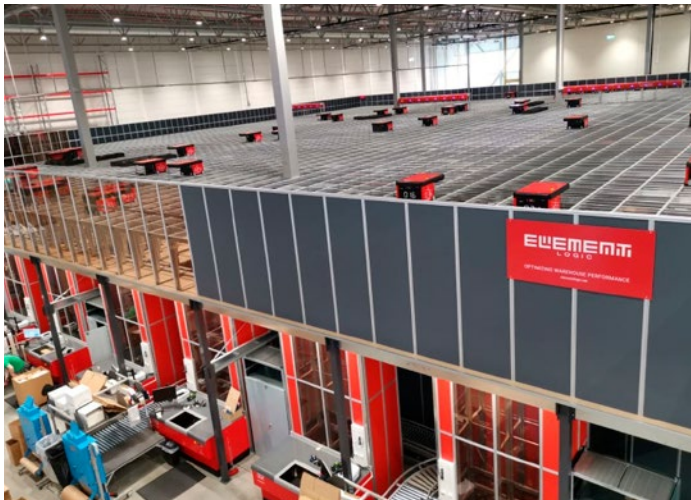


# *Room for* **GROWTH**

Since 1985, Norway-based Element Logic has been optimising warehouse performance. Since then, its robotic solutions, material handling systems, software, and consulting services have combined to make it a European powerhouse in its sector. We caught up with CCO Håvard Hallås to learn more about the intersection of innovation and growth.

**HÅVARD HALLÅS**  
CCO, Element Logic





With fourteen offices/locations across Europe, eight in the Americas, and two in Asia, Element Logic has come a long way from its inception. Founded as the brain-child of Norwegian entrepreneur Kjell Blakseth, the company began by writing software using a stopwatch and counting the steps of warehouse workers. Naturally, the tech revolution has raised the stakes, and Element Logic has managed to stay ahead of the curve, leading the way in warehouse automation. Current CCO Håvard Hallås joined the company in 2001 after a background in logistical engineering. At the time, he was joining a relatively small operation with around twenty employees. Now he helps to oversee a company employing nearly a thousand. It has been an exciting journey and one he reflects on with pride. “It has been a journey of growth,” he says. “For my part, I have fulfilled many roles, from trainee,

to sales, through to management and then executive roles. So my journey of growth has mirrored the company’s in many ways.” In Mr Hallås’ early days, the company was very much a local affair, with its sights set only on the Norwegian markets. The product portfolio was also relatively limited, comprising manual and semi-automated solutions. This all changed as the result of a collaboration.

“**My journey of growth has mirrored the company’s in many ways.**”

“We came into contact with some guys on the west coast of Norway in 2003 who had an idea of making a cube-based storage system. We thought that idea was tempting—a little bit crazy but tempting,” the CCO recalls with a smile. “We thought *Why not?* and connected with them. We made a software application out of their product and sold the system to a customer, which is still going strong.”

**A winning strategy**  
By 2006, Element Logic had sold the system ten times within the Norwegian market. The results were proven, and the potential for export sales became clear. A distribution network was created, and by 2010, the company had established itself as a Nordic player with activities in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. A period of consolidation followed, in which Element Logic, along with its partner, AutoStore, solidified its position in the Nordics for six years

“**Understanding cultures and people has been a big learning point for us.**”

or so. During this time, it assumed the position of a regional market leader in its niche. By 2017, thoughts were turning to the rest of the continent. “Around that time, we began a new process,” Mr Hallås explains. “We had talked for a while about becoming a European champion, and the time felt right. So we opened up in Germany, then in three more countries. Several more followed, and I would say by 2019 we were a pan-European actor. But we retained our identity, which I think was very important. We brought the Element Logic systems and values, which had brought us such success at home, to the European market.”

**Maintaining the momentum**  
The upward trend did not stop there, however. By 2021, confidence within the company had grown to the extent that the idea of going beyond Europe and becoming a “global champion”, as Mr Hallås calls it, was rooted.

“We thought okay, Europe is conquered!” Mr Hallås says, smiling. “Let’s see if we can make a global concern out of this. We set a global strategy, and by the end of the year, we brought the company to the US.” The acquisition of SDI Systems in the Americas helped to create a success story on the North American continent too, which was quickly followed by the move into Latin America and then the most recent expansion into Asia. All of this has combined into an impressive, seemingly unstoppable twenty-year period of growth, enabled at least in part by the digitisation and automation trends sweeping all industrial sectors. Yet it would be foolish to assume that Element Logic’s journey has been easy. Challenges have had to be overcome, some of them potentially existential ones. “Like everybody, we have faced macro challenges,” the CCO sighs. “The financial crisis of 2008, the coronavirus pandemic, these major global crises affected everybody in business. But

in fact, some of these, like COVID-enhanced demand for our solutions as e-commerce business exploded due to ‘consequences’ of COVID. Smart warehouse solutions carry less risk of contagion, for example. Beyond that, our greatest challenge has revolved around the need for adaptation. As we have grown internationally, we have needed to meet the needs of different cultures. It may sound simple, but the business culture in the US, for example, is very different to Europe, and you need to come to grips with that if you want to progress. So understanding cultures and people has been a big learning point for us.” With that said, there clearly remains great potential in the marketplace for Element Logic’s product offerings. Continued geographical expansion remains a big part of the company’s future projections. But there is more to their plans than that. **Room for growth** “We will continue to expand our product offerings too,” Mr Hallås explains. “But we still see untapped potential for our current offerings. Element Logic’s strategy is quite straightforward, actually. We have been on a growth journey, and we will continue it at the same pace. Our five-year plan remains as ambitious as the last few years have been. We see no reason to dilute that. Asia and the Pacific will grow for us, and the Americas will continue to grow, also.” A large part of this confidence is based around Element Logic’s unique approach. It is not just a tech-based provider offering tech-based solutions. This may form the basis of the company’s core product offering, but there is another layer to the picture. “We are a people-oriented company,” states the CCO. “That means the customer is important, of course, but so are our own people. They are our biggest asset. Our employees feel that they are seen, valued, and developed. We have a Scandinavian, informal management setup and an extremely open culture. I think this helps us to stand out against our competitors in this sector.” It all adds up to an impressive overall package, which Mr. Hallås can use to reflect on the journey so far and where it will lead. “The drivers for automation will continue to develop and increase. And the factors which promote automation will also continue to grow. We know this, and we also know that we are well placed to continue to revolutionize the warehousing worldwide with this. This is why we do what we do.”

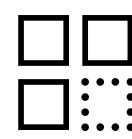


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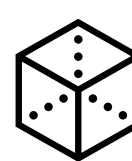
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