



Lauri Honka, CEO and shareholder of Mastermark, in the new warehouse which has just been finished.



"Insourcing" instead of outsourcing: Many processes are bundled under one roof, including decoration.



Mastermark Brands sells around 40 brands on the Finnish market – including Eva Solo (m) and Victorinox (r).



MASTERMARK

1,000 face-to-face contacts a month

As Finland's largest promotional products agency, Mastermark provides customers from the smallest companies through to multinational groups with haptic advertising – also beyond the country's borders. Furthermore, the business unit, Mastermark Brands, represents a host of international brands on the Finnish promotional products and retail markets. Alongside cutting-edge logistics, the company relies on creativity in the area of product development and the highest possible proximity to the customer.

"In ice hockey there is a technically very demanding pass, the one-timer. Here, the puck is shot at the goal without stopping the ball first," explained Lauri Honka. For the CEO and shareholder of Mastermark the phrase doesn't just apply to the sport that is so popular in Finland, but also to logistics: "We too want to achieve as many one-timers as possible with our processes – the less frequently a process has to be handled between the ingoing order and the delivery, the more efficient, faster and accurate the transaction is."

Efficiency plays a decisive role at the Mastermark headquarters in Turku. This is where the products of numerous suppliers as well as direct imports from the Far East arrive, before they are forwarded on to end users all over Finland. With the exception of the embellishing, which is partly carried out by contracted printing companies, Mastermark bundles all of the processes under one roof – Honka: "Other companies outsource

their tasks, we 'insource' them." A growing number of customers also rely on Mastermark as a fulfilment partner, which stores and sends out goods on schedule on behalf of customers – "a slimming programme for our customers," as Honka puts it. Mastermark currently stocks around 4,200 items in two warehouses, a recently completed extension will soon provide even more warehousing space. "The ISO 9001 certification we attained several years ago brought a decisive boost, however we continually strive to improve and orientate ourselves on the best companies on the consumer market in terms of our quality and service level. We can already supply a host of orders within two days of their being received from the customer, even for order quantities of just one item.

With an annual turnover of 18.4 Euros and a headcount of around 100 employees – 47 of whom work in the sales department – Master-

mark is according to own accounts Finland's largest promotional products player. The company was founded in 1978 by Timo Häkkinen, Lauri Honka joined the company as a salesman in 1984. In the same year, Mastermark became the Finnish member of the international distributor cooperative, Ippag (International Partnership for Premiums and Gifts). Then, around 25 years ago, Honka took over the management and simultaneously became a shareholder of the company, which is still privately owned today. In 1993, a second pillar was established, namely Mastermark Brands: The own division sells around 40 brands, mostly exclusively, on the Finnish B2B and B2C markets – including Victorinox, Eva Solo, Moleskine, Villeroy & Boch, Alessi as well as most recently also the Japanese brand, Yamazaki. Mastermark Brands is not only responsible for distributing goods to resellers and retail stores, but also in some cases for the marketing, import

and eCommerce. "We also sell many brands on the B2B market of course," stated Honka, "but the brand business is clearly separated from the promotional products division via Mastermark Brands."

"Quality is essential"

Mastermark also intensively implements its know-how in import, design and product management for the development of own brands. For example, table and living accessories of unmistakable Nordic flair are produced under the brand Tapio. But the Mastermark team also demonstrates its creativity when it comes down to finding the right haptic advertising messenger for every campaign goal and customer requirement: "The idea behind Mastermark was always to proactively develop ideas for our customers," explained Honka, "here we rely on the resources of our suppliers as well as directly on those of the manufacturers – in total we import goods from 25 countries, 14 employees coordinate the buying processes."

Mastermark doesn't exclusively count on the quality controls of its suppliers, it has also installed its own control system for this purpose. "We check everything that arrives in Turku and which is dispatched from there personally – some products are checked up to four times," reported Honka. "Quality is essential – especially on the Finnish market, where a very high quality awareness prevails."

This is a remarkable achievement when one considers that in the promotional area 25,000 and in the retail area 15,000 deliveries left the two warehouses in Turku alone in 2018 – and an important prerequisite for promotional products agencies, which like Mastermark serve a host of multinational companies. "We dispatch to around 50 countries and we are one of the

FACTS

Company type
Promotional products agency

Headquarters
Turku

Headcount
100

Turnover
18.4 mil. Euros



1,000 face-to-face contacts a month." Evidently, Mastermark is on the right track with its strategy – according to a survey carried out in 2018 on customer satisfaction, 98% of the end users interviewed were satisfied with the service of their promotional products partner.

According to Honka, despite all logistic performances and product quality this is significantly due to the performance of the team: "To compare it with ice hockey again: One needs the right people in the right positions, good coaching and good team work." ■ TB

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Mastermark's own design brand Tapio stands for table and living accessories with Nordic flair. The serving platter *Ruis* (below) purposefully resembles the Finnish national food, rye bread.

