone Toftild.

Everyone agrees that SPIN-IN for Sustainability is a great concept and they encourage others to join in.

FACTS

SPIN-IN for Sustainability is a collaboration between the University of Southern Denmark, Design School Kolding, the Royal Danish Academy, Aarhus University and the Lifestyle Design Cluster.



Dorthe Tørngren (to the right) from Kolding-based Mos Mosh created the assignment, and Lone Toftild from the University of Southern Denmark facilitated the process involving five graduates and students.

Design management and development play well together

Five years ago, Dansk Gummi Industri hired Design Manager Carsten Sommer. Today, he is part of the Development Department, which helps implement the company strategy.

Dansk Gummi Industri had high hopes for the new Development Department established in spring 2021.

"I always wanted to make our own products. For many years, we strictly produced order-based products, but since Carsten arrived, we have developed and patented our own products. Today, we have 36 different products," says Development Director Peter Thomsen.

He and his brother, Christian Thomsen, own Dansk Gummi Industri.

Qualified collaboration

Carsten Sommer had been with the company for three years before the Development Department was established. He was hired because the Thomsen brothers wanted to make use of their waste products. They asked HAU, a network of design students from Kolding, to help them out. At the time, Carsten Sommer studied design management at the University of Copenhagen, and he tried to help the brothers solve the problem. This opened Peter Thomsen's eyes to the advantages of design management, and they offered Carsten Sommer a job.

Among other things, design management can facilitate and qualify collaborations by getting the right people involved, exploring the situation, asking the right questions and testing possible solutions. At Dansk Gummi Industri, qualified collaborations either lead to better or more products.

"Our development competences enable us to come up with and design new solutions fast. Sales tells us what the cu-

stomers want, and then we brainstorm in Development. It is a team effort. Among other things, I am responsible for coordinating the process," says Carsten Sommer.

Like a band playing together

The Development Department also includes a chemical engineer, a polymer specialist, a product and process developer and a mechanical engineer.

"I put the team together to see if we could develop our own products and realise our strategy of creating partnerships with clients. And it has been a pleasure right from the start. We are like a band of musicians playing the same song, but on different instruments," Peter Thomsen says with a smile.

Because they work so well together, the team is able to respond quickly and develop new ideas based on input from other parts of the organisation.

"The client should be part of the process from day one. I love the fact that clients now come to us for help solving a problem. That was exactly what we wanted to achieve with our partnership strategy," Carsten Sommer explains.

Peter Thomsen adds: "A department with competences like that is always a good investment."



Peter Thomsen (to the left) and Carsten Sommer have introduced design into Dansk Gummi Industri.

Photo: Dansk Gummi Industri

FACTS

The company is a subcontractor to the wind turbine industry, i.a. supplying the elements that secure blades and towers during transportation. One of the company's patented products is a so-called blade-resting cradle, which is like a cradle for wind turbine blades consisting of a rubber-encased metal core. The blade rests on the cradle during transportation.



Der er fastfood. Og så er der os.
Ind imellem oplever du måske at skulle
vente en smule, når du besøger os.
Din mad er nemlig altid frisklavet ved
bestilling, uanset hvor langt et stykke
du kommer på.
Vi serverer maden så hurtigt,
vi overhovedet kan - men vi gør det aldrig
på bekostning af vores kvalitet.

Jens Broch

Less work, more job satisfaction

As CEO of the fast food chain Sunset Boulevard, Jens Broch seeks to make the most of his own and his employees' time – and he has declared a war on pseudo work. The result is great job satisfaction among the staff.

By Mona Østerlund

It has taken courage to radically change traditional work procedures and think out of the box – both among the management and staff at the fast food chain Sunset Boulevard's headquarters in Nordager in Kolding.

Would the employees and management be able to achieve the same in four workdays instead of five?

"On the other hand, this feeling – of being courageous together – has given us renewed energy," says CEO at Sunset Boulevard Jens Broch.

Jens Broch enjoys stimulating change and results together with others, and he can do that as CEO of Sunset Boulevard,

where the just under 50 employees at the company headquarters have gone from a five-day workweek to a 30-hour four-day workweek – on full pay. At Sunset Boulevard, Friday is part of the weekend.

"I also try to take Fridays off, though I don't always manage to. But when I do, I really feel the difference when I come to work again on Monday – my batteries have been recharged and I am ready to work full speed the next four days," he says.

He spends his weekends upgrading his management skills and spends time with his wife and three children at home or in the family's holiday cottage.

K

It began in 2020 with a single “Sunset Friday” off each month, and gradually, the company reduced the workweek to 30 hours with Fridays off. In this process, the company has tested various models for how the same number of employees can do the same amount of work faster. Some of them didn’t work and have been abandoned, but one model proved effective: Each workday follows a strict schedule, almost like a school timetable, and this applies to everyone in the organisation, from IT to Finances, Marketing and Management. From early morning till 9:00 is “regular” workhours, while the two hours from 9:00 to 11:00 are so-called “red hours”, where each employee works on their most pressing tasks, and no one is allowed to answer emails, talk together or hold meetings. 11:30 to 12:00 is social time, where they all have lunch together. Meetings are only allowed in the afternoon.

“I was surprised by the effect it had. Especially the ‘red hours’. It is incredible how much work you can get done when you are not interrupted for two whole hours,” says Jens Broch.

The organisation has also radically changed their meeting culture.

“Only the people who are absolutely necessary are called to meetings. This has reduced not only the number of participants, but also the number of meetings by 50 per cent. It includes me too, and it is obvious from my meeting calendar that I participate in far fewer meetings than I used to. Because I do not have to participate in each and every decision we make,” says Jens Broch and points out that what works for Sunset Boulevard does not necessarily work for other organisations.

