

Frank Lauridsen

100 YEARS

IN THE SERVICE OF TECHNOLOGY

Hans Følsgaard 100 years 2022







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Frank Lauridsen

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IN THE SERVICE OF TECHNOLOGY

Hans Følsgaard 100 years 2022



Preface

Hans Følsgaard A/S celebrated its 100th anniversary on 1 September 2022. The beginnings were extremely modest in a small basement on Rådhuspladsen in Copenhagen. Hans Følsgaard took the tram or walked to visit his customers until he could afford a bicycle. He was 38 years old at the time and remained at the helm of the company for 40 years until he was succeeded by his son Poul for the next 21 years.

Over the 100 years, the company has experienced ups and downs, but has landed on its feet again every time. Through the years, Hans Følsgaard has evolved from being a conventional electrical wholesaler selling to the Danish and Scandinavian markets into an active Technical Partner that delivers customised technological solutions and brands under its own name to the whole world.

Skilled employees, commitment and an inclusive culture have been the foundation for the tremendous development that Hans Følsgaard has been through. At the core of Hans Følsgaard's strategy is the ability to go through change and thus constantly seek out new profitable avenues in a world where the digital market is growing exponentially and the customers' requirements are ever increasing

From an early stage, Hans Følsgaard started working towards sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals. Internally, the company is working with sustainable solutions and production that support the customer's Sustainable Development Goal ambitions.

Hans Følsgaard A/S has all it takes to develop in the coming decades. Society needs the services HF has to offer. With Addtech's ownership of HF, the company is in an extremely good position to tackle future challenges. It is vital for the company to be able to retain and hire skilled, committed employees who deliver functional and sustainable solutions to the customers.

Enjoy reading!

Bent Madsen
CEO



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The beginning

The founder of HF was born on 16 January 1884 in the home of a shoemaker on Låsbygade 70 in Kolding. The 24-year-old shoemaker and orthotist Lars Hansen had married 21-year-old Ane Cristine Nielsen in 1880. According to the church register, he added the surname Følsgaard some years later. Hans Følsgaard had a 18 month older sister. His mother gave birth to 8 children, of which 2 died in infancy.

At that time, the town of Kolding had many shoemakers. The industrial mass production of shoes had started, but the shoemakers were still busy. People still had lasts moulded and shoes sown at the local shoemaker. Around the turn of the century, Hans Følsgaard's father changed his title to retailer. That meant that the shoemaker business had become a shop where you could also buy factory-made shoes, soles, laces, etc. He also moved his business to Copenhagen around 1915. Hans Følsgaard's father also made custom-made shoes for people who were unable to use factory-made shoes, but his job increasingly became that of a repairer.

The church register from Vor Frue parish, Haderslev.



Hans was confirmed on 3 April 1898 at the top of his class in terms of knowledge and other abilities. As the oldest son, it was only natural that Hans would start as a shoemakers apprentice after his confirmation, but he had his mind set elsewhere. He wanted to

work in commerce. He found an apprenticeship. It was in a hardware dealer just 25 km south, but it was in Haderslev, which at that time was under German rule. As a shop apprentice he earned board and lodging and a very modest salary, and it was a bit of a plunge moving away from home where his mother served food and did his laundry. He now had to stand on his own feet.

During his apprenticeship in Haderslev, Hans met a young girl named Adele. They fell in love and wanted to get married. However, Adele's parents opposed it. They did not think that Hans was a suitable match for their daughter. Adele's father was a dental technician. At that time, sugar had become something both the rich and poor consumed. It had a devastating effect on many people's teeth since only few people brushed their teeth daily at that time. Dental technicians had become relatively good at making fake teeth, and a self-employed dental technician earned good money.

A lot of people needed fake teeth after their confirmation. Adele's mother died when Adele was six, but her father remarried. Via an acquaintance, Adele's father arranged for the young lady to travel to the USA – he had even found a suitable husband for her.

Adele stayed in the USA for 7 years. She was a woman who knew what she wanted, and she did not want her American suitor. When she returned to Denmark, she told a friend in a letter that she had reservations about contacting Hans again as he might have become married in the meantime. But, as mentioned, she was a strong-minded young woman. She contacted Hans and found out that he was still single. Their love quickly rekindled and this time, Adele's parents realised that the two were destined for each other, so they were married in 1911 when Hans was 27 years old. By then he had changed title from shop employee to 'Grosskaufmann' (wholesaler) as stated in the church register.

The beginning

The couple moves to Odense

Hans Følsgaard started working at Thomas B. Thrige in Odense. Thomas B. Thrige had been on study trips in various places as well as the USA, where he had worked for Thomas Edison. Back in Odense, Thomas B. Thrige started a business that produced electric motors and equipment for power stations. After some time, Hans was hired as purchasing manager and learned a lot about the industry.

The young family had two sons while living in Odense. Kurt was born on 30 November 1916 and Poul was born just over two years later on 27 January 1919. When Poul was born, Hans came in a couple of hours late for work. He explained that it was because his wife had given birth to a son during the night. He was reprimanded for coming in late to work. The otherwise calm and cool-headed Hans Følsgaard responded that if you could not show up late because of a birth then he was in the wrong place.

Shortly before leaving the company, it had celebrated its 25th anniversary, which meant a special bonus of one month's salary and he also received 3 months' severance pay. Hans Følsgaard was a thrifty man, so the money was put into his bank account.

The family relocates to Copenhagen

The family left Odense for Copenhagen, where Hans started working as a salesman for the Swedish company ASEA. This company really prospered during and after World War I.

Until then, Germany had had much of the production of electrical equipment in Europe, but during World War I, it had spent its energy on producing other articles. Hans Følsgaard, who had been trained at a hardware dealer, had started working with electrical articles while

he lived in Odense, and at ASEA, he was able to continue this work, only now as a salesman. He sold installation equipment, electric motors, electric household appliances, etc.

In June 1922, Hans and two other salesmen at ASEA in Copenhagen were invited to dinner at the fancy Hotel d'Angleterre by the company's Swedish CEO. After eating a wonderful dinner, they were all given notice by the end of the month. He also received 3 months' salary with his notice, money that he used to expand his bank account.

Wholesaler situated on Rådhuspladsen

Although, private homes had started getting electrical installations, Hans Følsgaard's skills were in short demand. He applied for a job as a salesman at Kabelfabrikken, which did not have a salesman at that point. During his interview, he made an excellent case for his good knowledge of the industry and relationship with many of the electricians in the city. After the interview, he was asked for his salary claim. The company was still hesitant, but Hans could not keep on waiting and he did not want to tap into his savings.

So Hans Følsgaard decided to talk with the electricians he knew from his time at ASEA. Many of them said that if he was able to sell materials to them at prices that were the same as those they were used to buying at, then they would choose him. He visited another small wholesaler in the industry that wanted to sell products to him at prices that would allow him some earnings, but payment would have to be made on the day the articles were delivered – no credit.

Hans Følsgaard rented a basement on Rådhuspladsen from where he ran his small one-man business.



The electrician at work in the 1920s.

The beginning



Unfortunately, there are no photos of Hans Følsgaard on his bicycle, but this is a colleague.

Photo: Kemp & Lauritzen

Despite the incipient financial crisis in the 1920s, he chose the right time as we know because the electricians in Copenhagen were busy installing electricity in companies and private homes. They needed cables, wires, conduits, switches, etc. and those were the kind of products that Hans Følsgaard's small business was able to deliver.

The company started out in a very modest fashion. The wholesaler went out to the electricians in the morning to collect orders. He has told that he sometimes took the tram and sometimes he rented a bicycle to get around. By lunchtime, he visited the wholesale company's warehouse and was given the ordered articles on credit on the condition that he would pay by the end of the workday.

He then delivered the articles to the electricians during the afternoon against cash payment. The means of transport were the same, however, for large deliveries of e.g. heavy conduits, which at the time were made of steel, he had to rent a horse carriage from the delivery central in order to be able to deliver the articles, but that came at a cost of course. His last job every day was to visit the supplier and pay for the day's purchases. When he went home at night to Adele and his children, he should at least have a couple of tenners to himself. After a few weeks, he had enough money to buy a bicycle, so that he could make calls on his own bicycle.



Adele made tie dye scarves which were sold in fancy shops.

At the beginning, the small family were often short on money. They really had to watch every penny. It helped that Adele in her youth had learned to make tie dye. She not only knew the technique, she was also so good at it that some of Copenhagen's finest shops, such as Fønnesbech, sold Adele's scarves. This meant food on the table every day.



A light bulb is being replaced in a street lamp in Gentofte.

The beginning

Hans Følsgaard's business hinged on one thing – electricity

Before it became possible to use electricity for lighting, people used tallow candles and later kerosene. The light it produced was modest and entailed a certain risk of fire. With the inventions that were made in the 19th century, it became possible to use electricity for lighting and many other things.

Before electricity was introduced in the major cities in Denmark, they had to rely on gasworks. These gasworks were established from the 1850s and were a good business for the municipalities that owned them. Accordingly, in some places, municipalities were reluctant

AC cable being laid between Skovshoved and Lyngby.



to establish power stations, but leading up to 1915, most urban communities had power stations. The advantages of electricity for lighting were obvious. With the light bulbs that had been developed, you simply had to press a switch to turn the light on or off, the light was much clearer than that based on gas and the fire hazard was much smaller. Electricity was expensive during the first years, and the very uneven consumption during the day caused some problems.

During the 1890s, various household appliances were developed in Germany and the USA. At the beginning of the 20th century, the appliances also became available in Denmark. The first brands are still known today. They include AEG (1891), Phillips (1891), Miele (1898), Hoover and Kitchen Aid (1908) and Electrolux (1918). Due to different national trade barriers and transport costs, a market emerged for Danish-made household appliances. The first Danish brands were Gram (1901), Voss (1908) and Nilfisk (1909).

The kitchen appliances were still quite expensive and electricity prices were high, so only families with a high income were able to afford them. The power stations wanted to sell more electricity during the daytime, and some were enterprising, like Skovshoved power station, which bought a large number of irons in 1911, which they hired out for DKK 0.50 per quarter and you did not have to pay extra for repairs. This type of initiative increased the sale of electricity during the daytime. In order to further push sales during the day, many introduced differentiated electricity prices.

Besides the iron, the vacuum cleaner had become particularly popular in Danish homes. In 1910, a Nilfisk vacuum cleaner cost DKK 380, an amount that corresponds to DKK 27,000 for a new vacuum cleaner in 2022. During the period between World War I and World War II, the sale of electrical appliances increased and the prices dropped. During this period, mainly electric cookers and electric ovens were popular. The refrigerator was introduced in Denmark in 1926. After World War II, the number of cooks and maids dropped drastically in well-to-do homes.

They were widely replaced by the electrical household appliances. Hans Følsgaard sold electrical household appliances from the main branch and, from 1962, from its Silkeborg branch.

Another condition for the sale of electric articles was the development of the electrician trade. The first electricians in Denmark were almost all German fitters, who were stationed by the suppliers of the electric equipment.



Clothes being ironed with an electrical iron



Electrical appliances for the home.

The beginning



The contemporary electrical kitchen

The German fitters were often assisted by Danish labour in the form of plumbers or carpenters. The Danish craftsmen gradually gained insight into and training in working with electrics. The actual electrician apprentice programme was established in Denmark in the 1890s and we saw the first trained electricians in 1900.

New address on Gl. Kongevej 13A in Frederiksberg

Følsgaard hired some salesmen, which led to a satisfactory increase in sales. However, earnings varied a lot and when Dansk Akkumulatorfabrik was looking for a salesman, Hans applied for the job to get a regular income. He was hired with permission to run his small wholesale business on the side. After a while, the manager asked Hans how he got around to visit customers. He answered truthfully that he either took the tram or rode a bicycle. The manager did not think that it put the company in a good light, and since Hans could not afford a car, the manager offered him an advance of DKK 1,200 to buy a car. Hans Følsgaard was now motorised.



