



*Pekka is a skillful small plane pilot, and has competed in flying events for 21 years.*

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## What would you do if you had all the time in the world?

**Pekka Ketonen retires after a successful career at Vaisala**

Pekka Ketonen, who has acted as Vaisala's Chief Executive Officer since 1992, is looking forward to dedicating more time to his hobbies and personal interests. Pekka has retired from a hectic working life to enjoy all those things that time did not allow before. We discussed what has passed and what is yet to come.

**You have worked for Vaisala for 15 years. How has the company changed during those years?**

So much has happened. Vaisala has changed from a small product development organization into a globally acting business with well-defined business processes. The introduction of a glob-

ally unified business culture and operative structure in Vaisala has improved efficiency. Production has become more demand-oriented and production times are much shorter than before. As product quality and business processes are being mastered rather well, the efforts turn to customer focus and best practices in managing customer relationships.

### **Vaisala's turnover has quadrupled during your tenure. How do you explain this?**

Efforts to improve efficiency have played a major role. Shared resources and business architecture are an example of this. We have continued winning market share in different businesses. For example, when I started in the company, our global market share in radiosonde sales was approximately 30%. Today it is 60%.

No-one could have achieved this alone. This has been a team effort from the start, and I am most grateful to all the dedicated Vaisala people who have made this success possible.

### **What milestones or developments are you most proud of?**

Winning large contracts is of course always very satisfying, especially in fiercely competed markets. Vaisala's good reputation is something to be proud of, and it is earned with hard work. It stems from our "fair play" approach, where we seek to always act in a straightforward and honest way and promise only what we can deliver. It would be foolish to do otherwise - if you treat your customers like a disposable entity, you will quickly run out of them. It is extremely important to take good care of the existing customers so that they feel comfortable coming back to you year after year.

### **How have the customers and their businesses changed over the years?**

Customers are increasingly focusing their efforts on their own core businesses. Therefore they are more and more willing to entrust a bigger share of context activities to their business partners, and expect more comprehensive and better services.

### **What have you learned from your experiences at Vaisala?**

Vaisala has achieved world leadership in many of its businesses. I have learned



*Pekka enjoys spending time at his amateur radio laboratory.*

that this is mainly due to Vaisala's culture for innovation. We have innovated in both product design and conceptual thinking long before innovation became a word on everyone's lips. Cooperation with external partners, such as academic institutes, has been extremely fruitful.

Today's organizations sometimes leave little room for innovation as processes are developed to a fine science and proceed as if on tracks. Therefore it is very important to create other venues for innovation, the kinds that do not dismiss ideas that seem a bit "out there" or do not fit nicely on the process tracks.

### **How would you like to see the company develop in the future?**

I would like to hear and read news about new ventures and business openings. Nowcasting and dense observation networks for accurate short-term local forecasts are especially close to my heart. In order to truly improve the quality of forecasts, different actors need to join forces to cover the costs of comprehensive environmental measurement infrastructure.

Data business is another good candidate, as well as new applications in environmental measurement. Obviously I would very much like to see Vaisala maintain and strengthen its current position as the market leader.

### **What do you intend to do now? What are your passions and hobbies?**

I have developed a real passion for amateur radio over the years. I have collected a considerable amount of equip-

ment from different decades, and built a well-equipped electronics laboratory at my summer cottage. Great treasures can be found in second-hand markets and on the Internet. I collect vintage radios and fix them. I also build antennas - currently there are three 30-meter towers in my yard. We do actually also operate the radios to stay in touch with other enthusiasts. It is such good fun to build and work with your hands again!

Another hobby is piloting small planes. I have been competing in flying events for 21 years on a national level and fared pretty well. I even had my own plane for quite some time. I have now sold it and finished competing, but will continue to fly every now and then.

My wife and I also have a Cairn Terrier called Samu, who keeps us healthy by taking us for walks. In short, I am looking forward to enjoying the simple pleasures of life - all those things I did not have time for while still working. ■

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