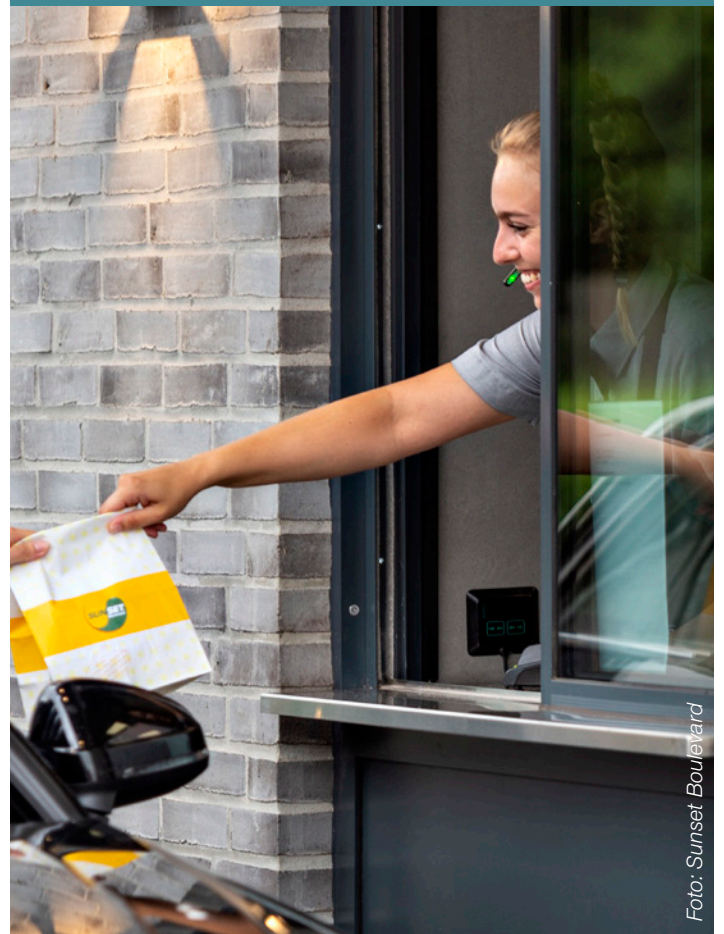
Efficiency and job satisfaction

Jens Broch applies the management principle of “tight-loose-tight”.

Sunset Boulevard

The country’s largest Danish-owned fast food chain with 42 restaurants.

The chain is owned by Jeppe Droob from Esbjerg and its headquarters are located in Nordager in northern Kolding.

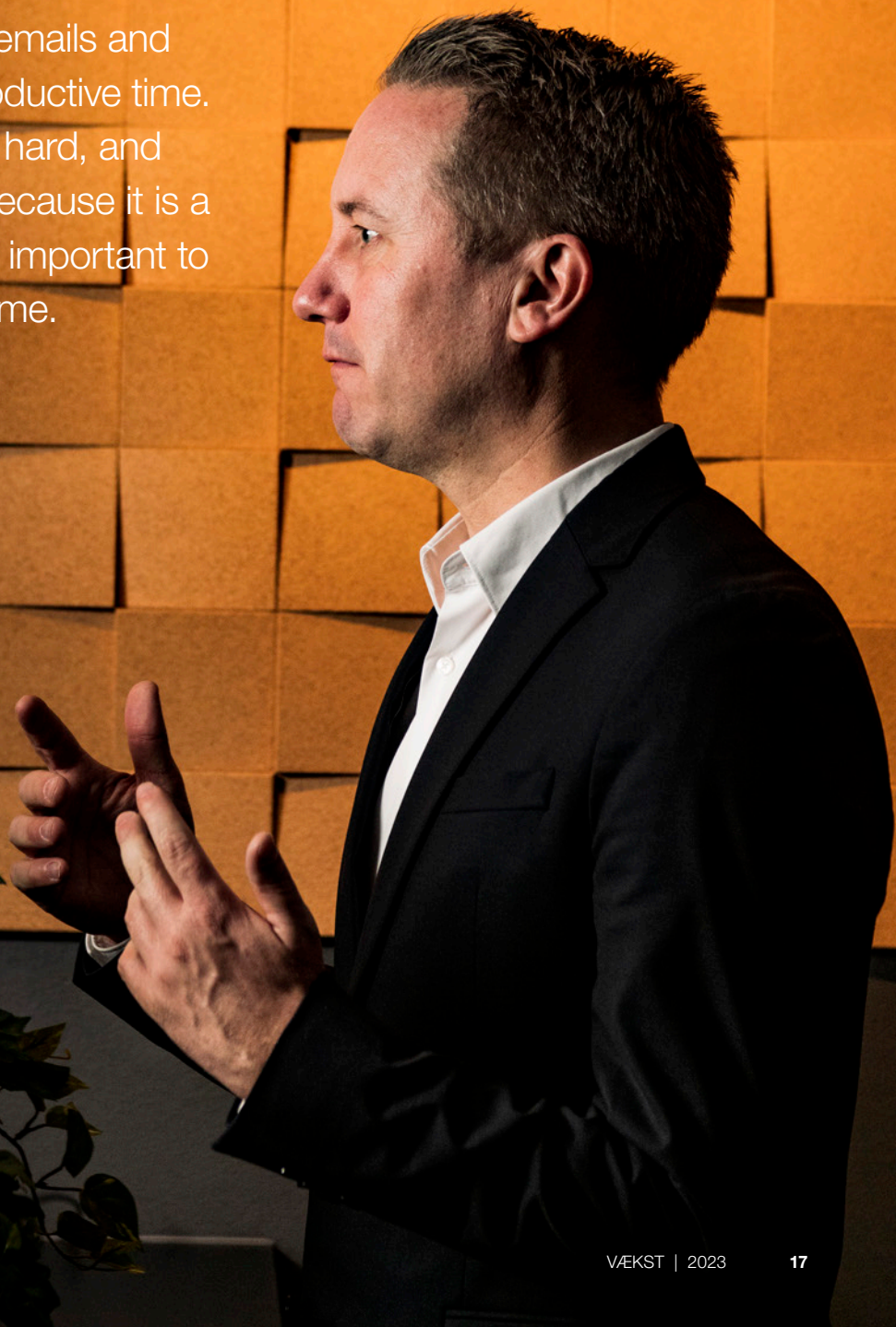


Boulevard

“

We have broken with inefficient meetings, unnecessary emails and phone calls and non-productive time. We have all had to work hard, and we still sometimes fail, because it is a difficult process, but it is important to respect other people's time.