From 1926, it was possible to admire a Frigidaire (refrigerator).

After some time of having two jobs, Laur. Knudsen offered him the credit agreement they had previously refused. Even Kabelfabrikken wanted to give Hans Følsgaard credit now. His business went well despite fierce competition in the Copenhagen area. At the end of the 1920s, society really started feeling the repercussions of the financial crisis. Følsgaard was told that many of his suppliers would no longer be offering a credit. By a stroke of fortune, Hans came into contact with an experienced salesman, who had a small fortune and wanted to invest in the company. Carlsen, as the salesman was called, was able to invest DKK 2,500 in the company. So Hans Følsgaard contacted Laur. Knudsen to tell them that he had been given new

capital and so they offered him a credit agreement again. Later, Følsgaard revealed in a confidential conversation that he might have added a 0 to the 2,500, but he had to keep his business running.

A couple of years later during the devastating financial crisis at the beginning of the 1930s, he hired a new employee to bring further capital into the business. Through business associates, K. E. Tørsleff had been put into contact with Hans Følsgaard. Tørsleff had inherited a large sum of money that he wanted to invest in the company. He was hired as assistant general manager and worked for the company for many years. During the first 10-15 years of the company's existence, Hans Følsgaard really had to be enterprising to make ends meet in a society that was hard hit by the financial crisis.

Hans Følsgaard and assistant general manager Tørsleff around 1960.



HF grows

Jutland to be conquered – new branch in Esbjerg

Several of Følsgaard's suppliers had recommended that he start up sales in Jutland. Hans Følsgaard liked the idea and Jutland was his old stamping ground after all. In 1929, Hans Følsgaard headed towards Jutland and chose to look at the options in Esbjerg where business was booming. He visited various construction sites in the town to talk with contractors and electricians. He was convinced that he would be able to get customers in the town. Back in Copenhagen, he started looking for someone who could open and run the coming branch in Esbjerg. A very young man just 19 years old contacted Følsgaard to apply for the job. His name was Holger Hammersholt Christensen, better known as H. H. Christensen. Hans had a good impression of the young, energetic and ambitious man. He was therefore hired, and 3 months later he travelled west towards Esbjerg.

He has told that he took the train from Copenhagen Central Station in the morning and arrived in Esbjerg 12 hours later. The walk to the new premises on the main street Kongensgade proved to be very short. He quickly found no. 13, which was an old dairy with terrazzo floors and tiles from floor to ceiling on the walls. The same evening, he and a workman started carrying lots of equipment into the basement under the shop. It was not until 2 at night that Christensen was able to call it a day. He does not say anything about how he lived, but even a terrazzo floor would probably make a tempting bed after such a long day.

Hans Følsgaard liked visiting the Esbjerg branch. H. H. Christensen has told that he learnt a lot from how Følsgaard talked with the customers. He has told that even if the customer did not really want to buy anything, Følsgaard would still manage to sell some articles.

All business was conducted in a good and pleasant tone. The branch generated a profit from day one.

H. H. Christensen has also told that Følsgaard had good insight into human nature. At one point he visited a construction site in Esbjerg where he met a young electrician who rode his bicycle with a ladder on his neck. The young man had just started his own business. So he relied on being able to get credit when he bought equipment. Følsgaard had a long talk with the young electrician and he sensed that he had what it took to become a big and profitable customer. So Hans opened a credit, and sure enough, in just a couple of years, he had become a big and profitable customer.

In 1932 H. H. Christensen was called up. So a temporary employee had to be sent to Esbjerg for 9 months. When he had completed his time in the military, H. H. Christensen was driven to Esbjerg by Følsgaard himself in his big American car. Christensen has told that during the ride, they could hear that something was wrong with the front-wheel suspension. Følsgaard stopped the car and they quickly identified that a nut had come loose. Følsgaard found a wrench and gave it to Christensen. Christensen then laid down on the pavement. 49-year-old Følsgaard then grabbed hold of the bumper and lifted the front end of the car while Christensen secured the nut. Christensen noticed that 'the old man' was strong as an ox since he was able to do the job without needing a car jack.

The Esbjerg branch did well and was able to generate a profit from day one.

In fact, it did so well that it had become a thorn in the side of Nordisk Solar Compagni, which was a market leader in Jutland. Consul Jørgensen from Kolding who owned Nordisk Solar Compagni invited

HF grows

Følsgaard to a meeting in January 1937. Here he offered to buy Følsgaard's Esbjerg branch. The offer was extremely lucrative – it was said that when Jørgensen returned to Kolding, he was blamed for giving such a generous offer. Følsgaard accepted the offer and the transaction was to take place on 1 March 1937.

H. H. Christen has told that the transaction was celebrated with much ado. Customers and business associates were invited at 9.00 am on the day of the transfer and for some it did not finish until 5 am the next morning. Consul Jørgensen and Hans Følsgaard took the lead and they all had the classic Jutland coffee laced with spirits. Christensen has told that he had to take 3 naps before 5 am, Jørgensen only needed 2 small naps. Hans Følsgaard, however, was as he always was on such occasions in excellent 'party form'. Few were able to keep up with him on such occasions where he would be smoking a cigar most of the time.

After the sale of the Esbjerg branch, H. H. Christensen stayed in Jutland where he continued dealing with the electricians. After some time, a new salesman was hired for the Jutland market and Christensen returned to Gl. Kongevej.

Challenges during World War II

The repercussions of the great depression at the beginning of the 1930s started to ease off and the construction industry experienced a boom at the end of the 1930s. Følsgaard had supplies of cables from the Netherlands via Simco.

When World War II broke out, this proved to be a great disadvantage as the supplies of cables from the Netherlands were quickly shut down. Følsgaard had not bought Danish-made cables to a large

extent before the war. That meant that the company did not get any of the supplies of Danish cables during the war. It was a major setback that the company was unable to deliver cables to the electricians. However, it started selling other articles, which proved quite successful. During the war, Danes had become accustomed to not being able to buy everything but having make do with what they could get. However, purchasing power was quite good during the war, not least because of the constructions initiated by the German armed forces. Constructions that the Danish State was forced to pay for.

Hans Følsgaard did not, as a lot of others in the industry, become a large-scale supplier to the German armed forces during the war. An unfair consequence of this was that after the war, it was not possible to get major import licences which the companies who had large sales during the war had sold to the German armed forces.

In 1947, the company celebrated its 25th anniversary.



HF grows

2nd generation – Poul Følsgaard joins the company

Poul Følsgaard's apprentice agreement at Laur. Knudsen

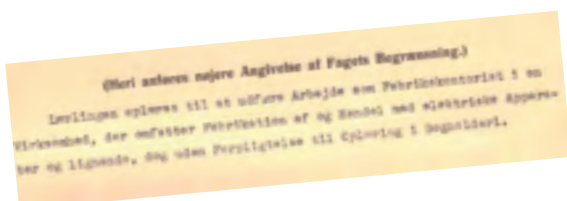
The youngest of Hans Følsgaard's sons, Poul, passed the lower secondary school leaving examination when he was 16. At the time, this exam would give you access to various educational programmes in commerce, banking or journalism. On 2 September 1935, Poul started as a merchant apprentice at Laur. Knudsen, Mekanisk Etablissement A/S in Haraldsgade, Copenhagen.



Poul's apprentice agreement states that 'he must be trained in performing work as a factory clerk in a company that engages in production of and trade in electric appliances and the like, but without an obligation to be trained in bookkeeping'. The monthly salary was agreed at DKK 35 during the first year and would increase to DKK 60 in the fourth and final year. However, the agreement included a 50% cost-of-living allowance.

After he completed his apprenticeship and commercial examination, Poul passed the Higher Commercial Examination at Niels Brocks Commercial College in 1941. During his apprenticeship at Laur. Knudsen, Poul met his future wife Emmy. Emmy worked as an office clerk in the company. She had been orphaned at the age of 16, and after Emmy and Poul had become a couple, Poul's mother lovingly looked after Emmy. They married on 12 May 1943.

After his apprenticeship and taking the Higher Commercial Examination, Poul was hired by the chemical company P. Brøste where he worked for 2½ years before joining his father's company. His first job at the company was in the warehouse, and he then made a tour of the company.



The older and more experienced employees later said that they felt like a father's son had now been hired. He saw that it was difficult for Poul to bring new ideas to the table. He did, however, find it easy to socialise in the workplace, and it was clear that his colleagues increasingly started to accept his proposals for changes in various areas. There was no actual specialisation at Gl. Kongevej 13A, everyone knew more or less everything about everything and the workplace culture was masculine and convivial.

With the end of World War II, a new chapter in the company's history could begin. The European industry had largely become a war industry that at best was in a rather run-down state and at worst had been bombed into smithereens. None the less, production for the civilian society started relatively quickly.

The financial aid to Europe from the USA, in Denmark known as Marshall Aid was key to production getting back on its feet so quickly.

Poul Følsgaard saw opportunities in the new Europe. During his education, he had learnt to speak both English and German. So after the war, he began looking into the possibilities of exporting some of the company's products. He went on a study trip to London, which at that time was the European centre of commerce, and in 1946, the company established an export and import department.

As mentioned, the young Følsgaard's initiatives were not met with much enthusiasm by the company's management. It had become accustomed to a culture where people preferred to wear both belt and braces. Old Følsgaard was a cautious man who had been used to being careful about not biting off more than he could chew. His main



*Emma and Poul Følsgaard
married in 1943.*

HF grows

focus was on the figures on the bank account. He had on more than one occasion had to go cap in hand to get more capital and credit in order to continue the company.

Poul Følsgaard started collaborating with international companies, which meant that the company was able to offer new articles. The company acquired agencies from various countries, which fostered brand new opportunities to develop the company. The senior staff of the company saw that it was not just father's son who had been hired, but also a skilled and energetic business man who was able to work internationally. Many in the company realised that they might have been too reluctant to take on bigger challenges in the past.

Reception in 1954 at Gl. Kongevej on the occasion of Hans Følsgaard's 70th birthday.





**Vi præsenterer
hermed - -**

vore ansigter »udadtil« ...



*Repræsentant
O. Hansen*



*Prokurist
K. E. Torsleff*



*Repræsentant
Arne Flink*



*Repræsentant
Helge Jensen*



H. Følsgaard



*Bogholder
H. Kristiansen*



*Disponent
H. H. Christensen*



Povl Følsgaard



*Repræsentant
P. Jacobsen*



*Ingeniør
A. Skaarup*



*Ingeniør
C. Pelch*



*Ingeniør
P. Nøller*

**- - - også hele vor øvrige stab
af medarbejdere er »Deres« ...**

International activities



Above: Lev livet elektrisk – an electric life. HF's first known brochure came in 1955.

Previous page: HF's public faces in 1955.

An electric life – from low voltage to high voltage

Poul managed to increase the number of international agencies substantially. A brochure from 1955 tells that the company now has 28 agencies from England, Germany, the USA, Sweden, Scotland, France and Norway. The company also advertises that it is able to deliver all kinds of electrical equipment from leading Danish factories. Følgsgaard was able to deliver practically everything within electrical equipment.

The brochure also presents the senior staff and the agents. In the mid-1950s, around 35 people worked at Gl. Kongevej 13A. The company was doing really well. More employees and an increasing number of articles in stock meant a constant lack of space, although the lease at Gl. Kongevej had been expanded several times. They therefore started looking for larger and better facilities, and in 1958 they moved to Amalievej 20.

