



REPAIR Good Practice Example: Telecom City, Karlskrona



Connecting cities
Building successes



During the latter part of the 1900th century several so called farms, similar to those set up earlier on outer Wämö in Karlskrona, Sweden, were established on inner Wämö.

One of these farms is called Gräsvik, which became a storage place for sewage. The sewage was kept in stone basins and dried for use as fertilizer by farmers and gardeners in the area.

Between 1902 and 1906 sewage handling was moved from Gräsvik and replaced with barrack blocks on the northern and later the eastern side. Other buildings were added to house a Grenadier regiment and the barracks was commissioned ready for full use by 1906.

The association of Gräsvik with the Grenadier regiment continued until the barracks was closed in late 1927. Gräsvik was re-opened in 1928 with the installation of a detachment of the Kronoberg Regiment, which remained until 1936. Later Gräsvik hosted the Coastal Artillery and some World War II installations but the barracks were finally closed by the early 1980's.

In 1984 the land at Gräsvik was sold to the municipality for approximately SEK 2 million when it was considered to have a huge potential with its different buildings situated on a hill by the sea giving it great expansion possibilities.

The university college of Karlskrona / Ronneby, founded in 1989 and by 1992 the board of public building in Karlskrona reached an agreement with the municipality to place a university at Gräsvik and one year later the inauguration ceremony was held. Today the lower area at Gräsvik houses the renamed Blekinge Institute of Technology also known as BTH.



Some of the older buildings were demolished whilst others have been refurbished and are in use today. In the old barracks there are lecture rooms and a new library building has been built in connection to the barracks. The two, four story high barrack blocks are connected by a link housing a student's coffee shop.



BTH is internationally competitive and their mission is to lead nationally in the profile area: applied information technology and sustainable development of industry and society. More than 7,500 students study at BTH, with over 3,500 full-time students and 800 international students.

Educational programs are focussed on computer science, software technology, telecommunications, signal processing, media technology and Internet systems and the cooperation with business and industry is intimate.

The buildings on the upper area of Gräsvik house a diverse range of companies operating within the IT industry: all connected to the TelecomCity business network.

Research accounts for one-third of the Blekinge Institute of Technology activity and its research have achieved great success in a short time.

Engineering is the "authorised area of research" in which BTH is entitled to award postgraduate degrees. All studies are carried out in the faculties in close co-operation with other universities, industry and society.



At the end of the 1980s the trade and industry in Karlskrona was poor and the town was heavily dependent on the Swedish navy, the defence industry and traditional manufacturing industry where new job opportunities were rare or non-existent.

By 1984 a group of people from the municipality, the university college of Karlskrona/Ronneby (now known as Blekinge Institute of Technology - BTH) and industry in Karlskrona decided that a joint effort was needed to reverse the trend with the aim to create more job opportunities in the region.

In 1993 the TelecomCity concept was born although it was dependent on the location of the customer service centre of the mobile operator Europolitan, established in 1991, to Karlskrona. This happened partly as a result of Ericsson's presence in the city and its commitment in the Telecom business. The focus of the university college of Karlskrona/Ronneby on IT and Telecom training courses and the investments of the municipality in the campus and business environments was essential.

TelecomCity had an ambitious vision for Karlskrona to become a world leader in telecommunications, which was matched by the commitment from the different partners to the Triple Helix concept; that of intertwining research, business, and government led to its success.

Today, TelecomCity functions as a valuable network created between the actors of the business sector and society providing the right conditions for growth, development and profitability.

The municipality provides a very good infrastructure with appealing housing areas and positive environment for establishment of member companies. Blekinge Institute of Technology supply successful education, research and development within the Telecom area together with the municipality and the individual companies.

The businesses, authorities and organisations established in Karlskrona want to contribute to development of the environment and can apply for membership and participate in TelecomCity if their operations contain a qualified competence in the telecommunications area, or if they are able to contribute to the development of this competence. Today more than 50 companies are members of TelecomCity together employing more than 4,500 individuals. Those who don't fulfil the criteria for membership in TelecomCity can apply for partnership status.

The member companies are big international actors as well as small IT development companies and entrepreneurs within different areas of the Telecom industry.

The Karlskrona region has become a dynamic environment, due to the close cooperation between the companies within TelecomCity.

The Blekinge Institute of Technology, the municipality and society are continuously generating new companies working with telecommunications, mobility, Internet and on the convergence between them.

These companies are developing new, world-class solutions, services and products in Karlskrona and have made a step change in the economy of the area.

The TelecomCity initiative has been instrumental in changing the proportion of employment sector from, what was formerly almost 100% naval and later heavily manufacturing-dependent industries - to a balanced naval, manufacturing, IT structure.

TelecomCity has facilitated the development of a spirit of entrepreneurship, encouraging the foundation of many Small Medium Enterprises in the ITC sector. As a result, about 66% of ITC graduates from Blekinge Institute of Technology stay in Karlskrona after graduating.

The city, formerly 50% below national average of population with university education, is now well above that average.



Richard Liden, CEO of Telecom City, defines the reasons for success by placing emphasis on the right focus: the right attitude: producing the right people. He recognises

that long-term support from the city and business were critical in developing the necessary entrepreneurship.

By defining a market niche in the development of applications for mobile telecommunications, TelecomCity has become equally co-funded by the industrial members, whilst it started from almost 100% of public funding.

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