JENS BROCH



"I am responsible for setting the direction and visualising our success, which means tight management. But I don't interfere with how the individual employee does their job – that is loose management. There are so many different ways of doing a job, and it is important to give your staff a say, responsibility and the space to prove themselves. I think that is the key to serious motivation. And then you get tight management again when we follow up on processes to determine if we have succeeded, what we have learned and what we can do better next time," he explains.

It is important to Jens Broch to eliminate pseudo work, that is, work that does not add value to the company, and this too is something that takes courage – both on the part of the management and the staff – because it forces everyone to look at their work and determine what is necessary and what is not. Perhaps a report should be two pages long and not 16?

"We have broken with inefficient meetings, unnecessary emails and phone calls and non-productive time. We have all had to work hard, and we still sometimes fail, because it is a difficult process, but it is important to respect other people's time. We should all have the courage to rethink our workday and focus on the jobs that need doing," says Jens Broch.

To follow up on the process and make sure it is a success, Sunset Boulevard has measured the employees' view on the changes, and it turns out that most are happy with the new model. 84 per cent of the staff report having more energy for leisure activities; 85 per cent are happy with the four-day workweek; and many believe they have become more efficient.

At the same time, the company's revenue increased by 25 per cent in 2022 – following a record-high revenue in 2021.

Trees instead of plastic toys

The idea of being critical of your own practice also applies when it comes to sustainability. In fall 2020, Sunset Boulevard

Jens Broch

Since 2017, Jens Broch has been CEO at Sunset Boulevard, which he joined as Sales and Marketing Executive in 2013. He has experience with management, strategy, sales, business development and marketing from Danish and international organisations like Starbucks, Cadbury, Cocio and Arla Foods.

He sits on a number of boards.

stopped including toys in the kids' menu. Instead, the company decided to invest in new woods around the country, and by the end of 2022, the fast food chain had sponsored a quarter of a million trees.

"We take sustainability seriously and try to do what we can here and now to make a difference. We believe it is better to make a difference to the environment than to continue giving customers toys. We have also replaced disposable cups with recyclable ones and stopped offering straws, and last year we jumped at the offer to use recycled bricks to build our new restaurant in Nørresundby. To us, it is about seizing the opportunity when it presents itself instead of following some fancy 2030 plan; because there is no guarantee that we will be able to achieve such goals," says Jens Broch.

Once again, it is about thinking out of the box and having the courage to fail. The philosophy is: It is better to get a little hurt than not to get anywhere.

of waste
you



Clever thinking!

How do we make better use of our resources? This is one of the big questions of our time, which call for innovative answers – some of which can be found in Kolding.

By Rie Nielsen

Climate changes, energy crisis, inflation. Problems are abundant these years. And though they are very different, they have one thing in common: The key to solving them is creative thinking. We all have to change our habits and do a lot of things differently, e.g. economise on electricity and heat.

Kolding is home to several good examples of how we can use our resources better and thus reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Manager Claus Valter from Birkemose Golf Club has adopted the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, focussing on social economy, biodiversity and waste management. His next project is to collect rainwater and use it to water the golf course, which is the size of 50 football fields.

Chickens help heat the golf club

Birkemose Golf Club gets surplus heat from their next-door neighbour.

There are a lot of different ways you can get warm. One is to play golf on a beautiful golf course like the one at Birkemose Golf Club northeast of Kolding. But you can also just get the heat. And that is exactly what the golf club does. They get surplus heat from a chicken farm 700 metres away and use it to heat the club. The owner of the farm also owns the land and facilities of the golf club.

“We lease the land and facilities, and for many years, we joked about using the heat from the chicken farm to heat the clubhouse. In 2019, we realised the idea, and today, with increasing energy prices, we are really glad we did,” says Manager Claus Valter.

The work of volunteers

The golf club uses warm waste water from free-range chicken production.

“We get the heat for free. The golf club and Fonden for Fynske Bank paid for the system, while some of our talented volunteers – trained plumbers and contractors – buried the pipes and installed the fittings. We have amazing volunteers here who are eager to make a difference,” says Claus Valter.

The club has around 150 volunteers and has been elected the Coziest Golf Club in the Country six years in a row. They have also received the 2022 Business Kolding SDG Award.

FACTS

Hot water (80 degrees Celsius) flows from the chicken farm via buried pipes to the golf club. The water passes through the club's heating system and exits at a temperature of 30 degrees Celsius. The water then returns to the farm, where it is reheated and used to heat the chicken farm facilities, before it sent back to the golf club.

Heating is a joint affair

Treated waste water is the most stable heat source available, but so far few make use of it. Kolding is home to an inspirational project, where flats are heated with waste water energy.

The benches in the local bus terminal are heated using waste water energy. The six benches are part of a test project conducted by the utility company BlueKolding. The idea is to use treated waste water as a heat source.

“We discharge 15 billion tons of lukewarm treated waste water into the Little Belt each year, which is crazy if we could be using it as a sustainable heat source. Waste water is the most stable energy source available, because people will never stop producing waste water – unlike solar or wind energy, which depend on the weather,” explains Managing Director of BlueKolding Per Holm.

From benches to flats to ...

After the benches, the next step was to heat part of BlueKolding’s own domicile and its next-door neighbour, Alfabo’s iconic orange apartment building. Since then, the building next to Alfabo’s has joined the project, and BlueKolding and Alfabo are now talking about heating 112 new homes using waste water.