New address on Amalievej 20

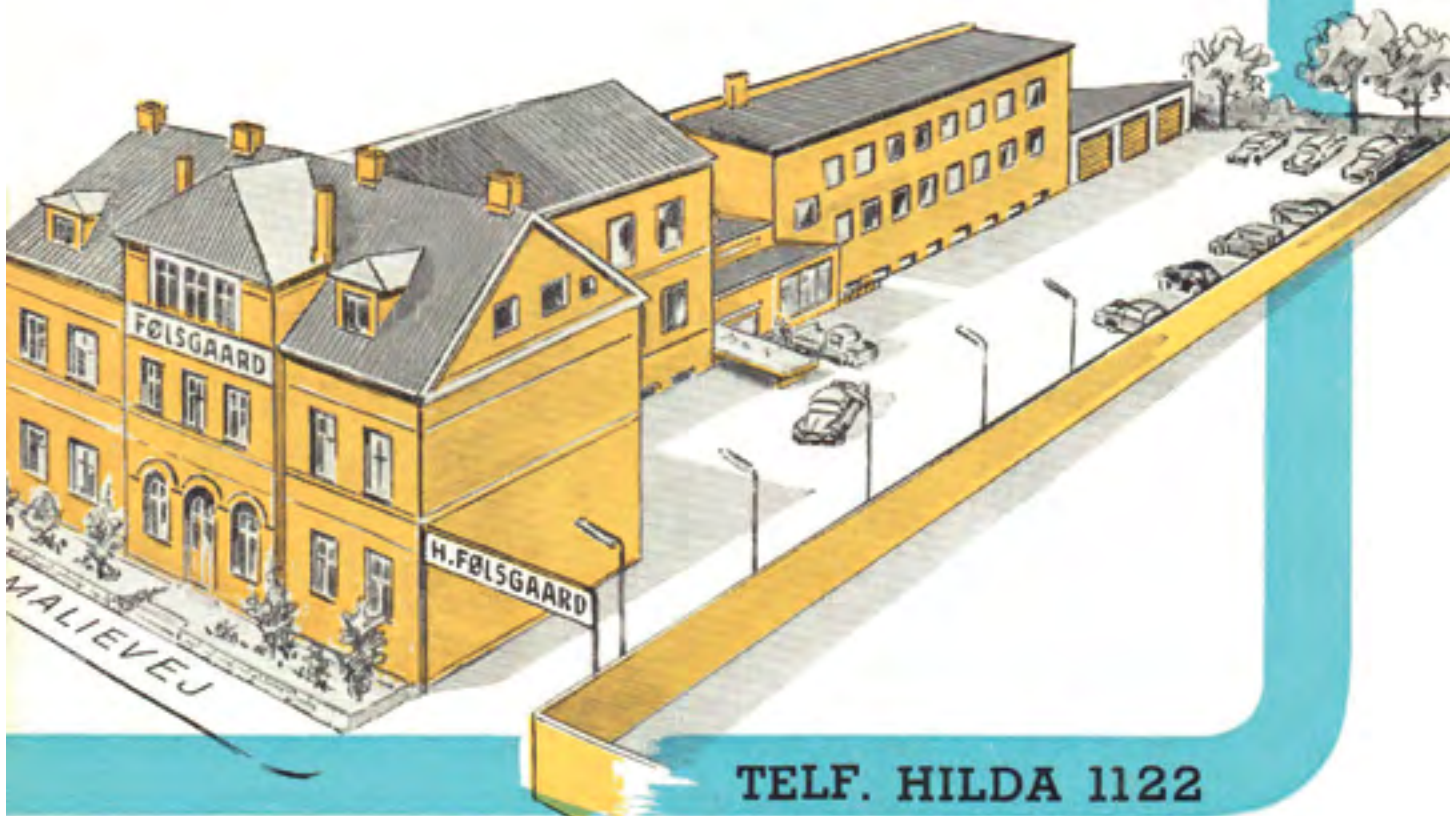
In connection with the move to Amalievej, the company established a much more practical division of departments and because of the “great” distances, a pneumatic post system was installed in the buildings. The company tried to create a more practical layout. It naturally kept its phone number HILDA 1122. It tried to maintain the good work climate although it was challenged by the specialised structure of the company. A former employee said that the problem with the division into departments was that people would create an ‘enemy image’ of the other departments and thus ‘blame others’ when something did not go according to plan.

New markets

Zealand was a highly competitive electricity market. The management therefore considered the option of having another attempt at Jutland. After all, the attempt in Esbjerg in the 1930s had gone pretty well, and they had only sold the branch due to an extremely lucrative offer. The company still had representatives visiting customers in Jutland, but having a Følsgaard branch in Jutland would definitely make a difference.

Poul Følsgaard went to Kolding, his father's birth town, where he imagined that they could have a branch. He went to the town hall to talk about the opportunities in the town and how the municipality would be able to assist. He was asked to wait for the mayor and some

Hans Følsgaard's impressive domicile on Amalievej 20, Frederiksberg.



International activities

senior officials. He waited for a long time, but at some point he lost his patience and left the town hall. He then went to Herning to look at the opportunities, but they did not meet his expectations.

Chief engineer Skaarup had received a proposal from a business partner from Silkeborg Oplands Strømforsyning, power station manager A. Gislinge, to establish a branch in Silkeborg. The power station manager envisioned how much easier it would be to get quick deliveries with a local branch in the town,

HF's fleet of cars on Amalievej 20 had grown significantly.



HF in Silkeborg and Ry

The Silkeborg branch

Poul Følsgaard went to Jutland again, this time heading directly to Silkeborg Town Hall. He was welcomed by Mayor Aage Christensen and the acting town manager. Silkeborg municipality was able to provide an excellent construction site in the new industrial neighbourhood by the new ring road that was being established around the town. The price of the construction site was also extremely fair.

The municipality was also able to lease out good premises until a new building had been built. Poul experienced a lot of willingness to help in Silkeborg. The leased premises were located in the old manor house Vester Kejlstrup. From 1942 until 1958, the place had served as a 'poorhouse' or a 'workhouse' as it was called at that time.

The address was close to the coming new premises. The matter was discussed with Hans Følsgaard and the management group. They decided to start up a branch in Silkeborg in the leased premises and to acquire the construction site they had been offered.

Drawings had to be prepared for the new building that had to be able to accommodate not only the department but also have facilities for custom-fabrication of cables which the company had decided to start. In his talks with Silkeborg Municipality, Poul had also been offered labour for the factory in the form of people with mild disabilities, who would be able to carry out some of the tasks at the factory against a wage subsidy from the municipality. In summer 1961, the company leased the premises at Vester Kejlstrup where the wholesale department had its first address in Silkeborg.



*Architect Preben Dal
talking to Hans Følsgaard.*

You noticed the building when you drove by on the new ring road. Poul Følsgaard had inherited his great interest in architecture and art from his mother. Some two years after the inauguration, two outdoor artworks were revealed. Both sculptures played with the light. One was made by Knud Hvidbjerg, the other by Børge Jørgensen.

The Silkeborg branch was extremely successful. In an interview from 1962, H.H. Christensen said that he was satisfied with the company's progress. However, he was not always satisfied with the team spirit. He said that he had always been used to people giving a helping hand to anyone who was overwhelmed by work. Sometimes he felt that the specialists in Silkeborg found it hard to lend a helping hand to their colleagues. After all, they were not that many in the branch.

The Silkeborg branch is extended several times.



Custom-fabrication of cables

The production of cable sets for the industry was a new work area for Følsgaard. It therefore had to invest in new machinery. In his inauguration speech, Poul Følsgaard said that it was extremely likely that the demand for cable sets for e.g. refrigerators, washing machines and other industrial products would increase substantially. Already at the inauguration of the new premises, he predicted that they would soon need to expand the building, something the plans and drawings had taken into account.

HF in Silkeborg and Ry



Holger Hammersholt Christensen became the first manager of the Silkeborg branch

The agency department had started in the leased premises. However, the wholesale department offering self-service had to be established and run in the new premises. All three business areas in the Silkeborg branch came off to a good start. However, in 1967, it was decided to sell the wholesale department to ASEA Skandia. The entire new building was sold, so now the company had no production facilities for custom-fabrication of cables or office facilities for the employees in the agency department. The solution was a lease on Søgade in premises that had previously been used for manufacture of textiles and located very centrally in Silkeborg. A 10-year lease was signed. However, these premises were also too small, so they considered leasing bigger premises or building new ones.

The solution was to build new premises on Tietgensvej 16 in the industrial neighbourhood in northern Silkeborg, which were completed in 1977. When these premises were built, the company knew its needs in terms of making cable sets and was therefore able to create the optimum layout. After just 5 years as manager of the Silkeborg branch, H. H. Christensen became seriously ill. After an operation and radiation therapy he returned to his job, but had to take sick leave again in 1967. He remained manager of the branch until his death in August 1968.

In 1969, a branch of the Silkeborg factory opened in Copenhagen. Employees were being trained in Silkeborg and during a relatively short period of time, the new branch became able to produce 4,000 cable sets per day.

Towards the end of his illness, the company had hired the man who would eventually take over from Christensen. He was a former policeman named Peter Munk who had been working as an agent in the electricity industry for a number of years. Peter Munk joined the new company in connection with the sale of the wholesale department to ASEA Skandia. As mentioned, the agency department and the department for custom-fabrication of cables moved to Søgade in leased premises and engineer Erik Oberthon was named general manager.

The department for custom-fabrication of cables continued in the new premises with Kurt Schuster as day-to-day manager. Schuster had been one of the first apprentices at the Silkeborg branch. The department continued growing, and the newly built factory on Tietgensvej 16 had to be expanded several times. The staff was now up to 50 people.

In 1991, the company started a department of custom-fabrication of cables in Poland some 40 km from Warsaw in a small town called Nieporet. Some orders were difficult to produce at a profit in Silkeborg. However, in Poland they were able to produce at lower prices and using readily available unskilled labour. The problem with the production in Poland was, however, the logistics and the communication, so in 1995 it was decided to close the factory.

In 1987, department manager Kurt Schuster, some middle managers and other employees left Følsgaard's factory to start their own business within the same industry and very close to Tietgensvej 16. That had a very negative impact on sales, but through a successful and joint effort, the company managed to hold on to many of its big customers and to boost sales.

Manager Erik Oberthon remained in this position until May 1988, when Knud Krægpøth took over the management of the Silkeborg Branch. On 1 February 1994, Hans Kristian Slot took over the management, only to be replaced by Hans Jørgen Sørensen in September 1995.

In 1998, the Silkeborg factory was hived off into the company Cable Systems, which established a subsidiary in Vilnius, Lithuania, the same year. Lars Schjønning joined the company on 1 June as manager and remained in this position until the factory is sold to SEM Electronics in 2001. After 40 years, Følsgaard's activities ended in Silkeborg, and the company now wanted to concentrate on its core activities – providing consultancy on and selling technical solutions.



In 1977, new premises are built at Tietgensvej in Silkeborg.



About 50 employees worked with custom-fabrication of cables in Silkeborg in 1980.

HF in Silkeborg and Ry

The Ry branch

Hans Følsgaard acquired Procom Proces in Viby, Jutland, in 2001. Since the Silkeborg branch had been sold, the agency department had no premises. So it was decided to merge the agency departments in Viby and Silkeborg. The new department was located in new premises in Ellemosen in Ry. A practical location a short distance away from the north-south-going motorway. The department started out with 12 employees and with Lars Hoppe-Hagelskjær as head of department. The department has grown over the years and in the anniversary year, it had 22 employees.

Topping-out ceremony at the future company headquarters at Ejby Industrivej 2 in 1977.

