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Ten Years of Flow:

# The River Group Journey





When Carl-Johan Callenholm looks back at the early days of what is now River Group, one thing still stands out: the uncertainty.

“It’s incredible that ten years have passed. Sometimes we almost have to pinch ourselves,” he says.

What started as an idea between experienced industry professionals has grown into one of Northern Europe’s leading independent service providers within pumps and electrical motors. However, in the beginning, there were no guarantees, only a vision and a belief that we had a place on the market.

“Both I and the co-founder, Carl Hall, believed that the industry was ready for something new, and we were right”.

### **Starting with a Vision**

After more than 20 years in the industry, and with Benny Jonsson joining the company bringing nearly 40 years of experience,





Carl-Johan felt they understood both the technical side and the market need.

“We saw a clear need for an independent service player. But you never know how the market will respond. You just hope you’re right.”

In 2016, the first three companies were acquired, marking the official start of the journey. By the end of the first year, the group had already grown further.

“We didn’t start with capital. We started with a vision. We had to convince people to believe in the idea. Fortunately, they did.”

## **Growing Beyond Borders**

The initial goal was to become the largest brand independent service provider in the Nordics. The journey began in Sweden and Norway, before expanding into Denmark, Finland, Germany and later the UK.





As the company grew, the vision evolved.

“At one point, it became natural to think bigger; to become a strong independent player across Northern Europe.”

By 2021, the group had reached a turnover of NOK 1.5 billion in just five years and became part of Vestum. In 2023, another defining moment followed when the company returned to independence and was rebranded as River Group. More than 30 key employees took part in the buyback together with Equip Capital.

With independence came a renewed strategic direction and a new name. Lakers became River Group, reflecting a stronger shared identity across the companies.

The vision also evolved once again: Not necessarily to be the biggest, but to be the best independent service provider in Northern Europe.





## **One Brand, Strong Local Companies**

Despite its growth, one principle has remained unchanged: business is local.

“We don’t want to become one centralized company. We want to be one brand and one group, but always with strong local companies close to their customers.”

The idea is to combine the strength of the group with local expertise, shared branding and collaboration, while keeping decision-making close to the market.

“Our strength has always been that we actually come from this industry. We understand it because we have worked in it our entire lives. We are water and pump people.”

## **Built by People**

When asked what he is most proud of after ten years, the answer comes quickly: the people.

“This journey has only been possible because of the people in River Group. The engagement we see across the companies is something special. People believe in what we are building together.”

He also remembers the nervous excitement of the early days.

“There were definitely butterflies in the beginning. We took risks. But we believed strongly in what we were doing, and it turned out that our gut feeling was right.”

## Looking Ahead

Today, the group continues to focus on long-term growth in a sector that has gained increased attention in recent years.

“People understand more than ever how critical water infrastructure really is. It has to work, every day.”

On February 15th, River Group officially marked its ten-year anniversary. For Carl-Johan, the milestone is as much about reflection as it is about gratitude.

“Everyone who has been part of this journey deserves a big thank you. It’s been fantastic to see how many people believe in what we are doing and want to build this together with us.”

And the ambition remains clear:

**“We are building for the long term. And this is only the beginning.”**

Making Room for the Game:

# How Ahlström & Persson Helped Prepare Sweden's Finest Golf Course



When a construction project at one of Sweden's most prestigious golf courses suddenly ran into trouble, time quickly became money. Heavy machinery stood still, costs were rising by the hour, and the only solution was clear: the water level in the lake had to come down, and fast.

That's when Peab picked up the phone to Ahlström & Persson.

"They knew who to call," says Jonas Eneberg, Managing Director of the Malmö-based pump service company.

"We have worked together for many years. When they need help, they call us directly."

### **An Urgent Assignment**

The project took place at PGA National in Bara, just outside Malmö, widely regarded as Sweden's finest golf course. Peab had been tasked with reinforcing the shoreline with stone to prevent erosion, but unusually high water levels made the work impossible.

The solution was to lower the lake by about one to one and a half metres so excavators could access the shoreline and begin construction.

"They had several excavators standing ready, waiting," Jonas explains. "When heavy machinery like that is left idle, it quickly becomes very costly, so this became an urgent job."

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## A Fast and Collaborative Solution

Through their River Group network, Jonas and Site Manager Benny Jakobsson contacted Danish partner Elmodan, who quickly supplied portable diesel pumps.

“We called our friends across the Øresund. They delivered the first pump the same day,” Jonas says.

For nearly three to four weeks, the pumps worked continuously, lowering the water level enough for Peab to begin placing the protective stone along the lake.