“We think it is a great idea, so hopefully the next step is heating an entire community like Sdr. Bjert and Sdr. Stenderup. We could choose to build the facility ourselves, but fortunately, the district heating transmission company TVIS wants to invest in the facility, so the only thing we’ll have to do is provide the waste water,” explains Per Holm.

The 15 billion tons of waste water that passes through BlueKolding’s system each year can be turned into sustainable heating and used to heat around 4,000 homes.



The orange building is an inspiration project that has earned BlueKolding a Danish Design Award and attracted visitors from the US Congress, Spain, Portugal, Germany and China.



FACTS

Treated waste water of 8-18 degrees Celsius is heated using a heat pump till it reaches 50 degrees Celsius. The hot water is then transported to benches or buildings via a traditional piping system. It is the same technology used in refrigerators and freezers; it is just the other way round. The only energy required is power for the heat pump. And if that comes from biogas, wind or solar energy, it is a fully carbon neutral solution.

K

Jakodan listens their way to the best packaging solution

Jakodan designs packaging for small companies and provides small shops with standard packaging with a personal touch.



By Anette Jorsal

A brown paper envelope made from grass, pink cardboard boxes and ribbon in fashionable colours. These are just a few of the products offered by Jakodan, which says a lot about why the company has seen continued growth for the past 20 years.

Jakodan has made a virtue of listening to their customers. Director Nina Jørgensen loves spreadsheets, where she lists customer requests. And when several customers have requested pink boxes she will design such a box and put it into production. Today, there are lots of pink and light-blue boxes in the warehouse, which is run by Nina Jørgensen's husband and co-owner of Jakodan Jakob Schmidt.

She also listens to her office staff, whom she refers to as colleagues. They keep abreast of popular colours, while Nina Jørgensen keeps abreast of trend spotters.

"If you want to design the right product, you have to listen to your customers and keep up with what is trending," says Nina Jørgensen and adds that it is one of the main reasons why Jakodan has experienced an annual growth of 18-20 per cent. Another main reason is the fact that the company allows customers to buy small amounts of packaging at a time.

Boom during the pandemic

The company experienced a boom during the pandemic. First, Nina Jørgensen and Jakob Schmidt chose to send their staff home, but after two weeks, they had to ask them to come back to work. All the web shops suddenly needed more boxes and bags, and Jakodan's revenue doubled from 2019 to 2021.

Jakodan

- Founded in 2002 by Jakob Schmidt and Nina Jørgensen, who at the time worked as an office trainee.
- The company has relocated several times. In 2020, they built a new warehouse at 31 Essen.
- Annual growth of 18-20 per cent.
- 2019 revenue: DKK 26 million. 2021 revenue: DKK 47 million.
- 11 employees.

K

The couple started out selling bubble wrap envelopes and brown cardboard boxes. In 2005, when web shops began to emerge, they made their own web shop, and once they started selling plastic shipping bags, as one of the first in the country, things started to move fast.

In recent years, Nina Jørgensen has kept a watchful eye on the green transition. Besides bags made from wood and grass, Jakodan offers i.a. shipping bags made from sugar canes instead of plastic.



↑
In the past 20 years, Jakodan has received five fast-growth company prizes and been elected Successful Business of the Year four times by BDO and Spar Nord.

Jakodan provides everything from machine shops to clothing, wine and web shops with packaging.



In 2022, Kolding was home to 38 fast-growth company prize winners – that is 6 more than the previous year

(Source: Børsen)

Kolding students' GPA at the ninth-form school-leaving examination is the **third highest** in Jutland – after Rebild and Aarhus.

(Source: KL: "Kend din kommune")

187

Kolding has a strong business community and the highest commercial revenue in West Denmark with an index number of 187.

(Source: Retail Institute Scandinavia: "Handelsbalancen 2019")

Building with a green conscience

More timber, more recycling, more bio-based materials. These are keywords if we want to build with a green conscience, and more suppliers and construction companies need to focus attention on sustainability.

By Anette Jorsal

The construction industry is responsible for 20 per cent of the country's total carbon emissions – and for 35 per cent of all waste. Globally, construction is responsible for 40 per cent of the world's carbon emissions. Add to this the fact that the amount of sand used in concrete production means that we will eventually run out of sand. Suppliers and construction companies therefore have every reason to focus attention on sustainability.

Some concentrate on recycling construction materials. Others, including Alfix, focus on reducing the carbon footprint of construction materials. And researchers are looking into alternative materials such as straw and seaweed or sustainable materials such as timber.

According to Professor of Environmental and Resource Economy Jette Bredahl Jacobsen, timber production is typically eco-friendlier than cement production. And we have enough timber. According to Kenny C. Holm from Holdbar, we generally grow more timber than we use.

Sources: Bolius.dk, Dagens Byggeri, Kenny C. Holm

Kenny Holm has trained as a carpenter, but also worked as Product Manager with i.a. a sawmill and Würth.



Alfix has a green, sustainable mindset – focussing on wind power, LED lighting, sedum roofing (on the new warehouse) and of course eco-friendly products.

Timber expert from Sjølund calls for more timber construction

Ask timber expert Kenny C. Holm why we need to use more timber in construction, and you will get a prompt reply:

“Because we cannot afford NOT to. Denmark is full of concrete, but cement production emits tons of CO2. We need to reduce that amount, and using more timber in construction is one way to do that,” says Kenny C. Holm, who is the owner of Holdbar, which specialises in making bearing timber more accessible and demonstrating that timber construction can be economically viable.

He draws on his experience as a carpenter and manager in the timber industry when he advises developers and construction companies on timber solutions, i.a. focussing on bearing timber constructions. In 2021, he contributed to the UN17 Village, a large-scale apartment building project, and in 2023, he will contribute to the large timber-based construction of the

Marble Pier in Nordhavn, Copenhagen, designed by Henning Larsen Architects.