HF-firmaer i nye lokaler

Rejsegilde på kontorbygning - flytter ind 1. oktober

Takket være en velvillig indstilling fra Glostrup-kommune kunne HF-firmaerne - HF-Belysning A/S og Hans Følsgaard Agentur A/S - i fredags holde rejsegilde på en ny kontorbygning på Ejby Industrivej 2.

Ekspanionen i begge firmaer har medvirket til en hurtig udflytning fra Amalievej på Frederiksberg til nye lokaler i Glostrup. Firmaerne fandt delvis egnede lokaler, der blev købt i fællesskab med Thos. Sonne, men kontorfaciliteterne var for små, og opførelsen af en ny kontorbygning på godt 1000 kvadratmeter i 2 etager blev igangsat.

Men tiden var knap. Firmaerne skulle gerne være inde den 1. oktober, og derfor udtrykker de glæde over, at Glostrup kommune var hurtig med behandlingen vedrørende byggesagen, ligesom firmaernes totalentreprenør Hal Entreprisse gjorde en indsats for, at byggeriet blev fremskyndet.

HF-Belysning har markeret sig stærkt i de seneste år på såvel hjemmemarkedet som eksportmarkedet inden for belysningssektoren, og det er et

tydeligt bevis på, at dansk design klarer sig godt. Blandt firmaernes designere møder man så kendte arkitekter som Knud Holscher og Poul Cado-vius.

Hans Følsgaard Agentur er et importfirma inden for elektriske komponenter til bl. a. elektronikindustrien og elværker. Endvidere er firmaets jyske afdeling, der har til huse i Silkeborg, pr. 1. juni flyttet ind i en nyopført fabrik, der producerer færdige ledningsæt.



Fra rejsegildet i fredags ses fra venstre entreprenør M. Glar-rind, ingeniør H. O. Tange, ingeniør O. Mortensen, direktør P. Roland og direktør P. Følsgaard.

The lighting department

At the same time as the idea to produce cable sets for the industry was being realised in Silkeborg, Poul Følsgaard came up with the idea to produce lamps. The management group discussed the idea and in 1960, Poul Følsgaard asked his childhood friend, architect Preben Dal, to design a range of lamps. Preben Dal immediately started making sketches to everyone's satisfaction. During 1961, they started producing the first lamps at A. Knudsen og søns Maskinfabrik in Herlev. The lamp range was named 'Symphony'.

At the end of 1961, the company advertised for a position as buyer for the lighting department. The company hired 30-year-old Preben Roland on 2 January 1962. As the only employee in the department, he needed to create sales material about the lamps before starting a tour of the major engineering and architectural firms. In the following years, the lamps were installed in various modern buildings that provided an excellent showcase. The lamp range was used in popular Danish feature films and were marketed heavily.

The company also sold other types of lamps. Non-profit housing experienced a boom in the 1960s and 1970s. Previously, the round, white glass dome that could be screwed onto the wall outlet in staircases, kitchens and bathrooms had been used. Følsgaard's lighting department launched a modern lamp range in plastic for the same purpose. The lamps quickly became the preferred choice in non-profit housing.

Poul Følsgaard, who in 1962 took over from his father as general manager of the company, chose to acquire the lamp factory Belux in Gladsaxe in 1966. His strong interest in art and design led him and architect Preben Dal to invite a number of artists to design new lamps for Belux. The project was followed by Denmark's only television

HF in Silkeborg and Ry



The Symphony lamp became the company's greatest lamp success and remains popular to this day.

channel, DR. The experiment was extremely exciting and was followed by many viewers, but it did not produce anything that could be sold. Belux had 4-6 employees and mostly dealt with product assembly of fluorescent lighting and later production and assembly of LK fixtures. Belux also made light sculptures designed by various artists. And the company also developed and made new products.

After the acquisition of Belux, the lighting department changed name from H. Følsgaard Elektro A/S to H. F. Belysning Belux A/S. In 1967, the department moved from Amalievej to H. C. Ørstedesvej 32 where display and sales rooms were established. In the same year, the entire Følsgaard company moved in on the other side of the street at H. C. Ørstedesvej 29.

After some time, the lighting department moved into no. 29 with the rest of the company. Its storage rooms were located in the basement and its office facilities in the attic. Since the property on Amalievej 20 could not be sold, the entire company returned to that address in 1971. With architects like Preben Dal, Knud Holscher and Poul Cadovius, the company designed and sold lamps both in Denmark and abroad. In 1977, the company took the consequence of the lack of space on Amalievej 20. In collaboration with Poul Følsgaard's son-in-law, Thomas Sonne, the company acquired suitable premises in Glostrup.

However, since the office facilities were not satisfactory, the company built a new office facility that was ready on 1 October 1977. The entire company then moved to Glostrup on Ejby Industrivej 2. Especially the Symphony range became a solid success, and in the anniversary year, many years after the last lamp was produced, the lamps are still

highly popular. However, the facts are that the lighting department never became a financial success. Management and the board of directors has considered the situation based on that fact on several occasions.

On 22 December 1978, Preben Roland was called in to talk with Poul Følsgaard where he was told that they intended to merge the lighting department and the agency department under one management and that they therefore would have to let him go. Not long after, the company lost the sales from the English company Marlin and the Finnish company Nokia. It was therefore decided to close down H. F. Belysning and concentrate on electricity products and custom-fabrication of cables.



*Employees
in the open-
plan office at
Ellemosen in Ry.*

The Følsgaard family

Hans Følsgaard becomes a public limited company

Poul Følsgaard took over the position as general manager after his father in 1962. At that point, he had been with the company for 20 years. It is decided to convert the family-owned company to a public limited company with a board of directors. Supreme Court attorney Frits Rosenquist was appointed chairman of the board. The Følsgaard family held all the shares in the company.

Chief engineer resigns

In 1967, chief engineer Aksel Skaarup decided to leave H. Følsgaard. He was one of the first engineers to be hired and helped develop the company after World War II together with Hans and Poul Følsgaard. He wanted to start his own company within the same line of business. Skaarup used his connections to take some of the large agencies with him to his new company. Also some of the employees joined Skaarup and his new company. That was a bit of a blow to H. Følsgaard A/S. It was years before Poul Følsgaard wanted to greet Skaarup when they met in a business context.

The Følsgaard family

Adele and Hans Følsgaard married in 1911. Their first son, Kurt, was born in 1916, and Poul was born in 1919. After taking the leaving examination, Kurt started studying to become a surveyor, which he became in 1943. It was at that time, he met his future wife Nina. Her father and Hans Følsgaard were friends and Hans had often joked about the fact that his friend had three beautiful unmarried daughters and Hans had a handsome unmarried son. So at the suggestion of their fathers, Nina and Kurt meet, which resulted in a

life-long marriage. Kurt became co-owner of a surveyor company in Hillerød. In 1948, they had a son, Jørgen, and his little brother Carsten arrived in 1952.

As mentioned above, Emmy and Poul Følsgaard married in 1943. They had a daughter, Inge Lise, in 1944, Jette was born in 1946, Eva came



in 1952 and finally Hans Christian was born in 1961. Poul's wife Emmy died all too young in 1971 from liver failure caused by renal pelvic inflammation. Poul was now alone with his three grown-up daughters and just 10-year-old Hans Christian.

Adele and Hans Følsgaard lived on Wiehesvej 5 in Hellerup and in 1940, the home consisted of the parents, their two sons, who at that time were both under education, and Poul's girlfriend Emmy. They also had a maid, who also lived in the house. The family was close and often met at Adele and Hans and not just for traditional festive occasions but often also just for Sunday dinner. They often went on trips to the North Zealand forests with baskets of food, beer and soft drinks. The family also organised joint holidays to Norway, Germany and Southern Europe. They also had a keen interest in trotting.



Above: Hans and Adele loved visits from their grandchildren, here Eva and Carsten in 1953.

Left: The Følsgaard family on a picnic in 1956. Photo Kurt Følsgaard.

The Følsgaard family



Before Hans left in the morning, Adele was given housekeeping money. They also had a maid who lived in the house.

Through the years, they owned different trotting horses and were often enthusiastic spectators on the racing track. Poul Følsgaard owned a horse that one year won the Swedish derby. Having a natural understanding of the commercial value, Poul had naturally named the horse Symphony, as he thought that perhaps the horse might just be able to 'sell' some lamps.

The atmosphere was always spirited when the family assembled on Wiehesvej. They climbed trees, played ball games and board games. Granny had her work space in the basement, where she not only did tie dye but also engaged in many other artistic activities. She loved to bronze different types of figurines. Adele was a loving but also strict granny who liked to plan and decide things. Her daughters-in-law had great respect for her.

Her grandchildren say that Adele and Hans were extremely loving and generous grandparents. One of the grandchildren tells of the long drives with granddad and how you were always greeted with open arms as a child when every you popped by Amalievej 20. One thing that one of the grandchildren particularly remembers was his ability to listen and take the opinion of even a child seriously. Both Adele and Hans lived a long life. Adele died in 1965 almost 79 years old. Hans was able to celebrate his 90th birthday, he died in 1974. The last 9 years as a widower.



The entire family on New Year's Eve in 1962. Kurt Følsgaard was the photographer.

Poul had inherited his mother's interest in art. Over the years, he made many paintings. They were abstract paintings where he played with colours and shapes. Most remained in the family, but he also gave away some to various employees, who still have them hanging to this date. Poul was also extremely interested in beautiful lamps and light art.



Flatø in Guldborgsund.

The tragic accident on Flatø

Poul Følsgaard owned the small island Flatø in Guldborgsund. The island had a couple of houses which the family used as vacation homes. The island had no electricity and you had to take your own boat to get there. On Saturday 17 June 1978, some of the family had gathered on Flatø. They wanted to be able to keep their food cold, while staying on the island and had therefore bought a gas refrigerator, which had been delivered to the boat by one of the employees of the company. The refrigerator was sailed to the island and installed. After dinner, the children were put to bed on the first floor.

The Følsgaard family

The adults had a cosy get-together by the other house. Suddenly, they saw smoke coming from the house where the children are sleeping. It quickly developed into a blazing fire and they only just managed to rescue three out of the four children from the burning house. One of Poul Følsgaard's grandchildren, a small 5-year-old girl, died in the tragic accident. The girl's father sustained such severe burns during the rescue mission that he died in hospital four days later. The cause of the fire was a gas leak from the new refrigerator.

The son-in-law who died after the fire was Thomas Sonne. He was general manager of his own company which traded in iron and steel. It was also the plan that Thomas Sonne in the near future would take over the position as general manager of H. Følsgaard. After the move to Ejby Industrivej, the two companies had almost become neighbours.

The traumatic accident marked a turning point for Poul Følsgaard, who was 59 at that time. After the accident he lost some of his commitment in the company and largely left the management to director Gunnar Østervig and chairman of the board of directors Aage Elleman. So the accident on Flatø had a decisive impact on the company.

100 years of general managers at H. Følsgaard

Being the general manager at H. Følsgaard was no short-term job. Six managers over a span of 100 years, of which the founder accounted for 40 years. Three of them had worked for the company for an extended period of time before becoming general manager. Poul Følsgaard had been with the company for 20 years, Gunner Østervig for 15 years and Jørgen Stenberg for 25 years.

The general managers have also held various positions of trust in employers' and industry associations. In this way, they have taken professional responsibility and thus helped underpin HF's importance in the market.



1922 – 1962
Wholesaler Hans Følsgaard A/S
(1884 – 1974)



1962 – 1983
CEO Poul Følsgaard
(1919 – 1992)



1983 – 1992
CEO Gunnar Østervig
(1941 -)



1993 – 2002
CEO Jørgen Linthoe
(1940 -)



2002 – 2020
CEO Jørgen Stenberg
(1951 -)



2020 -
CEO Bent Baunegaard Madsen
(1978 -)

(1992 – 1993 Temporary management consisting of Stenberg, Shoshan and Sandø.)

