

Sveriges Bygg- & Järnhandlareförbund, (The Association of Swedish Building Materials and Hardware Merchants) is a trade association and umbrella organisation for Sweden's building materials and hardware merchants. We have some 780 members. We call ourselves "Bygg och Järnhandlarna" for short. The organisation was formed in 2004 through a merger of Sveriges Bygg- & Trävaruhandelsförbund, SBT (Sweden's Building Materials and Lumber Merchants) and Sveriges Järnhandlareförbund (Sweden's Hardware Merchants Association). Since the blurring of sector boundaries is almost complete today and businesses are operating in one and the same market, the decision was taken to merge the two associations into one federation.

Our vision:

The Association of Swedish Building Materials and Hardware Merchants will be the clear unifying force for the building materials, hardware and paint merchant sectors in Sweden.

This is the vision we have created and with it we want to show how we would like to be perceived by the external environment.

Our strategic goal:

To help our members, through the federation's various activities and information initiatives, to obtain the tools they need to help grow their businesses and broaden their contact networks.

Our cornerstones:

Coordination

As the central and umbrella organisation for the industry, we ensure that cross-sector projects and issues are handled in an optimal and rational way in the industry. There should be no need for the job to be done in more than one place!

Opinion building

Our industry needs to be visible. We are not only competing within our industry, but with other industries as well. We will work to ensure that consumers, businesses and public authorities choose to invest resources in our industry. We are also working actively on opinion building in the industry through a broad contact network that includes manufacturers, suppliers, other trade associations and the media.

Information

Our members will always be well informed about events in the industry, agreements, directives from the authorities and other events that may directly or indirectly affect our members and their business.

Competence development

In our industry, knowledge is an important competitive tool. The federation is therefore active in promoting education and training for employees as well as management/business leaders. We offer education and training under our brand Bygg- & Järnhandlarskolan (Building Materials & Hardware Merchant School).

The industry in brief:

By "the industry" we mean merchants and suppliers of building materials, hardware and paint. It is difficult today, not to say impossible, to clearly define exactly what our sector is.

Blurring of industry boundaries

The blurring of industry boundaries is widespread. Companies are adapting their range of products and services more according to their customers' demands than based on belonging to a specific sector. Today, we can find items such as flowers, fabric, furniture etc. in "our" sector.

In the past the boundaries were distinct between the range of products sold by building materials, hardware and paint merchants. Many of these boundaries are blurred today.

Number of businesses

We estimate that there are currently just over 1,000 retailers/merchants in Sweden within our industry segment.

Turnover

The estimated turnover in the sector in 2010 was just over EUR 8 billion (excl. VAT). This includes building materials, hardware, heating, water & sanitation (VVS) and paint, as well as tools.

Consumers – Professionals

Retailers in our industry often target both private consumers and professionals. However, some companies have developed a profile specifically aimed at one of these groups. In their business concepts, some have chosen to specialise in industry customers while others have decided to only market themselves to consumers.

The bulk of the turnover in our sector consists of sales to professionals. About 65% of the turnover goes to professionals and 35% to consumers, albeit with large local variations.

It is also important to take into account that a large portion of the sales, for example to local builders, is based on requests from consumers who have contracted the builders to remodel their homes.

Chains

Most of the retailers are part of a chain or some other form of buying consortium. Fewer than 100 companies have opted to operate outside this type of organisation.

Development – Future

In the 2000s we have seen very strong sales growth in the industry. Part of this is explained by the so-called "Timell effect" (Martin Timell is a famous DIY expert and TV presenter in Sweden). Every TV channel today has its own do-it-yourself programme. This is shining a spotlight on the products that we sell. Meanwhile, there are numerous houses and blocks of flats that were built in the 1970s in Sweden that are now in need of renovation. Despite the recession, our industry has not been affected too negatively thanks to the Swedish "ROT-avdrag" (tax deduction for home improvement costs) and the low interest rates.

We are also optimistic about the future. We believe that people will continue to invest in their homes and we also believe that new construction will increase, albeit at a slow pace. We also hope

that the strong focus on our industry will lead to even more young people seeing our industry as one that offers great development opportunities and that they will come to us as future members.

Does this sound interesting? If so, you are very welcome to join us!