He is seeing increasing interest in timber construction among large investors, architects and some construction companies:

“For many years, I have participated in trade fairs, but we never really got down to business. The past two or three years, though, the number of people interested in using timber in construction has soared, and this includes large-scale projects. Of course, this is supported by the general development in society too. Today, pension funds have adopted a sustainable profile, and we have a new set of rules for calculating the carbon footprint of the construction of buildings of more than 1,000 square metres,” says Kenny C. Holm. He also draws on timber experts from his large network which includes Germans and Italians.

Alfix wants to make a difference in a carbon-heavy industry

A large packaging producer shook their head in wonderment when Kolding-based Alfix ordered FSC-certified paper bags. Why pay extra for packaging meant for an industrial product? Because it meets the family-owned company’s values and strategy of making a sustainability-oriented difference in the carbon-heavy construction industry.

Alfix got its FSC-certified bags in 2014. Later the company has added cement and other raw materials with a significantly reduced carbon footprint to its best-selling product. They have also added a dust-inhibiting material that improves the working environment. The tile adhesive, Alfix ProFix Plus, is marked with the Nordic Eco-Label and is the reason why Alfix received the Construction Industry Environmental Award earlier this year – for the second time.

“Since 2000, we have focussed systematically on sustainable initiatives. We want to win and inspire Nordic construction with sustainable systems, and we want to design eco-friendlier products,” says CCO Anders Berthelsen Toft, whose grandfather founded Alfix.

Alfix seeks to impact the value chain from the bottom up, because, as Anders Berthelsen Toft says:

“We can really make a difference if we are able to influence subcontractors.”

Today, Alfix focusses on ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) standards and actively applies the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Anders Berthelsen Toft is convinced that it has an effect on recruitment at Alfix.

Land of milk and honey for wildlife and plants

By Astrid Cramer

Last fall, farmer Peter Hindbo received the Ministry of Environment of Denmark's Wildest Business Award for his effort to recreate wild nature and biodiversity on his property. The previous year, he was elected Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year.

Peter Hindbo was both surprised and happy to receive the awards. They are the result of three years' hard work transforming 12 hectares of farmland into a nature haven home to a diversity of wild plants, birds, amphibians and insects.

What he is most pleased about, though, is having achieved an old dream of living in wild countryside. Peter Hindbo grew up on the Stenderup Peninsula, which kindled a passion for nature in general and birds in particular. Peter Hindbo later trained as a conventional farmer and bought a farm in Lejrskov west of Kolding. When his son took over in 2018, Peter Hindbo bought Asbølgård close by. On the 54-hectare farm he practises organic farming.

"When I bought the property, I promised TREFOR Vand to practise zero-pesticide farming, as they extract drinking water from the area. Around the same time, I came across an ad from the Danish Nature Fund looking for new nature projects," says Peter Hindbo.

"Together with Kolding Municipality, he put together an application and received just under one million kroner for creating a nutrient-poor area where wild meadow plants would thrive. In order to speed up the process, he deep-ploughed the area. Nutrient-poor soil was mixed with the top 60-cm layer of nutrient-rich soil, as nutrient-poor soil is the best basis for wild plants, and Peter Hindbo's hard work has already paid off.

New excursion spot with hiking trail

Biologists from Kolding Municipality closely monitor the development, and they are impressed with the large amount of wild plants already found in the area. Normally, this process takes 30-50 years. The many wild flowers have attracted a swarm of insects.

"Last year, in late summer, the biologists measured the population of insects here, and they concluded that the area is home to 10 times as many insects as a meadow by the Marielund Woods," says Peter Hindbo.

Right from the start, Peter Hindbo wanted to open the area to the public. Together with Kolding Municipality, he has established a hiking trail through the area. For more information about the trail and parking, see the map at oplevelkolding.dk.



K

Nine Exmoor ponies graze in the area. This is to keep the grass low to allow sunlight to reach the ground and thus provide optimum conditions for many different types of flowering herbs.





As of 1 January 2023, all farmers must in accordance with a new EU directive convert four per cent of their agricultural land into nature.

Peter Hindbo advises local farmers to: Start by getting in touch with advisers in your local agricultural organisation, KHL, and biologists with Kolding Municipality. They can provide valuable knowledge and feedback.

Kolding benefits from stronger ties to the royal house

Koldinghus has seen a steady stream of visitors and royals since the castle became part of the Royal Danish Collection. The castle is a beacon that is hard to miss, internationally too. And 80 per cent of visitors venture into the city.

By Anette Jorsal

Since Koldinghus became part of the Royal Danish Collection, the castle has become more popular. It houses exhibitions on HM The Queen's embroideries, the Flora Danica set, Danish crown princesses and the Royal Yacht Dannebrog. And it is good for Kolding and the entire Triangle Region. CEO Martin Perregaard-Bitsch from the tourist organisation Destination Trekanten says:

"When German tourists have to decide where to spend their next holiday, Koldinghus pops up, and that is not only good for Koldinghus. It good for the entire city – because where do we go for dinner? And where can we stay?"

According to Martin Perregaard-Bitsch, to attract cultural tourists you need a serious attraction. This group of tourists have a lot of money to spend and are able to travel outside the busy summer season.

"And you should not underestimate international interest in the Danish Royal House. I have participated in a lot of international travel fairs in Germany, and if you can get HM The Queen's sister or another member of the Royal Family to come, it makes a real difference," says CEO Martin Perregaard-Bitsch.

HRH The Crown Prince himself opened the exhibition on the Royal Yacht Dannebrog.

More press and publicity

According to Museum Director Thomas Thulstrup from the Royal Danish Collection, making Koldinghus a part of the Royal Danish Collection has had a huge impact on the city and region:

"80 per cent of visitors to the castle also venture into the city. In my opinion, though, the fact that a lot of people are proud to live in a city with a popular royal castle is just as important," says Thomas Thulstrup.