Følsgaard Foundation

Agencies in the 1960s, 70s and 80s

During these years, Følsgaard acquired an increasing number of agencies, mainly from English, Swedish, American, Finnish and German companies. That meant that the employees had to be able to deal with a broad market.

When Følsgaard lost the right to sell one of the leading connector brands, AMP, in 1967, Poul Følsgaard started looking for a suitable replacement. In this connection, he spotted an ad for Molex and contacted the company, which was about to enter the European market. Følsgaard and Molex entered a distributor sales agreement in 1968. This collaboration quickly became vital for H. Følsgaard.

Molex was founded in Chicago, USA, in 1938 by John Krehbiel. The company develops a special plastic material from limestone and tar. At the beginning, the material was used for making plastic pots, toys and insulation material. The material quickly became important in the world of electricity.

The company opened a branch in Europe at the end of the 1960s after having successfully marketed its products in the USA and Japan. This branch was managed by the founder's grandchild Fred Krehbiel. He and Poul became not only business partners, but also very good private friends. They both shared a great interest in art and culture, but had to earn a living from trade and industry. In fact they agreed that Poul's 10-year-old son, Hans Christian, should come and live with Fred Krehbiel's family in London for a period after the death of his mother.

Følsgaard got off to a good start selling Molex components to leading companies, such as B & O which was a technology and design leader. Such references testified to the quality of the product.



Examples of agencies.

In March 1978, Fred Krehbiel invited Poul Følsgaard to a meeting in Copenhagen which was also attended by Gunnar Østervig. At this meeting, Fred Krehbiel told Følsgaard that Molex inc. Chicago had offered Gunnar Østervig a job in Chicago from where he would be involved in the management of the global organisation. However, Fred Krehbiel promised that Østervig would not leave until H. Følsgaard had gained a foothold selling Molex products. Poul Følsgaard regretfully accepted the news.

Three months after the meeting, the traumatic accident happened at Flatø. Poul Følsgaard lost much of his old drive, and the newly appointed chairman of the board, Aage Ellemann, summoned Gunnar Østervig to a meeting, where, in light of what had happened, he offered him to take over the position as sales director for all sales at H. Følsgaard. Molex' general manager for Europe, Fred Krehbiel, was immediately notified of the tragic accident in the Følsgaard family and agreed to cancel the contract with Gunnar Østervig. Throughout the 1980s, the Molex agency proved to be of major importance to Følsgaard.

Many of the agency contracts signed in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s are still very important for the company today. Particularly, US-based Panduit has been among the most important agencies for many years.

Director Aage Ellemann

Establishment of the Følsgaard Foundation

As previously mentioned, Hans Følsgaard became a limited liability company in 1962 with the family holding all shares. In 1983, Poul Følsgaard, director Gunnar Østervig and chairman of the board Aage Ellemann considered a generational change. None of Poul Følsgaard's four children were interested in taking over the management of the company and the son-in-law intended for the job tragically died after the Flatø accident.



Følsgaard Foundation

In the late summer of 1983, chairman of the board Aage Ellemann prepared the draft articles of association for a foundation whose object was to own shares in Hans Følsgaard A/S for the purpose of consolidating the company. Furthermore, the foundation was to help promote job satisfaction and provide financial support to former and current employees as well as to the descendants of Hans Følsgaard.

On 28 September 1983, Poul Følsgaard established the Følsgaard Foundation with contributed capital of DKK 30,000 in the form of shares at a nominal value of DKK 300,000. The board of directors had six members: Two direct descendants of Hans Følsgaard, two employees, one of whom had to be the CEO, and finally two independent members, one of whom had to be a practising lawyer and the other had to be a businessman. In 1986, the contributed capital was increased to DKK 330,000. However, the capital of the Foundation was negative for virtually the entire period until 2005 and therefore no funds were distributed.

From the establishment and until 2005, the shares of the Foundation were controlling Class A shares. When HF Holding A/S was sold to Addtech in 2014, 20% of the 30% of the shares held by the Foundation were also sold to Addtech.

In the anniversary year, the board of the Følsgaard Foundation consists of (from the left):

- *Bent Baunegaard Madsen, CEO, employee*
- *Michael Nørremark, Attorney-at-law*
- *Jørgen Stenberg, Chairman.*
- *Anette Wacher, employee*
- *Anders Lehmann, appointed by the family*
- *Helene Følsgaard, appointed by the family*





1983 – 1993
Director Aage Ellemann
(1919 – 1993)



1993 – 2011
Attorney-at-law Mogens Skipper-
Pedersen
(1940 -)

*Chairmen of the board of the
Følsgaard Foundation:*



2011 – 2020
Director Freddy Frandsen
(1944 -)



2020 -
Director Jørgen Stenberg
(1951 -)

Otto Mønsted A/S acquires HF

Break with Molex

With the change of owners of Hans Følsgaard A/S following the death of Poul Følsgaard, Fred Krehbiel decided in 1992 that Molex should have its own branch in Denmark. Krehbiel summoned a meeting attended by chairman of the board Aage Ellemann, board member Jens Christian Lorenzen and CEO Gunnar Østervig. At the meeting, Fred Krehbiel said that Molex intended to establish its own branch in Denmark with Gunnar Østervig as the CEO. Several senior employees would also be offered a job in the new branch. At the time of the break between Molex and Hans Følsgaard A/S, about one third of HF's earnings came from the sale of Molex products. Obviously, this was a major setback for HF.

Molex had already considered the break in 1978, but due to the close connections between Fred Krehbiel and Poul Følsgaard, they hesitated. Not until after the death of Poul Følsgaard was the break realised. Følsgaard A/S was left without a CEO, but the new owner, Otto Mønsted A/S, had the resources required to bring the company back on track.

New management in 1992

After the departure of Gunnar Østervig as CEO, the board of directors decided to temporarily appoint three senior employees. Jørgen Stenberg, Karen Shoshan and Mogens Sandø formed a temporary management board from August 1992 and until April 1993 when Jørgen Linthoe was appointed as CEO. In that connection, sales manager Jørgen Stenberg was promoted to sales director, not only for the power department but for all sales. From then on, Jørgen Linthoe and Jørgen Stenberg formed the management board of the company.

The two other employees from the temporary management board resigned from Hans Følsgaard A/S. Shoshan resigned from her position as CFO and Sandø joined the Molex group.

Ownership of Hans Følsgaard A/S after 1992

Following the death of Poul Følsgaard in April 1992, some unfortunate circumstances occurred in connection with the sale of the shares which Poul's children were to inherit. 30% of the shares belonged to the Følsgaard Foundation established in 1983. After some back and forth, the remaining 70% were acquired by Otto Mønsted in 1992-1993. The shares of the Foundation were controlling Class A shares. With CEO Jens Christian Lorenzen, representing Otto Mønsted A/S owned by the Otto Moensted Foundation, as chairman of the board from 1993 until 2005, Hans Følsgaard A/S – after massive problems – gained the financial muscle to expand and acquire a number of companies and get the company back on track.

The objects of Otto Mønsted A/S were to promote and develop Danish trade and industry and not to carry on business for extended periods of time. The aim was to sell off 70% of the shares at the turn of the millennium, when the business of Hans Følsgaard A/S was doing well. However, as previously mentioned, the problem was that the 70% of the shares were Class B shares which counted for only 30% at the general meeting. The Følsgaard Foundation had the controlling interest at the general meeting.

Company acquisitions and new agencies

In the 1990s, the management of Hans Følsgaard was on the lookout for companies that could complement the range of products and increase sales outside Denmark. Companies such as VK-Electric, parts of Mecatronic and P. Axt & Co. were acquired. Later in the 1990s, Per Buhl Elektronik ApS and Norwegian Danyko A/S joined.

Otto Mønsted A/S acquires HF

Especially the acquisition in 1992 of P. Axt & Co. became of great importance. P. Axt and Co. was a renowned company in the cable industry founded at the beginning of the century and had been in the hands of the Axt family for three generations. The company now found itself in a situation where, for various reasons, it had to be sold. For Hans Følsgaard A/S, it was perfect timing. After the loss of Molex, other products were needed to create good results. P. Axt & Co. was based in Glostrup just like Følsgaard. Initially, it continued as an independent company, but it proved to be a challenge to achieve the synergies.

After about a year, it was decided to join the sales and administration departments in Følsgaard's premises at Ejby Industrivej 2. However, the warehouse stayed as a cable warehouse takes up a lot of space. Some employees had to be dismissed, but most were integrated in various departments at Følsgaard. In 1995, the cable warehouse moved to HF's new warehouse building at Ejby Industrivej 30.

Up through the 1990s, sales and development were progressing, the shelves were stacked and finally, things were going in the right direction. In 2000, HF acquired the company Procom Process in Viby



close to Aarhus, and in 2001, it was merged with the Silkeborg branch of HF. The base of the merged department was in new premises in Ry close to the north-south motorway E45.

All these new initiatives were carefully discussed with chairman of the board Jens Christian Lorenzen who had the financially strong Otto Mønsted A/S behind him. In practice, the management board divided the tasks in such a way that Linthoe was in charge of the finances and the formal management functions. Stenberg were given more or less free rein to develop the company's business activities.

Punch cards and digital age

Like many other companies, HF has tried to rationalise administration over the years. In the 1960s, the company started to use punch cards. In the first half of the 1980s, the first computer programs were used in the administration and in the mid-1990s, the company started to use the Internet to communicate with customers and suppliers.

In 1997, HF issued the first comprehensive paper catalogue of all articles. It took a lot of effort to describe all the articles. At the same time, the customers were offered a CD-rom containing the catalogue content.

When the first commercial Danish websites saw the light of day, it did not take long for HF to follow suit. The company immediately saw the great advantages of communicating via this medium. The problem with a paper catalogue with so many articles is that it is out of date almost before it is issued. In the summer of 1999, Hans Følsgaard's first website goes live. This allowed customers to order 48,000 different articles 24/7. It also made it much easier to update the list of articles. However, it took some time before the customers really got used to communicating in this way, but after a relatively short time, no one would want to order goods and communicate in any other way.

In 1999, it became possible to order 48,000 articles via the Internet.



HF Holding

From sale of catalogue articles to Technical Partner with own brands

Together with a group of senior employees, CEO Jørgen Stenberg considered taking over the shareholding of Otto Mønsted. The problem was the lack of influence at the general meeting. A request was therefore made to chairman of the board Mogens Skipper-Pedersen and the Følsgaard Foundation to equate all shares of the company. Equating the shares would be a prerequisite for acquiring the shareholding of Otto Mønsted A/S. The board of the Foundation discussed the request and agreed. The Foundation saw the best opportunities for developing the company in equating the shares.

The owners consisted of Jørgen Stenberg as majority shareholder and Claus Rønne, Lars Hagelskjær, Henrik Kusk and Per Breinholt. In 2005 and 2006, the company changed considerably from selling catalogue articles to becoming a Technical Partner focusing increasingly on customisation and advisory services in connection with the services offered. The skills of the employees became even more crucial for a good result. Along with this change, the company also started to develop and produce its own brands. This development has been decisive for HF's position in the market.

Majority shareholder Jørgen Stenberg was very aware that at some point a generational change would have to take place. He was also aware that certain competitors had been strengthened by becoming part of larger groups. In 2013, he started to scour the market for a potential business partner. Negotiations were held with both Danish and Swedish companies.

