



Calmer waters, but Nordbrandt changes tack

Andreas Nordbrandt likes to build things and, like a lot of Swedes, doesn't mind driving fast – though in his case it's usually in a waterborne conveyance.

While his hobbies will take a backseat to his new role as Atlas Copco's national parts and services manager – based in water-sport nirvana, Perth – he's already devised a new blueprint for the division, and is talking about switching gears.

The Linköping Institute of Technology mechanical engineering masters graduate and former Royal Swedish Navy technician moved with his family to Perth in August. He didn't waste time before laying the groundwork for changes he believes can make Atlas Copco Construction and Mining Australia one of the best parts and service organisations in the industry globally.

A month spent interviewing customer representatives and members of the company's 320-strong parts and service organisation in Australia highlighted to Nordbrandt key measures needed to position the division for future sustainable growth. He has since broadened the parts and services management structure and set about building depth in marketing and technical departments within the division.

"This [change] is not about internal competition," Nordbrandt said.

"Certainly we want the company in Australia to be among the best service and support organisations within Atlas Copco worldwide. But it's about hearing our customers say that they get better and better support from Atlas Copco.

"Our annual survey of customers will, every year, be showing improved results. We will also enter into more partnerships with our customers. These are the results I'm looking for from improvements in the service and parts area. This is where we have already seen improvement – where we have a business partnership and a win-win situation where the customer has products that they can rely on, which give them greater uptime and productivity, and where we show there is quality support available from Atlas Copco.

"Our relationship with the customer is ultimately about them becoming more competitive in their market. That's the goal. We should be in the business of selling machine uptime, and productivity."

Nordbrandt has spent the past 15 years working for Atlas Copco and, briefly, for Rolls Royce (as a design engineer in the large-ship propulsion field) in Europe. The two years before he came to Australia saw him immersed in service and parts activity as vice-president aftermarket for Atlas Copco Rock Drills.

"The quality of service, and spare parts availability, are two areas where I would say we have a universal need for improvement. So it's not just in Australia where we see that highlighted by customers," he said.

"We sell very good products. Of course, we need to support the products at a high level.

"The complexity and technology level of the machines generally today versus five years ago is different. They are more computerised and there is a lot more automation. Recruiting, training and retaining the skilled technicians we need to maintain a high level of support for these products has not been easy. Right now there are more people available, but in future it will be a challenge for us and everyone else."

"But we are not waiting for the next upturn. We're making a new start now to be ready for future business growth – really switching into the next gear, if you like."

Investment in training and systems to improve the efficiency of service and parts delivery is another Nordbrandt goal.

"It is very important that we have competent people who can support our customers so that they get uptime on the machines and this is part of the efficiency in delivery that I talk about," he said.

"In terms of retention, it's not always about money. People need the right working environment, and to be able to get a perspective on where they sit within an organisation, and where the opportunities are. Atlas Copco is a company that can offer career paths and opportunities in the US, or in Europe."

Thirty-eight-year-old Nordbrandt has a three-year "primary assignment" in Australia. His wife Jane, a financial advisor, and young boys Gustaf and Karl-Johan, had settled in Perth and were enjoying the lifestyle and climate. A boating and renovation enthusiast, Nordbrandt has a villa in Kumla, Sweden, he mostly built himself.

"I have been very well received," he said. "It's easy to come to this country as a foreigner, or expat."

Nordbrandt has also been pleasantly surprised by the comparative calm in the local market, though he didn't discount the impact of a major freeze on expenditure by mining and exploration companies in Australia earlier this year.

"If you compare here with other markets Australia hasn't suffered as much from the global financial crisis. In Europe, eastern Europe, Russia, the US ... substantial parts of the market totally collapsed," he said.

"You never know what's going to happen in 2010, but it looks like Australia has seen its downturn in 2009 and next year looks like bringing a slight recovery."

In any event it would seem Atlas Copco service and parts will be in ship-shape condition, ready for a change in conditions.

[Print this article](#) >
[Download pdf of this page](#) >
[Visit Atlas Copco Construction and Mining website](#) >

Contact: Atlas Copco Parts and Services
 Freecall: 1300 366 880

* If you have difficulty printing this page download and print the PDF