The castle has also noticed a change in the press:

"In the past, we sometimes had difficulties getting through to the national press. It is a completely different situation today, not least thanks to the Royal Family, who are really supportive, and this has an effect on the branding of the city," says Thomas Thulstrup, who is more than pleased.

"I am over the moon about it, and I am afraid it shows."



Photo: Maria Tuxen Hedegaard

Largest number of visitors for years

In 2022, the Royal Danish Collection Koldinghus had 150,000 visitors. It is the largest number since 1998 – except for 2018, when 170,000 people visited Koldinghus in connection with the castle and city’s 750th jubilee and the exhibition “Magtens smykker”. In 2019, the year before the first lockdown, the castle had 127,000 visitors.

- 80 per cent of visitors are Danish citizens.
- 20 per cent of visitors are foreign nationals.
- 24 per cent of visitors come from Zealand, which is home to the other three members of the Royal Danish Collection, Rosenborg, Amalienborg and HM The Queen’s Reference Library.
- 80 per cent of visitors to the castle also visit the city.

HRH The Crown Princess has visited the Royal Danish Collection Koldinghus on several occasions, including the sewing room.



Foto: Maria Tuxen Hedegaard

Supporting the green transition

A number of Kolding-based companies experience growth as subcontractors of i.a. wind turbine, solar cell and transformer station producers and thus contribute to the green transition.

By Anette Jorsal

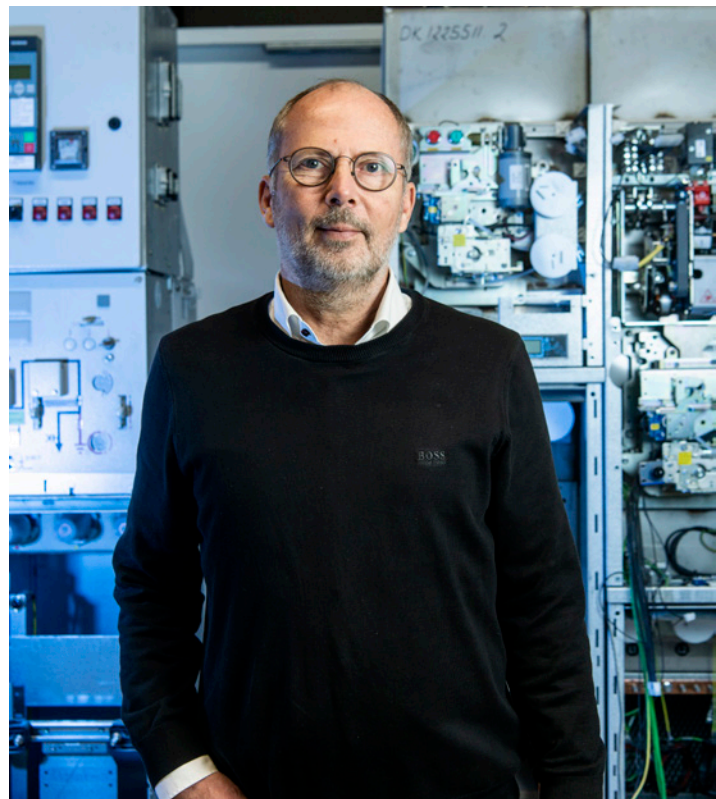
Denmark is undergoing major social changes these years. We need to transition to greener energy and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In accordance with the Danish 2020 Climate Act, greenhouse gas emissions must by 2030 be cut by 70 per cent compared to 1990. The EU has also formulated a series of greenhouse gas reduction targets. Thus, by 2030, carbon emissions from agriculture and transport must be cut by 30 per cent compared to 2005.

According to the Confederation of Danish Industry, it will take 116,000 full-time equivalents of skilled as well as unskilled workers to achieve a 70 per cent-reduction by 2030.

A number of Kolding-based companies contribute to the green transition as subcontractors of i.a. wind turbine producers, solar cell manufacturers, an expansion of the energy grid etc. Two of the local companies that can look forward to more work in connection with the green transition are Tora A/S and Delpro A/S.

According to Jesper W. Jensen, 70 per cent of the company's production is targeted at either wind turbines or solar cells.



According to Jacob Rath, everything is headed in one direction at Delpro – towards the green transition

Tora – green inside and out

When the sun is out, Manager Jesper W. Jensen from Tora A/S has a big smile on his face. Because sun means that the solar cells on the company's new production building – with the help of a heat pump – provide the net zero building with power.

This system is in keeping with a large part of Tora's production, which is dedicated to the green transition. Since the beginning of the century, Tora has been a supplier to the wind turbine industry, and today, the factory supplies various metal items for both wind turbines and solar cells. Around 70 per cent of the company's production is dedicated to the green transition; 60 per cent is targeted at the wind turbine industry.

Tora can stamp, bend, cut, mill, weld and twist iron elements and produces various customer-specific items. They can pro-

duce more or less any part for the wind turbine nacelle (the "house" behind the blades), except the gearbox and generator, and all metal items for solar cell panels.

But when 60 per cent of your production is targeted at one industry, it makes you a bit vulnerable.

"Yes, that is true. But we are enterprising and can easily adapt to the other industries we collaborate with, and we believe the wind turbine industry will be here for many years to come. The industry produced fewer turbines in the years 2012-22, but we are convinced that we will see a lot of orders in the future," says Jesper W. Jensen, who founded Tora A/S together with Technical Manager Jan Elsner in 1995. Today, the company has a staff of 85 and is located in Birkedam.

Thanks to the green transition, Delpro is on the crest of the waves

Delpro A/S is really on the crest of the waves thanks to the green transition. In just five years, the company has nearly tripled its revenue from DKK 75 million in 2016 to 200 million in 2021. The company's 200 employees focus on high voltage at home and abroad. When large wind turbine manufacturers like Vestas and Siemens/Gamesa sell turbines to countries around the world, they are accompanied by Delpro's high voltage specialists. Right now employees from Vamdrup are connecting power from offshore wind turbines off the coast of Taiwan to a transformer station.