After a few months, Swedish Addtech AB turned out to be a good candidate. Jørgen Stenberg says that at the meetings with Addtech, he found that as a technical partner, Addtech's aim of creating added value for the customers and focusing on customer-specific solutions

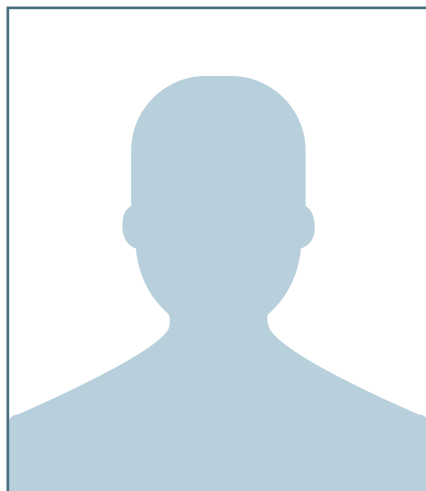


*The 5 owners of HF Holding.
From the left: Lars Hagelskjær,
Per Breinholt, Jørgen Stenberg,
majority shareholder, Henrik Kusk
and Claus Rønne.*

went quite well with the values of Hans Følsgaard, and he also noted that the ever so vital 'chemistry' between the parties was good. It was also important to be able to continue the company independently and to eliminate the risk of being sold again. That was also the main reason why the Følsgaard Foundation accepted Addtech as the new majority shareholder. Everyone agreed that it would be a good solution for Hans Følsgaard A/S.

Addtech owned a number of companies engaging in the same activities as Følsgaard and was therefore in a good position to support the growth and development of Hans Følsgaard A/S. Addtech had one requirement for a potential acquisition: Eight manufacturers selected by Addtech were to remain suppliers of HF. Jørgen Stenberg had one week to get the signatures for that which he managed to do. That was a good sign of the confidence in the company Hans Følsgaard.

Hans Følsgaard A/S



1962 – 1978
Supreme Court Attorney Frits
Rosenquist
(1910 – 1988)



1978 – 1993
Director Aage Ellemann
(1919 – 1993)



1993 – 2005
Director Jens Christian Lorenzen
(1942 -)



2005 – 2014
Director Freddy Frandsen
(1944 -)



2014 – 2020
Director Anders Claeson,
Addtech



2020 -
Director Hans Andersén, Addtech

Chairmen of the Board of Directors of Hans Følsgaard A/S over 60 years



In the anniversary year, the Board of Directors of Hans Følsgaard A/S consists of the following (from the left):

Director Henrik Møller, Addtech

Director Bent Baunegaard Madsen, CEO Hans Følsgaard.

Director Hans Andersén, Addtech, Chairman

Director Jørgen Stenberg, Følsgaard Foundation.

Karin Wolf, employee representative.

Per Henriksen, employee representative.

Company culture

Company culture for 100 years



For the first many years, Hans Følsgaard's employees consisted almost only of men. The company sold electrical products, and back then that area was dominated by men. Former employees have described the culture as masculine and convivial. In the first years, practically all employees knew everything about everything, there were no division of trades.

Way back in time, the company started to make different events for the employees. For a number of years, outings were organised where the employees were transported by bus to a location somewhere on Zealand. Then they would engage in different activities such as tug-of-war and popinjay shooting – all of which took place in suits and tight ties. A beer or two was offered and it ended at a forest restaurant or an inn, where a good dinner was served along with appropriate drinks. Then the bus would return home with the employees in high spirit. This event was later renamed the sports party, and as more female employees joined, the dinner was followed by music and dancing.



For a number of years, the company hosted a harvest festival. Even in the technical industry, one could rejoice over a hopefully good harvest for the farmers. The company party was also a regular event at Følsgaard. As mentioned, music and dancing had been added to the programme of the parties, and gradually the company got so many female employees that they did not have to be on the dance floor all the time. For many years, Følsgaard had a badminton club, allowing employees to exercise with their colleagues.

Top: Tug-of-war at a company outing in the 1950s.

Above: Poul Følsgaard is getting ready to shoot while Hans Følsgaard is having a chat.

Soon after the establishment of the Silkeborg branch, the so-called Silkeborg tournament started. The head office and the Silkeborg branch took turns organising the tournament. The employees took off by train on Saturday morning, bringing supplies for the train journey and the ferry trip across Storebælt. On Saturday afternoon there was a football match with mixed teams. H. H. Christensen tells that one year he had signed up a Følsgaard team for a large company tournament in Silkeborg. The head office had several talented football

players and Følsgaard ended up winning the final. Some of the locals were a bit upset as they had noticed that some of the Følsgaard football players spoke anything but the local dialect. However, all Følsgaard's employees were allowed to participate in the tournament.

After the physical activities, which could also include rounders and miniature golf, people changed into their best clothes to have a nice dinner at a restaurant. After the dinner, it was time to dance, and nobody would get much sleep in the hotel bed that night. On Sunday morning, the colleagues got a tour of the branch and after lunch, it was time to go home. On the train, the tired employees tried to catch some sleep so that everyone could go to work rested and refreshed on Monday morning.

For a number of years, Følsgaard participated with a rather large cycling team in the cycling event Sjælsø Rundt. Every effort was made to ensure that the employees did not dehydrate or bonk on the trip. The team car with the CEO at the wheel tried to handle all problems along the way and served cold beer after the race. As the photo



Above: Excited employees getting off the bus at the company outing.



Left: The HF cycling team in high spirits at the Sjælsø Rundt cycling event.

Below: On the train home from Silkeborg.



Company culture



Employees enjoying a beer after Sjælsø Rundt

shows, the Følsgaard employees were of course wearing HF clothes. More recently, the employees have participated in the DHL Stafetten relay run. The company has fielded football teams at Brøndby Sponsor Cup and Køge Firmaidræt, and HF became Køge champion in 2014. The trophy cabinet is almost full. Sport is a big part of the company's DNA – especially football.

Over the years, a number of other activities have also been organised for the employees. For some years, leading up to Christmas, there was a competition for men to make the most creative Christmas decoration – the women made up the judging panel.

In the new millennium, Følsgaard has invited the employees and their spouses/partners on an annual team-building trip. They have been in Tallinn, Estonia, Dublin, in Ireland, in Riga, Latvia, Budapest, Hungary and several places in Denmark.

The 100-year anniversary trip goes to Vienna in Austria

The Følsgaard Foundation provides the basis for organising an eventful trip for the employees and their partners every year. A trip that helps strengthen the culture and the relationship between the employees and between their partners.

Every day in HF's lunchroom in Køge, the employees have a quiz – someone reads the quiz from newspaper Berlingske Tidende, and then the colleagues try to answer. This tradition started in 2020, and it give rises to many good discussions and conversations.

Over the years, enterprising employees have made various staff magazines. Initially, they were type-written and stencil-duplicated magazines, and their contents included upcoming staff activities, new appointments, special birthdays and anniversaries. Of course, there were also quips and jokes that you could tell among colleagues. The magazines have had names such as Pindsvinet, Vrinsk, Stafetten and HF-Information.



The staff magazine Pindsvinet.

In 2020, an Intranet was established. This is the place to find news from colleagues, management and the latest updated documents. The Intranet provides information about special occasions and new large orders that call for celebration cake. You cannot say Følsgaard without saying cake, Følsgaard sends out cakes to customers with every cardboard box that leaves the warehouse. When the bell rings at Theilgaards Torv 1 – and it often does, a new large order has been landed and there is cake for everyone. Weeks with celebration cake every day are called 100% weeks by the employees. The Intranet also

Next: Trip to the zoo.





Development and future

Intranet – Hans Følsgaard.



contains the Employee Handbook and a description of all the benefits of being an employee of H. Følsgaard. It is also the place to find the company Code of Conduct and to see how to anonymously use a whistleblowing scheme if something does not seem right. Any such reports are sent directly to the parent company Addtech.

Development of own products

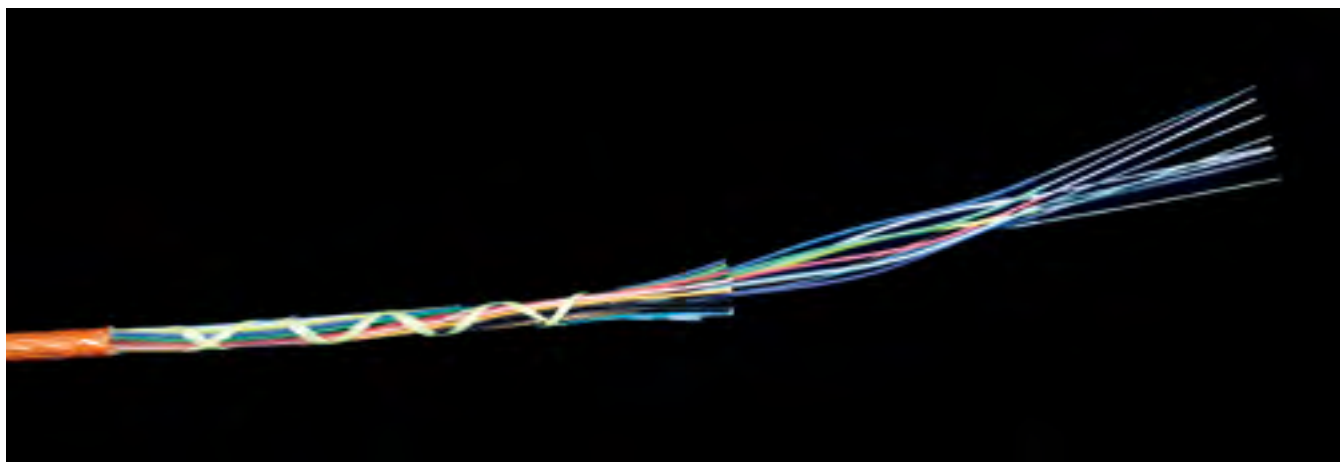
Throughout the years, Hans Følsgaard has sold products manufactured by various companies. Today, these products are often adapted to the individual customer to get the optimum result. Hans Følsgaard has also developed its own products when the available solutions were inadequate. Følsgaard was involved in the wind turbine industry at a very early stage, making customised components for the wind turbines. It was back in the days when Vesta's production often took place in old-fashioned forge shops in small villages in West Jutland. Some people seemed to be slightly amused that effort was spent on this sort of thing. However, it is safe to say that this was a smart move by Følsgaard.

One of the world's largest container transport companies, Maersk, had some problems with plug standards in connection with both overland transport and onboard ships. Together with Maersk, Følsgaard developed a new plug that could be used for overland and sea transport. This saved substantial costs of replacing damaged plugs.

For a number of years, there has been a significant growth in the need for fibre cables. Now, in our anniversary year, the laying of fibre cables in Denmark is more or less finished. That also goes for the other Nordic countries. However, requirements for the capacity of these cable increase as larger and larger amounts of data have to be transported.

In some of our neighbouring countries to the south, however, the situation is somewhat different, and the rollout of fibre cables has only just started. In recent years, Følsgaard has worked to develop fibre cables that can transport large amounts of data and are only 7 millimetres thick. The product is called HFiberCORE™. The cables are manufactured in Poland and are currently the best product in the market. The problem, however, is getting hold of sufficient supplies of these fibre cables because demand is very high in the UK and Germany. For cable installation, Følsgaard has also developed ducts, HFiberDUCT™, that make it easier to blow the thin cables through.

HFiberCORE



Development and future

*Right:
InnovationLab at work.*

InnovationLab

In order to facilitate the development of new work, Følsgaard has set up a group of young talents with different skills aiming to prepare a 'script' for the development work. The group consists of 7 people who meet at monthly intervals. In between the meetings, each of them has specific tasks.

Experience shows that following the 'script' in the development work will increase the chance of a successful process. It is obviously very attractive to be selected for this development group, and Følsgaard sees great results on the horizon, results that can help to optimise the customers' products.

