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Members' Corner – Ida started her own company, right after her exam as an Electrician

As a teenager, she did electrical services in her own company. Today, Ida Norström is 23 years old and runs a seven-person company that installs solar panels, charging stations and smart homes.

Ida Norström Hann had to put her student hat on the shelf before she started the electrical installation company EES, Energy Efficient Solutions AB in Åkers styckebruk in Södermanland. Today she is 23 years old and has six employees. As well as doing traditional electrical jobs, they install solar panels and charging stations as well as smart home systems. Sometimes KNX, usually Plejd.

“I wanted to start a modern electrical installation company and invest in future technology, and it has gone very well. We have lots of work,” says Ida.

Her electrical career started already in eighth grade when it was time for practical training. Her classmates accompanied their parents to work. Sad, Ida thought. But Staffan Schager, the family's neighbour, ran a one-person electrical business, and Ida was happy to go with him to work for two weeks during her work life orientation.

None of them knew that they would start an electrical installation company together a few years later, with Ida Norström as owner and CEO. But it was clear from the start that Ida enjoyed working as an electrician.

“It was great fun, and I started working extra hours at Staffan's on weekends, evenings and holidays,” she says.

In high school, Ida chose the Electricity and Energy Programme, and as part of her education she started the company Elservice UF (Young Entrepreneurship). Running her own business appealed to her.

“I wanted to work for myself, so I called the Swedish Electrical Safety Authority to ask what was required to offer electrical installation services,” she says.

The answer was that she needed to work with a certified electrician. Staffan Schager took her on during his self-monitoring programme ([Sök — Installatörsföretagen](#)). The company Elservice UF became a success, and Ida won silver when The Growth Company of the Year was awarded at the 2017 Swedish Championship for Young Entrepreneurship.

The year after, she got her degree and immediately started working as an electrician under Staffan's supervision. He soon saw that Ida had bigger visions.

“She said I wasn't running the business the way she thought it should be run. I had no structure, no entrepreneurial drive, and I was doing the same traditional electrical work I had always done,” he says.

Ida explained that she wanted to work with future technology, create a clear business idea and hire more employees. She had clearly spotted a gap in the market.

– More and more people were interested in solar panels and buying electric cars, but none of the local electrical contractors were geared up for it. “I think a lot of electricians find it difficult and a bit scary with the new technology needed to transition away from fossil fuels,” she says.

After some bobbing around, the duo decided to make a fresh start with a new name, a new direction, new ways of working. At the end of 2018, they co-founded www.eesolutions.se and started marketing themselves in solar panels, charging infrastructure and smart homes.

Newly born CEO Ida introduced digitised systems for work schedules, time sheets, quotes, orders and invoices. Materials management is also digitised, and everything in the warehouse has barcodes that the electricians scan.

“I automated the administration as much as I can,” says Ida, who doesn't want to get stuck behind a desk.

Nowadays, she spends about half her working hours in the office, which was once the headquarters of the old Åker gunpowder mill. The rest of the time she is out in the field. Wrenching is fun, and there's a lot to do. Business has been good. Almost too good.

“Well, we have a lot of work, so it's long hours. Now I want to hire more electricians,” she says.

She has set up a recruitment agency to find – and preferably headhunt – skilled fitters, an unusual approach in the electrical industry. Another example of innovative thinking is the online booking tool that Ida and Staffan have developed on the company's website. Private customers can choose the time and date for small electrical jobs at home, much like booking an appointment at the hairdresser. But at the moment, all appointments until the end of February are blocked. The electricians are busy with larger projects.

This summer it will be four years since you graduated. What are your old classmates doing?

“Unfortunately, only a few of them work as electricians. I think the training is far too poor, and we were not taught anything about new technologies like solar panels and charging stations. Being able to nail cables between switches and lamps is of course good, but you have to learn about future technology too. We are now working on a collaboration with Thomasgymnasiet,

a school in Strängnäs, where we will provide training in photovoltaic technology and charging infrastructure – both theoretical and practical”, says Ida Norström.

Where will you be in five years?

“By then the company will have a photovoltaic group and an electrical installation group, we will have opened a branch in another part of the country and have between 20 and 25 employees.”

Do you face obstacles or prejudices as a young CEO?

“A big challenge in this business is of course that I’m young and I’m a girl. Sometimes I’m not taken seriously, and people don’t listen to me,” she says.

That’s why Staffan Schager often goes along to the first meetings with potential clients. This has proved to be a good strategy when, for example, housing associations with older men in charge want to install solar panels or charging stations.

“I don’t really need to say much. Ida does the talking, and soon everyone understands that she knows what she’s doing,” says Staffan Schager.

[Read the original article \(in Swedish\).](#)