

Sustainable in every aspect

More and more people are concerned about climate change, are willing to take better care of the earth and to make different choices accordingly. However, it is hardly straightforward to gain access to the information needed to minimize one's own energy and heat consumption. This is where Brunata International A/S can help. The company is headquartered in Herlev, Denmark, and provides administrators and tenants across Europe with a range of their own patented heat cost allocators and humidity meters, and range of water and energy meters. Interestingly, the company is more than 100 years old, and in the last seven years has transformed itself from family-driven to family-owned.

"Savings in the first year after our meters are placed amount to 20% to even 35%," Eva Fischer Hansen states. "We are effectively changing people's behaviour, by making them aware of their energy consumption." She explains that those figures indicate a change from fixed fees that had been allocated solely on the square meterage of an apartment, to fees that are calculated for the larger part on their actual use of heat and energy. "The European Union decided years ago on a directive which states that wherever more than one family is sharing a heating source, measuring devices should be installed to allocate the individual families' use of heat and energy," she adds. "In Denmark and Germany this is already incorporated in national legislation, and other countries are following in the near future."

The company's portfolio of FUTURA meters include heat-cost allocators, humidity meters and temperature meters. The heat cost allocator uses patented technology that distinguishes between the



Eva Fischer Hansen has been involved in the family's company for ten years

heat that is supplied to the radiator from the heating system and the heat that is applied to the radiator from the surroundings, for example, from a wood burning stove or the sunrays. "Our meters are extremely accurate, and by now all of them can send information remotely to our computer system for the necessary calculations."

Ms. Fischer Hansen observes that modern measuring systems register more information, which allows users to save more money. A



The Futura heat cost allocator offers extremely accurate measurements, due to patented technology that distinguishes between the heat that is supplied from the heating system and the heat from surroundings

Brunata meter will pay itself back in one and a half to two years, and it works up to 15 years on a single battery. She adds that Brunata meters are actually the only meters that allow users to change the battery, making its use even more sound from a sustainability point of view.

Depending on the country the company is operating in, Brunata's clients are administrators of office buildings and social housing

projects, individual house owners and social housing owners such as municipalities. Advantages for Brunata's clients include a highly flexible reporting system, that can be customized according to the client's requirements. All measurements can be followed quite closely throughout the day, allowing for accurate advice and consultancy services for clients. It is even possible to set alarms to turn down radiators or correct settings in the installation. According to Ms.

Fischer Hansen, such consultancy issues will play an increasingly important part in Brunata's future. "Before the mid 1990s, the meters could not be read remotely from our Danish office, so we had offices in many countries and had to visit every house to read out the measurements," Ms. Fischer Hansen recalls. "After the Berlin wall had been opened, financial aid was provided in the 1990s to install meters for energy cost allocation, and our company was one of the companies selected to install the meters." While this is quite some time ago, Brunata is still very active in Eastern Europe. Even so, Brunata currently realises most of its 40 million EUR turnover in Denmark, since all calculations for individual apartments and collective overviews are performed here, on top of its 35% market share in the domestic market. However, with sales and service branches in Norway, Sweden, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy, and business partners in many other countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, China and the Eastern European countries, the company is truly international.

Actually, many of the current partners abroad used to be subsidiaries, but in the last seven years the Fischer Hansen family transformed Brunata from family-driven to family-owned. "It was such a very exciting process, to put people from outside the family in top positions and get to know

their way of thinking," Ms. Fischer Hansen enthuses. Brunata has been family-owned since its origins in 1917, and her father Jens Peter Fischer Hansen had already been working there since 1966 when he bought the company in the early 1990s. By 2011 all of his four children were also active in the board and in management positions, and the family decided to initiate a transformation in honour of what the company needed. "Our transformation is a study case at for example INSEAD Business School to teach and learn from how we succeeded in making good and bad decisions as a family," states Ms. Fischer Hansen. "You see, many other family-owned companies

struggle with this key issue of how to be business partners as well as siblings and family members." In 2011 the family hired a CEO, and in 2013 the Board of Directors was changed to include just Ms. Fischer Hansen and her father. "By 2015, my siblings also left their management positions, realising that we achieved our collective goal and that the company could go on without their involvement." Ms. Fischer Hansen was appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors in 2015, while her father is Board Member. After an exciting and fruitful seven-year process of focussing on its core business and changing the organisational setup and strategies accordingly, Brunata is finishing its transformation into a profitable company that



Brunata provides a web system to check measurements and related information, helping tenants and owners to decrease their use of energy and water

is ideally suited for increasing its international activities in the future. The company has also made it possible for administrators and tenants to monitor the consumption of for example heat and water on laptop, tablet and smartphone. Recently they have launched an app for tenants, and they continue to develop new solutions within the

industry for energy consumption. It is clear that Ms. Fischer Hansen is quite proud of Brunata: "We help people to gain insight in their use of heat and energy, in order to save money and save the environment. I am proud we are a Danish family-owned company, based on values that allow for good relationships with our clients."

Brunata

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