Responsibility for quality

At Hans Følsgaard A/S, we have always paid close attention to the quality of the services and products we provide. In connection with a LEAN implementation, where a large number of procedures had to be described, it was a natural step to carry out a full ISO 9001 implementation project. With this, the organisation has a management tool that provides a solid foundation for quality management and will constantly focus on creating improvements and keeping the company competitive. ISO 9001 is a quality management system recognised throughout the world.

In order to be a supplier of high-quality technical products, manufacturers obviously require assurance that the distributor meets the quality and service requirements that have been guaranteed for components and systems for the industry and the energy sector. With this ISO 9001 certification in 2018, such quality assurance is guaranteed.



Development and future



Training at Addtech Academy.

Top-qualified employees

For many years, Følsgaard has focused on ensuring that the employees are well-qualified. It has been easy for employees to pursue further training within all business areas. This was ensured with support from the Følsgaard Foundation and Følsgaard A/S. Having well-qualified employees has been absolutely crucial in a market where technology develops so rapidly.

When Addtech acquired Hans Følsgaard A/S in 2014, the entire training area was systematised in Addtech Academy. Addtech Academy organises training courses not only for salespeople and managers but for virtually all areas of expertise. If someone would like special and relevant training elsewhere, that is also possible.

For a company whose most important product is knowledge and whose most important resource is the employees, ongoing training is essential to ensure that the right 'product' can be supplied so as to optimise the customer's potential for greater market shares, growth and competitiveness.

Crises in society

A 100-year old company has obviously been through several periods of crisis. The crises may have arisen due to the termination of an important agency or due to the resignation of senior employees and the creation of a rival company. However, Hans Følsgaard has relatively quickly overcome those crises.

Like other companies, Følsgaard has been affected by crises in society over the last couple of decades.

On 1 December 2008, practically all activities stopped at H. Følsgaard. A global financial crisis left the market in fear. Danish industry was paralysed. No new orders were placed until the customers' stocks had been cleared. Many companies laid off employees.

At Følsgaard, the financial year 2008 had been good. The management decided to keep all employees as the company was geared for a couple of years of break even. When the market returned to a normal level, the company would still have all its competent employees. The management dictated that there would be no salary increases for three years. At the same time, a bonus scheme was introduced, giving 5% to all employees in 2011. All employees showed a fantastic attitude, which ensured that HF emerged from the crisis well. Business areas such as infrastructure did not react in the same way to the crises as the industry.

In the years following the financial crisis, Følsgaard's revenue and earnings steadily improved. After the sale to Addtech in 2014, H. Følsgaard A/S was given even better opportunities to develop. At the beginning of 2020, like everyone else, the company was hit by a pandemic, the consequences of which only few had imagined. COVID-19 suddenly led to restrictions and lockdowns for some periods over the next two years. Supplies of important parts for products were delayed and meeting delivery times became a problem. It became difficult or impossible to travel to business meetings abroad as usual. Many employees had to work from home while coping with the task of teaching schoolchildren who had been sent home. Various new laws granted many companies financial subsidies and deferment of tax, VAT and customs payments to prevent them from laying off employees.

All these challenges were overcome by Følsgaard, and the new ways of working and travelling have had a positive impact on the day-to-day business of the company today. Virtual meetings have become standard, lowering travel costs and reducing the associated inconvenience.

HF Group

During the COVID-19 pandemic, an accident occurred in March 2021 when a large container ship became wedged across the Suez Canal. Supplies from China and Asia stopped for a period and global trade came to a standstill – 12% of which passes through the Suez Canal. The pandemic and problems for the global transport market intensified the challenges of procuring important parts for the products that Følsgaard sells. Challenges which we are still seeing the effects of.

In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Suddenly, there was war in Europe. The people of Ukraine were bombed and attacked and many millions, especially women and children, fled the country. The West tried to pressure Russia to stop the aggression by imposing economic sanctions. Western Europe gets a significant part of its gas and oil supplies from Russia, which has complicated the situation.

Along with the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine has resulted in a significant increase in energy prices. This affects the price level of nearly all products. Challenges obtaining the necessary parts for the products that Følsgaard sells, together with strong general inflation, have been the reality for Følsgaard in the first half of 2022.

The Ever Given container ship blocks the Suez Canal in March 2021.



Hans Følsgaard A/S becomes a group

Norway

The company wanted to establish a stronger presence in the Nordic market. The first country to be considered was Norway. An interesting company was found in Grimstad which largely matched HF. The name of the company was Danyko A/S and since its establishment in 1974, four branches had opened in Norway. It was engaged in automation, cables, bar codes and installation.



The employees at HF Danyko.

In April 1998, Hans Følsgaard A/S acquired Danyko and named the company HF Danyko A/S. The installation and bar code branches were sold off to focus on automation products and cables. In 2008, the warehouse moved to Hans Følsgaard's central warehouse in Køge. Based on Bark Silas Vej 8, Grimsted, HF Danyko has 8 employees and Steffen Bie Paulsen as the day-to-day manager.

HF Group



The employees at HF Gigacom, Sweden, 1 position vacant.

SWEDEN

In 2000, Følsgaard set up a branch in Sweden that had a partnership with Swedish automation suppliers. Soon, fibre products were also added to the portfolio. However, in connection with the international financial crisis, the best solution proved to be to manage the Swedish market from the head office in Køge and close the Swedish office.

In 2021, Hans Følsgaard A/S acquired the Swedish company Gigacom AB. The company, now called HF Gigacom AB, is based on Sjöängsvägen 17, Sollentuna. The company provides network solutions, including consultancy and assistance on all relevant tasks. In 2022, the branch has four employees and is headed by Henrik Björk.



The employees at HF Technik Partner GMBH Germany.

GERMANY

For many years, Følsgaard has had suppliers and business partners in Germany. In 2017, it was decided to open a branch in Germany. The possibilities of supplying fibre cables for installation in Germany were lacking somewhat behind compared to the Scandinavian countries. The branch is called HF Teknikpartner GmbH and is based on Hüttenkamp 5 in Neumünster. The branch has four employees headed by Heike Kaiser-Jäger.



The employees in China – Hans Følsgaard Electrical Solutions (Tianjin) Co., Ltd.

CHINA

Since 2009, Hans Følsgaard has had its own production in China. The products mainly include components for the wind turbine industry and for containers. Already in 2005, Hans Følsgaard hired a Chinese engineer who had completed part of his degree in Denmark and lived in Denmark. With his knowledge of Chinese culture and language, he knew what it took to overcome the challenges of operating in this gigantic market. In 2019, Hans Følsgaard decided to open a branch in China. The branch is located in Tianjin and has four employees.

Hans Følsgaard's company addresses over 100 years

HEAD OFFICE

1922	Rådhuspladsen, Copenhagen.
1922 – 1958	Gl. Kongevej 13 A, Frederiksberg.
1958 – 1967	Amalievej 20, Frederiksberg.
1967 – 1967	H. C. Ørstedsvej 32, Frederiksberg.
1967 – 1971	H. C. Ørstedsvej 29, Frederiksberg.
1971 – 1977	Amalievej 20, Frederiksberg.
1977 – 1997	Ejby Industrivej 2, Glostrup.
1997 – 2007	Ejby Industrivej 30, Glostrup.
2007 -	Theilgaards Torv 1, Køge.

ESBJERG BRANCH

1929 – 1937	Kongensgade 11, Esbjerg.
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SILKEBORG BRANCH

1961 – 1962	Outbuildings of the Vester Kejlstrup manor, Silkeborg
1962 – 1967	New building at Ringvejen, Silkeborg
1967 – 1977	Søgade 1, Silkeborg.
1977 – 2001	Tietgensvej 16, Silkeborg.

BRANCH IN NORWAY – HF DANYKO A/S

1998 –	Bark Silas Vej 8, Grimstad.
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BRANCH IN RY

2001 -	Ellemosen 4, Ry.
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BRANCH IN GERMANY –

HF TECHNIK PARTNER GMBH.

2017 -	Hüttenkamp 5, Neumünster.
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Branch in China – Hans Følsgaard

Electrical Solutions (Tianjin) Co., Ltd.

2019 -	No. 18, North of Fuyuan Avenue, Wuging Development Areas, Tianjin.
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Branch in Sweden – HF Gigacom AB.

2021 -	Sjöängsvägen 17, Sollentuna.
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*HF's domicile
at Theilgaards Torv 1, Køge.*



HF Group



Jørgen Stenberg.

Jørgen Stenberg at a trade fair with Crown Prince Frederik.



The Stenberg era

A young engineer aged 26 was engaged by HF in 1977. He soon proved to be a very knowledgeable salesperson with a flair for communicating with customers. When Østervig left the company in 1992, Jørgen Stenberg was still sales manager of the power department. At that time, the board of directors appointed Stenberg, Shoshan and Sandø as to form a temporary management board.

When Jørgen Linthoe was appointed as CEO in 1993, Stenberg was promoted to sales director of HF and, together with Linthoe, he formed the board of management. When Linthoe retired in 2002, Jørgen Stenberg took over the position as CEO.

As a senior employee of Hans Følsgaard A/S, Jørgen Stenberg has played a key role in the development of the company. He was the instigator of a number of acquisitions of other companies, and he was definitely the architect behind the establishment of HF Holding A/S in 2005, in which he was the majority shareholder. In 2014, Stenberg wanted an even stronger foundation under HF and to ensure a prudent generational change at some point. As described above, Stenberg looked into the opportunities of strengthening the company and he went through an intense period of clarification and negotiation which ended with the company being sold to Swedish Adtech.

The values that characterised Stenberg throughout the years have left a substantial mark on the climate and culture of Hans Følsgaard A/S. As an outside author who gets a chance to meet the employees, it is very clear that HF has an open, trusting and appreciative atmosphere. The employees are given the opportunity to pursue further training, to take responsibility and work with dedication. It hardly takes anybody by surprise that Jørgen Stenberg, after his resignation as CEO in 2020, remains a prominent person in HF as chairman of the Følsgaard Foundation and as a highly dedicated senior adviser. Not only has Stenberg been a good engineer, businessman and manager, he has also been a dedicated and successful 'company architect'.

HF and the Sustainable Development Goals

In December 2012, HF signed up to the UN Global Compact and its 10 principles. Every year, the company has to prepare a report on the goals and progress achieved. As a natural next step, the company started to work actively with the UN Sustainable Development Goals in 2020. Two workshops were held for all employees. A value scan was made of Hans Følsgaard A/S, and the result was a decision to focus on the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- 7 Affordable and Clean Energy
- 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.
- 12 Responsible Consumption and Production.
- 13 Climate Action.

HF's customers generally have a strong focus on sustainability, and since more than 75% of the company's services are own brands or customised solutions, sustainability forms a natural foundation for the strategy and is integrated in all of the company's activities. All employees know the sustainability goals in their field, and every function has a specific area of responsibility, making it very concrete how each individual employee can contribute.

As a result of its CSR (corporate social responsibility) and sustainability work, Hans Følsgaard soon became ISO 14001-certified. ISO 14001 is an environmental management standard which sets out requirements for the company's processes and ability to utilise resources in a way that generates the least possible pollution.



Marketing



Povl Følsgaard (with his back to the camera) and Hans Følsgaard at a trade fair in Forum, Copenhagen 1957

Marketing, visibility and customer contact – relations and the personal meeting

Hans Følsgaard A/S has a long tradition of attending trade fairs. In 2022, HF is attending 10 different trade fairs where contact can be made with new customers. Of these 10 trade fairs, three are in Denmark, three are in Germany, two are in Sweden, one is in Norway and one is in the Netherlands. Every effort is made to present the products and services in an inviting manner to make sure that potential new customers have a good experience in the contact with Følsgaard's employees at the trade fairs.

