



The HangOn award ceremony at the Stockholm City Hall.



HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

SPECIAL PaintExpo

## HangOn Wins SEB Award for Best International Growth 2019

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Swedish company HangOn, a manufacturer of workpiece hanging systems and coating masks, received Ernst&Young's "Entrepreneur of the Year" award for "Best International Growth 2019" on January 30, 2020, during a ceremony at the Stockholm City Hall.

Ernst&Young is a global leader in insurance, tax, transaction, and consultancy services. The quality services it offers help build trust in capital markets and economies around the world. EY plays a fundamental role in building

a better world of work. For over thirty years, it has been cooperating with entrepreneurs and companies in the fastest growing global markets through EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™, one of the most prestigious business

award programs in the world. Aimed at encouraging entrepreneurial activity among people with great potential, it honours the contribution of those who inspire others with their vision, leadership, and results.



The Törefors family



The EY prize "Entrepreneur of the Year"

As the first and only truly global award program of its kind, Entrepreneur Of The Year™ celebrates those who are building and running successful, growing, and dynamic businesses through regional, national, and global awards in over 145 cities and more than 60 countries.

In addition to the main "Entrepreneur Of The Year" award, other prizes are also assigned, such as the one won by HangOn (Hillerstorp, Sweden), a European leader in the production and marketing of masks and hanging hooks and frames for the coating sector. The company was nominated for the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2019 award and it actually won the SEB award for "Best International Growth". The ceremony took place on January 30, 2020 at the Stockholm City Hall. The jury chose HangOn based on its innovative drive, from product development to technical knowledge. "We are honoured to have been rewarded in this way," says HangOn CEO Petter Törefors, interviewed by ipcm®.

**ipcm®: How would you describe HangOn's path to winning this award? What is its meaning for you and your company?**

PT: The journey was not an easy one. Over a year and a half, we have faced numerous interviews and we have prepared ourselves for the competition with the other finalists, which took place in front of a jury that we did not know. This award was a great

confirmation that we are working properly. We are so pleased to know that many people appreciate our work. Even a niche company like ours, if well positioned on the market, can obtain an award of such importance. Finally, this also favours the sector for which we operate, that of surface treatments. We only produce one type of accessory out of entire treatment lines, which however is crucial for the quality of their results thanks to its efficiency, ergonomics, and economy. We are currently trying to make coating lines even more efficient by minimising their environmental impact. One of the key elements on which we are focussing is precisely sustainability.

In 2019, we experienced constant growth; we acquired Dutch firm MBS, which has enabled us to expand our HangOn BV distribution hub by about 3000 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>1</sup> We will also soon launch a software package to track our production flow, which will help us improve our manufacturing processes. As already mentioned last September during the HangOn Sales Conference, we are striving to further implement process automation solutions and achieve maximum productivity with our equipment. I think this was one of our strong suits, as far as this award is concerned. In fact, the jury focussed a lot on issues such as sustainability and digitalisation.

<sup>1</sup> A. Venturi, "HangOn Sales Conference 2019: the smart way for hanging and masking", ipcm®, year 2019, no. 60, November–December, pages 122-126

**ipcm: How important is teamwork in HangOn's achievement?**

PT: Our team was crucial. As we explained to the jury, although this is a prize for entrepreneurs, special attention should be paid to our employees and collaborators. We would have never won without them: this is why we intend to celebrate together with them, throughout all our branches. This is something we want to share with the whole organisation.

**ipcm: What is HangOn's next goal as an international company?**

PT: We are hiring staff in Germany, Holland, and Great Britain. We also opened a new factory in India. I think I can say that our main goal is to continue gradually growing at the international level and continue accepting the challenges with which we are faced every day.

Petter Törefors concluded this interview by announcing his company's participation in PaintExpo, the world's leading trade fair for industrial coating technologies, to be held from October 12 to 15, 2020 (Hall 2, Booth 2120). ○