Delpro has divisions in Norway, England, the Netherlands, Poland and Taiwan and ... "Right now we are working on some big projects in Portugal, France and the US, and if you call me a year from today, we will be ready to set up in even more countries," says Manager Jacob Rath, who is one of the two owners of Delpro A/S.

Delpro is a contracting company based in Vamdrup, and most of the staff are trained electricians who have specialised in high voltage. In fact, Delpro makes a virtue of nerding out high voltage.

"To a lot of our competition, high voltage is a small part of a large business. We have chosen to make high voltage a key part of our business. Here 'nerd' is a good thing," says Jacob Rath.

Right now, Delpro is forced to recruit foreign workers to meet the demand. Among other things, Delpro provides services to Energinet. It has also installed the nine substations supplying the Odense Light Rail with electricity and been responsible for high voltage in connection with the construction of large data centres in Odense, Viborg and Fredericia.

The food should be sustainable – and local

Less food waste, fewer calories and more local produce. Kolding Municipality is one in 12 European cities who have set out to solve the task of making the food system more sustainable.

By Anette Jorsal

Kolding Municipality and the University of Southern Denmark have received funding of DKK eight million from the EU. The money shall go to rethinking the entire food chain in a living laboratory. Stakeholders include food manufacturers, distributors, retail and consumers.

In Kolding, the project title is FOOD2030, and the laboratory project will run for four years.

The aim of FOOD2030 is to develop a more sustainable food system. This involves studying food waste and local production.

Kolding is one of 12 participating European cities, which will be sharing knowledge and working together on developing long-term solutions for a more balanced food system.

And it makes good sense to take a closer look at the existing food system, which in many ways is unbalanced. Some have too little, others too much. 800 million people worldwide are undernourished, while two billion are overweight. In our rich part of the world, we throw away around one third of all food produced, and more and more people develop lifestyle diseases.

The 12 participating cities range from Oslo and Tampede in the north to San Sebastian and Athens in the south.

Takeaway as a healthy alternative



Together with his friend from school, Zenghui Lin, Shuang Chen, who calls himself Tony, opened Wok to go in June 2022.

Fresh vegetables and food right out of the wok. This is the goal at Wok to go in Adelgade close to St Nicolai Church.

Shuang Chen and Zenghui Lin opened the new takeaway restaurant in June 2022. They know each other from school. After graduating, Shuang Chen moved to Copenhagen where he worked as a cook for 13 years, while Zenghui Lin opened a restaurant, Atami Sushi, in Akseltorv in 2017. Today, Atami Sushi has spread to Billund, Vejle, Fredericia and Odense. In 2021, the company was awarded the newspaper Børsen's fast-growing company prize. The chain made a profit of just under DKK six million in 2020/2021.

This gave Zenghui Lin the courage to expand, and together with his old friend, Shuang Cheng, he decided to open a chain of Asian takeaway restaurants. Right from the start, the two friends have focussed on lots of vegetables to provide a healthy alternative to other fast food chains. Aside from the set menu, customers can create their own wok dish.

"The food we make is freshly made and contains more vegetables. The goal is not to make food that can be heated at home, but food that is hot, healthy and decently sized. We want to offer high-quality food at a reasonable price," says Shuang Chen.

Getting the locals to eat more vegetables has proven a bit of a challenge, though.

"We want to give our customers different experiences with vegetables, but in Denmark, the selection of vegetables is limited, so it is bound to take some time," says Shuang Cheng.



Sunshine produces local vegetables

10 years ago, Lene Husted and Lolke van Mulligan established the organic farm “Solskin” in Taps. To begin with, Lolke worked as a substitute on other farms and ran Solskin in his spare time, but after a couple years, the farm’s organic produce had become so popular that Lolke began to work full-time on his own farm. Sales have increased bit by bit, because organic produce is popular with the consumers, but ...

“People are sluggish. They are creatures of habit. They always go to the same shop, and they are happy as soon as they see the ecolabel. They don’t bother to check that the vegetables were produced in Denmark. 70 per cent of the fruit and vegetables we eat are imported from abroad,” says Lolke van Mulligan, who recently had success growing and selling oat rice.

He sells his organic vegetables from a stand in Akseltorv and from the farm’s own stand in Taps. Lolke also delivers produce to customers who have ordered them online. The farm makes its largest profit in July, though, when tourists from Christiansfeld pass by to buy cherries from the farm’s 500 cherry trees.

Lolke van Mulligan has trained as a biodynamic farmer in the Netherlands, and in his opinion, we need to transition to organic farming in order to protect the planet.

“The Earth has a limited amount of resources, and if we want to continue living here, we need to start using local resources. Furthermore, we need to stop using inorganic fertiliser. For more than three billion years, we have been able to live off the land without the use of fertiliser and without exhausting the soil. There is no need to add fertiliser; the soil already contains all the nutrients we need. What it is short of is animals,” says Lolke van Mulligan.

At Solskin farm, all the animals have names. The 12 hectares are home to four cows, a herd of sheep, 29 chickens and a range of vegetables.



Collaboration to prevent labour shortage

Considering the current labour shortage, it is important that the business community enters into collaborations with schools and educational institutions. Kolding Municipality is home to strong partnerships.

By Tanja Marek

To local businesses, a collaboration with a primary and lower secondary school, upper secondary school or institution of further education can be a good investment, as the demand for qualified labour will increase in the future.

A lot of businesses already acknowledge the need for collaboration and focus on the future and their obligation to Danish youth, giving them a wide range of jobs to choose from. Closer collaboration will facilitate knowledge exchange, create long-term partnerships and opportunities and support innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity.