Since 2006, HF has published its trade magazine TeknikPartner. It is probably the best and most attractive magazine in the industry. It features articles about current technical advances within the areas of Følsgaard's business and personal interviews with top executives in large groups.

Moreover, every year Følsgaard hosts the HF Open – an event for customers and business partners at the beautiful golf course in Resenbro near Silkeborg – and an event at the Jyllandsringen motor racing circuit where the guests are allowed to break the normal speed limit and feel the rush.

For 30 years, Hans Følsgaard has had a partnership with Brøndby IF – one of the most winning football clubs in Denmark. With this partnership, we get space on advertisement boards and we become visible not only to the spectators of the match but also to the many



HF's magazine TeknikPartner.

people watching the matches on TV. A sponsorship also gives us access to a unique business network, where employees from the company can meet business partners and perhaps future customers. Moreover, it is often possible to meet politicians and have an informal chat in a relaxed atmosphere.

In addition to Brøndby, HF has also been sponsors of Silkeborg IF and HB Køge for a number of years, also giving access to large business networks.

HF banner ads at Brøndby stadium.



Marketing

HF's business areas in the anniversary year

It all started with Hans Følsgaard cycling around Copenhagen delivering plug sockets, cables and more to the electricians. In Silkeborg, Følsgaard opened one of the first self-service stores in Denmark, not with groceries but with electrical articles.

For 40 years, the company has produced custom-fabricated cables for various refrigerator and washing machine brands and designed lamps and light art.

Over the years, the range of products and services has been adapted to the needs of society. In the anniversary year, Hans Følsgaard A/S has nine business areas.

HF supplies, develops and streamlines automation and processing plant. HF provides creative feedback in the idea phase and quality assurance of the final solution.

HF supplies cables for all industrial purposes. HF maintains a dialogue with the customer and provides advice throughout the process to achieve the best result.

HF designs and manufactures products for the container industry. HF has developed and manufactured the strongest and best fibre cables in the market for the past 15 years.



HF Automation.



HF Cable & Cable Management.



HF Container.



HF Foodline.



HF Greentech.



HF Infrastructure.



HF Powertech.



HF Telecom.



HF Electrical Engineering.

Marketing

HF supplies standard and customised solutions to the food industry with the best brands in the market.

HF cooperates with the world's leading manufacturers of wind turbines and with the sustainable energy sector. HF has many years' experience developing customised solutions to be used all over the world.

HF specialises in railway solutions and works with a number of suppliers with a wide range of custom designed and thoroughly tested equipment.

HF specialises in transformers, medium voltage distribution systems, protection relays and grid monitoring, etc. HF provides consultancy and guidance throughout the project and supplies solutions adapted to the specific task.

HF is a fibre optic centre of competence with many years' experience and has employees with extensive knowledge and the ability to find optimal solutions. HF has developed some of the best fibre cables in the world.

HF has supplied electrical technology for many years. The employees ensure that efficient and safe solutions are supplied at the right price. HF has a wide range of market-leading products.

HF's central warehouse

Over the years, the company's warehouse has had many locations. Generally, the company quickly tended to outgrow the warehouses. The area has been expanded time and time again, and the structure and management has undergone significant development.

Since 2008, the warehouse in Denmark has been the central warehouse for Scandinavia and is today central warehouse for the entire world. In 2011, it moved to Køge close to the company's domicile. In the warehouse, the products are received, registered and placed. Certain products need processing in the warehouse according to the technical customised solutions developed by HF. Sets have to be assembled for a number of areas such as wind turbines. The products need to be packed and shipped. HF uses both road and sea transport and air transport if it is really urgent.



The warehouse in Køge

Besides managing its own warehouse, Hans Følsgaard also offers warehouse management for its customers. With a number of customers, it is agreed that when the forecasts say that a certain product is out of stock, then it is sent to the customer.

For almost 25 years, HF has included cakes in the shipments to be enjoyed by the customers' employees. About 35,000 packets of cakes are delivered every year, and HF is by far Karen Wolf's largest single customer. If someone forgets to include the cakes, the customers immediately call and ask for cakes.

12 employees work at the central storage.

Management

Management of Hans Følsgaard A/S

In 2007, HF got a new domicile. In 1908 in Køge, engineer Theilgaard started a factory with a patent for recycling old rubber, which in the first years made hoses, galoshes and new-fashioned rubber boots. This factory moved its production and the old factory premises became vacant.

With the help of skilled architects, Følsgaard established a new modern domicile in some of the old buildings. An environment for curious, inquisitive and proactive employees had to be designed. It had to have high ceilings, wide corridors and open meeting spaces where bar stools and small communication islands could inspire short, spontaneous meetings. There were to be only a few walls, but also room for confidential conversations. The employees should also have the opportunity to enjoy short breaks with a game of table tennis or a cup of coffee at a standing table.

Below and right: The open-plan office in Køge





Most employees work in groups in the open environment, where the community thrives and successes are shared with an enthusiasm that re-energises everyone. Positive experience gives everyone food for thought.

HF has a flat structure aiming to strengthen interaction throughout the organisation. Great focus is on ensuring that HF has an open, trusting and appreciative atmosphere. The management encourages the employees to pursue further training, to take responsibility and work with dedication.

In collaboration with all employees, strategies are made for the development of the individual departments and a time schedule is prepared.

HANS FØLSGAARD IS WORKING TOWARDS:

- Supplying customers with products from the best manufacturers.
- Providing even more customised solutions.
- Developing and offering more proprietary products.
- Developing more unique products.

A green future



AAA rating for the 12th consecutive year.

The present and the future of HF

The situation in society provides the foundation for opportunities of Hans Følsgaard A/S. In 2021, for the 12th consecutive year, the company achieved an AAA rating, meaning that the company is regarded as highly creditworthy. The fact that HF was taken over by Addtech in 2014 means that the company is based on a foundation of solid resources.

All over the world, a battle is being fought to reduce the environmental impact. For a number of years, we have known that coal and oil must be phased out in order to limit CO₂ emissions. At the same time, global energy consumption increases. In recent years, nuclear power plants have increasingly been closed in connection with energy production. However, we are seeing more and more advocates for a new and safer generation of electricity-producing nuclear power plants.

However, most people prefer the green energy production. Far more wind turbines must be erected and solar energy needs to be greatly expanded. Other natural forces could be converted into electricity. However, that would call for a major expansion of the infrastructure for the transport of electricity, not only in Denmark but all over the world. The existing system cannot meet the increasing need for electricity at all.

The volume of data to be transported has exploded in recent years. In Scandinavia, we are in a fairly good position in this area, but a number of western countries are unable to send and receive the volume of data required by modern society.

According to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, everyone should have enough to eat every day. This is a huge challenge, but through more rational production and less waste, we can come a long way.

Right: HF and the Sustainable Development Goals.



A green future

How can HF help overcome these major challenges?

In terms of green energy, HF has already been involved in the production of wind turbine components for a number of years. Since the beginning of the industrialised production of wind turbines, HF has been part of the journey.

The company have a great deal of expertise which can be further developed and used in the coming years. HF also has solid knowledge



Technology, environment and growth go hand in hand.

of the use of solar panels for electricity production. This gives HF a very strong position in the use of green energy.

As mentioned, the rapidly increasing electrification in almost all areas places great demands on the infrastructure. HF has extensive experience in finding the right equipment, whether it be transformers, protective relays or grid monitoring. The company cooperates with the best manufacturers in Europe and offers customised solutions that ensure a stable and long service life for every installation. Here too, HF is in a good position with solid knowledge and experience as well as competent business partners.

Data infrastructure needs to be expanded, and HF is ready with its own products which are among the very best in the world. HF is already a large player in this market but has the potential to grow even more.

In terms of the manufacturing industry, HF has for many years supplied products that could rationalise production. HF has employees that can help the customers make the perfect solution in each case.


In the transport area, HF has developed products that have made it easier to transport goods at sea and on land.

Finding and hiring the right employees are crucial for Hans Følsgaard. The employees must feel the importance of contributing to a sustainable production, not only in HF but also in the companies we work with. The employees should not be content with being better than a competitor, the company must be the best in the market.

HF timeline




- 1884 Hans Følsgaard is born in Kolding.




1958 HF moves to Amalievej 20.

1967 HF moves to H. C. Ørstedsvej in Frederiksberg.



- 1922 The company Hans Følsgaard sees the light of day at Rådhuspladsen.

1961 The company establishes a new branch in Silkeborg headed by H. H. Christensen.




1968 Agreement is made with Molex.
- 1929 The Esbjerg branch is established headed by 19-year-old H. H. Christensen.

1961 HF establishes a lighting department with its own production.




1977 Engineer Jørgen Stenberg is appointed.


- 1937 Nordisk Solar Compagnie buys the Esbjerg branch at a good price.


1962 Topping-out ceremony at HF's new facilities for custom-fabrication of cables in Silkeborg.


1977 New domicile at Ejby Industrivej 2 in Glostrup.
- 1942 The son, Poul Følsgaard, starts in the company.

1962 Poul Følsgaard becomes CEO.




1978 The lighting department closes.



- 1946 HF establishes an export and import department.



1962 HF becomes a public limited company.



1978 The accident at Flatø.


- 1955 HF's first known brochure is issued.

1966 HF acquires the lamp factory Belux.

1983 Gunnar Østervig becomes CEO.

1983 The Følsgaard Foundation is established.

1992 Break with Molex.

1992 Acquisition of the cable company P. Axt & Co.

1993 Jørgen Linthoe becomes CEO.

1997 New domicile at Ejby Industrivej 30 in Glostrup.

1998 Acquisition of Norwegian Danyko A/S in Grimstad.

2001 The factory in Silkeborg is sold.

2002 Jørgen Stenberg becomes CEO.

2005 HF Holding acquires 70% of the shares in H. Følsgaard.

2007 The company gets a new domicile in Køge.

2011 HF's warehouse moves to Køge.

2014 Addtech acquires 90% of the shares in Hans Følsgaard A/S.

2017 Branch is established in Neumünster, Germany.

2019 Branch is established in Tianjin, China.

2020 Bent Baunegaard Madsen becomes CEO.

2021 Acquisition of Swedish Gigacom AB in Sollentuna.

2022 100th anniversary.

**100 ÅR
I TEKNIKKENS
TJENESTE**

THE FUTURE.





100 years in the service of technology



Hans Følsgaard

This book describes Hans Følsgaard A/S over 100 years. When 38-year-old Hans Følsgaard founded the company in 1922, it was an uphill battle. In Copenhagen, competition was fierce for sellers of electrical articles. The large-scale rollout of electricity in Denmark had started, but in the 1930s the world faced a severe economic downturn and when the wheels started turning again, World War II started, which also presented challenges for companies such as Hans Følsgaard.

After World War II, the company established an import and export department. The range of products increased considerably. In 1962, facilities were established in Silkeborg for custom-fabrication of industrial cables. The branch had about 50 employees until the department was sold in 2001.

Until after the death of Poul Følsgaard in 1992, the company was owned by the family and the Følsgaard Foundation. In the course of 1992 and 1993, Otto Mønsted A/S acquired the family's shareholding. From 2005 and until 2014, the company was owned by HF-Holding which consisted of five senior employees with CEO Jørgen Stenberg as the majority shareholder. In 2014, HF-Holding decided to sell 70% of its shares to Swedish Addtech, which also acquired 20% of the Følsgaard Foundation's shareholding.

Hans Følsgaard's activities increasingly focus on business areas where service and consultancy are important parts of the individual solutions. Products and solutions are developed for a range of areas, such as wind energy, containers and fibre cables. After Addtech's acquisition of Hans Følsgaard A/S, even more branches have been established in countries which either produce or have a great potential for selling the company's products and services.

Hans Følsgaard's competent and dedicated employees are to help develop the company and make the solutions environmentally friendly.