The pumped water was safely redirected into a nearby river about 100 metres from the site, making the operation both practical and efficient.

## Built on Trust

For Jonas and Benny, the project is a good example of how long-term relationships shape their daily work.

“It all comes down to trust,” Benny says. “When customers know you will solve the problem, there is no discussion. You just get the call and get to work.”

That trust has been built over many years. Founded in 1945, Ahlström & Persson has evolved from a small industrial company into a specialised pump service provider. Today, the company has

“We usually say we  
are like an ambulance.  
You call, we come.”

— Jonas Eneberg



ten employees and service as its clear core business.

“We are a service company at heart,” Jonas says. “Our strength is that we are always close to the customer. When something happens, we respond quickly. We usually say we are like an ambulance. You call, we come.”

## **The Strength of Collaboration**

The project also highlights the importance of collaboration within River Group. Without their network, accessing the right equipment at short notice would have been much more difficult.

“We don’t own these types of pumps ourselves,” Jonas explains. “That’s why it’s so valuable to be part of River Group. We can help each other and find solutions together.”

The cooperation with Elmodan, led by Managing Director Bo Rocatis, is one example of this cross-border teamwork.

## **Relationships That Last**

Today, Ahlström & Persson manages more than 100 service agreements in the Malmö region and works with both small local customers and large industrial clients.

But regardless of size, the philosophy remains the same.

“Relationships are everything in this business,” Jonas says. “If you

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take care of your customers, they will come back when they need you.”

As for the golf course project, the pumps have now been removed and the construction completed. If rising water levels create new challenges, Jonas is confident what will happen next.

“If they need help again, they know who to call.”



A New Flow of Opportunity:

# How River Group is Expanding Lowara Across the Nordics



River Group has earned its reputation through service expertise. Now, the group is taking another strategic step by expanding into product distribution with the Lowara brand in Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

Johan Zeno, CCO & Country Manager at River Group, sees this move as a natural next step.

“This is about the product, not the supplier,” he explains. “We remain supplier-independent, but Lowara gives us a strong starting point. It’s about offering the best solution for the customer.”

### **A Strategic Opportunity**

For years, Lowara pumps were sold through Xylem’s own sales organisation. When Xylem began seeking new distribution partners in the Nordics, River Group quickly emerged as a natural choice.

The process began in Finland in late 2025, when River Group acquired Xylem Finland’s sales organization and added 30 experienced employees.

“After seeing how we handled Finland, Xylem approached us about Norway and Sweden as well,” Johan says.

By early 2026, River Group had established new sales organisations in both countries, becoming the exclusive distributor in Norway and a key distributor in Sweden.

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## Building the Sales Platform

In Sweden, Mattias Nordblom, Frontline Sales Sweden, is helping build the new sales channels.

“We know the products well after many years working with them,” he says. “Now we are not just taking over the product, we are building the sales channels and customer relationships around it.”

For many former Xylem employees, the move also means joining a more entrepreneurial organisation.

“River Group is closer to the market,” Mattias explains.

“You are more involved in decisions and become part of building something.”

In Norway, Rune Østvold, Frontline Sales Norway, shares the same experience.

“We are building something from the ground up,” he says. “At Xylem, everything was already in place. Here we are creating the structure ourselves.”

## Stronger Together

A key advantage is the cooperation across River Group. With service workshops already established across Norway and Sweden, the sales teams have strong technical support close to customers.

“The combination of product sales and service capability gives us a real advantage,” Mattias says.

Cross-border collaboration is also becoming a defining strength.

“We may be different companies, but we play on the same team,” Rune explains.

## **Built on Relationships**

Despite the strategic importance of the Lowara partnership, those involved highlight one key factor behind the opportunity: strong relationships.

“This started because of trust between River Group and Xylem,” Johan says. “And that same focus on relationships is what defines River Group.”

For Rune, the transition also feels familiar.

“Carl-Johan Callenholm actually hired me years ago,” he says. “So even though this is something new, it also feels like coming back to something I know.”

## **Looking Ahead**

While much work remains, the teams across the Nordics are optimistic about the future. The focus now is on strengthening



sales channels, building partnerships with wholesalers, and combining product sales with River Group's strong service heritage.

"There is still a lot to put in place," Johan says. "But the start has been very positive. We see strong demand and real growth opportunities."

For River Group, the Lowara partnership represents more than a new product line. It marks another step in the company's development—from a pure service organisation to a broader solutions provider.

As Rune puts it:

**"We are building something ourselves now. That creates ownership. And ownership creates motivation."**



**River Group**

[river-group.com](http://river-group.com)