In primary and lower secondary schools, it can take the form of company visits or guest teachers; in upper secondary schools, it can include presentations, business cases and student assignments; and in further education institutions, the most common forms are internships, project collaborations and student jobs.

Read about three local business collaborations and find inspiration for your next project.

Extensive collaboration between local businesses and schools can help students acquire the qualifications they need to propel their career and personal development.

Strong school-business collaboration

Projections show that we will be short 99,000 skilled workers in 2030 and 10,000 engineers and IT and technology graduates in 2025.

Project Edison

Kolding sets a national record

Last year, 977 sixth- and seventh-form students from Kolding Municipality participated in the national entrepreneurship competition Project Edison. This made Kolding the Danish municipality with the most participants. The theme was “Our future city”.

Project Edison is run by the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship and is a fun, instructive competition, where students focus on invention in an innovative learning process.

In local schools, Project Edison has become an established tradition. The local finals are organised by IBC, Kolding Municipality and Pædagogisk Center, Business Kolding and a number of local businesses.

Charlotte Stensgaard from IBC Kolding is responsible for organising the local finals, and she always invites 60 business school students to judge the competition. The local business community contributes more than 40 judges, who are tasked with assessing the students’ ideas and giving them feedback.

Denmark needs more innovative minds who can come up with new ideas and solutions. This is supported by Project Edison, which sows the seeds of future entrepreneurs and creative trouble-shooters. And who does not need a talented inventor?

Would you like to be a judge? Please contact Tanja Marek at tamar@businesskolding.dk





Coding Pirates Kolding

Young people are coding pirates

Each Wednesday, around 25 young people and a group of volunteers from IBC meet to produce, 3D-print and explore new technology.

Coding Pirates Kolding is an after-school activity for young people aged 11 to 17 years, where they learn about coding and technology. The goal is to capture and mature the young people's interest in new technologies and increase the number of young IT enthusiasts in Kolding. Coding Pirates is a creative community, where young people get to explore and experiment with IT and technology.

The teachers are volunteers from local businesses who work on development and are interested in technology and computers, and they are responsible for the didactic framework. They too enjoy playing with IT and technology.

More and more primary and lower secondary schools focus on increasing students' knowledge of technology, and Coding Pirates is a popular after-school activity with a waiting list of students eager to join.

Coding Pirates has divisions throughout the country and aims to inspire innovative product developers. Last fall, the Kolding branch received a DKK-226,000 donation from the House of Innovation Foundation for better equipment and materials and more open events in 2023.

Would you like to volunteer and join the fun? Please contact Lene Wul at kolding@codingpirates.dk



Hard Skills Station

Giving students technical skills

Hard Skills Station was established in summer 2022 and is targeted at students at Campus Kolding interested in boosting their professional competences, especially their technical skills.

Business Kolding and the educational institutions have entered into a collaboration with the local business community on creating a community where students can acquire in-demand technical skills.

The purpose is to strengthen connections between students, educational institutions and businesses and to give students a sense of the skills in demand at local companies, today and in

the future. It also gives companies a chance to spot new local talents.

Instructors typically come from the business community, and they cover a broad spectrum of topics. Students can participate in workshops on programming and no-code, photo and podcast, automation, drones, design skills, illustration and laser cutting.

Do you represent a tech company and would you like to contribute with e.g. company visits, cases, presentation, seminar, mentoring or something else entirely? Please contact Majbritt Lykke Sørensen at mls@businesskolding.dk.





Kolding should be able to train its own engineers

Kolding is big enough to train its own engineers. So says
Managing Director of Beckhoff Automation ApS Michael Nielsen.

Trouble-shooter from Funen loves his work

39-year-old MSc of Engineering Peter Kristiansen is one of the many talented employees Beckhoff has managed to recruit. He is originally from Nyborg and went to school in Odense.

He applied for a position with Beckhoff and joined the company in January 2021, even though Kolding was new to him.

“I have to admit that in my mind the Triangle Region mainly included Fredericia and Vejle, but after moving to Kolding I have realised that the city is short of nothing really. The only thing missing is more exposure about what Kolding is and can do,” he says.

He works as a trouble-shooter, to use his own term, for several of the company’s business clients, whom he is generally able to help out over the phone or via email.

“The job is extremely interesting and constantly challenges my professional competences, and we have a lot of fun here. There are lots of after-work activities, which strengthen our team spirit,” he says and mentions a three-hour paddling event at New Year’s, which meant that everyone was pretty beat the next day at work.



Beckhoff provides control systems and components to machine and production equipment manufacturers. It is a German-owned company with international headquarters in Hannover.

By Anders Davidsen

At Beckhoff’s Danish headquarters in Kolding, Managing Director Michael Nielsen has a staff of 18 engineers, but recruiting them has been hard work. Today, most engineers graduate from a school in one of the largest cities in the country, and according to Michael Nielsen, few of them are interested in moving to a city like Kolding. This means that when the company posts a vacancy, they rarely get a lot of applications from suitable candidates.

“Therefore, we mainly use an external recruitment agency, who are able to tap candidates on the shoulder. It is far more effective, but costly,” he says.

Michael Nielsen has a large network in the region, i.a. via his membership of the board of the Danish Confederation of Industry in the Triangle Region. And he knows that Beckhoff is not the only company that has difficulties recruiting engineers.

“We do what we can to brand ourselves to students as early as possible and participate in anything from internship events

to seminars. We also make guest lecturers and equipment available to schools,” he says.

According to the Managing Director, Beckhoff is able to offer candidates a decent salary, but he does not recruit people on that basis. They need to be motivated by the work and he promotes Beckhoff as a company with a great work culture, socially as well as professionally.

“Our staff can work in lots of different areas and enjoy a lot of professional freedom; they don’t have to focus on one specific area,” he says and points to Kolding’ central location and great infrastructure, which makes it possible to commute from cities like Odense and Esbjerg.

If the city should choose to establish a school of engineering, Beckhoff is willing to contribute with one or two internships at a time.

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