



Best Handmade Glassworks Supplier 2021

Glasswork in Sweden has ancient roots in traditions being maintained by Sweden Crystal Design. CEO Staffan Lessner introduces us to the rich heritage of Swedish glasswork in the wake of his company's success at the Scandinavian Business Awards 2021.

Sweden Crystal Design was founded in 1986 by the Swedish Glassworks Design & Marketing Company and resides in the hands of CEO Staffan Lessner. "We have a comprehensive program of special designs and more than 25 years of experience. Our services and products are unique and are of the highest quality however, we believe a new type of customer is emerging in the global window that wants to be involved in creating and designing their own products."

Its customers are varied, ranging from private individuals to large companies to stores, hence the company's core ethos of flexibility on its services. "Our mission is to live up to the customer's requirements down to the smallest detail," says Staffan. "To meet the customer's requirements, we have three [priorities]: renew, change and improve."



The products are made of unique, traditional Swedish crystal with its special lustre. Staffan explains, "We have a product service that no other competitor has; if a customer does not find a product that they are looking for in our product range, we produce it after in-depth interviews and designs and manufacture it according to the customer's requirements - this is called 'special design.' Several proposals are presented to the customer and usually a prototype is made, after which the series production takes place."

With any business, trends are bound to fluctuate and change, effecting the marketplace, the products and the designs. "The trend in the industry is to adapt to the digital and global world we are now facing. Partly through improved product development to different markets' requirements and customer segments and partly combined through materials in the product," explains Staffan.

However, the most recent trend effecting the industry has been created by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Staffan states, "people have worked from home at the computer and sales in the physical stores have fallen between 80 and 90%. This has resulted in online sales, partly because the customer has been able to become more active with the business, [personalising] everything from the product's appearance to delivery times."

Staffan explains that there is a great benefit to the business' base in Scandinavia. "It's simple: the knowledge in design and art is well established and in constant development and renewal. As Scandinavia has unique traditions, this bodes well for the industry in the long run. The region has the knowledge and over 350 years of experience in glass and design created in the Kingdom of Glass, or the Kingdom of Crystal. There are clusters of glassworks, with schools for glassblowers and designers all located within a radius of 100 kilometres. This kind of community and traditional knowledge about glass is not found anywhere else in the world."

Staffan goes on to describe the internal culture of Swedish Crystal Design: "Our employees have everything from 40 years of experience in glassblowing, to graduates with 10 years of university education. When these employees meet in the glass cabin or around the table in the creative room, things happen! Our corporate culture is having an extremely high tolerance for new ideas. Our staff is in constant training and development to have the knowledge required to cope with the different customer segments. The staff is trained externally and internally, and is encouraged to 'think outside the bubble,' both independently and in teams. When we recruit new staff, we look for bold, creative people who can work in groups and independently."

The products created at Sweden Crystal Designs are without a doubt gorgeous, resilient, unique and stem from an immense knowledge of glass and tradition and are fuelled by the innovative and passionate minds of its specially trained artisans. Yet despite the focus on history and heritage embedded into each design, the firm also has a keen eye on the future.

"Instead of going to a shop, we envision that the customer could sit down and draw whatever product they imagine, whether it be a bookshelf, a table, a bowl, and email it to Sweden Crystal Design. We can adjust and correct the drawings, send it back for approval and then start a manufacturing process. Within 10 days, the product they envisioned will be at their door. Our plans for the future are to carry out this project."

Additionally, Staffan states that there will be changes in the industry regarding product development, production process and manufacturing. "AI will have a major role. The Kingdom of Glass will never be what it has been, but it will endure and become even bigger with the new."

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