

SWEDEN A GLOBAL GAME-CHANGER

The battery-run pacemaker, the three-point seat belt, the modern-day zipper, the electrocardiogram and the ubiquitous Tetra Pak. These are just a few of the Swedish innovations that have improved our daily lives in the past century. Today, that deeply rooted spirit of invention continues to shape the lives of people around the world with new innovations, from the medicines that cure us to the apps we rely on every day.

"Innovation is a notion that has been embedded in Swedish business culture for centuries. Companies such as Ericsson, Volvo, AstraZeneca and Sandvik emerged from this unique and broad culture," says Mikael Damberg, Sweden's Minister of Enterprise and Innovation. "Spotify, Klarna and iZettle – known as born globals – are businesses that were built on recently developed innovations. These companies are now gaining market share across the world."

At the epicenter of this innovation engine is the Stockholm region, with a population of 3.5 million, 1.9 million of whom are employed. The region is home to 28 universities and 365,000 companies, which account for 42% of Sweden's gross domestic product.

More astonishingly, the region has seen consistent growth every quarter for the past fifteen years, a testament to the strength of the region's economy and the environment that nurtures innovative companies and creative entrepreneurs.

"Our priority is to work with the vibrant start-up scene. We are very active in bringing the community together and helping them collaborate and gain access to investment," says Olle Zetterberg, CEO of Stockholm Business Region, the city's official investment promotion agency.

"Sweden is ranked number two after Silicon Valley as a breeding ground for successful start-ups. We would like to see a lot more investors of all sizes come to Sweden. I would also like to see the high-tech entrepreneurial spirit of Sweden being cross-merged with international companies," says Business Sweden CEO Ylva Berg, who sees ICT's convergence with all industries as a key area for growth.

Meanwhile, Stockholm's vibrancy and the ingenuity of its residents have spread into entertainment and leisure. The city's highly demanding inhabitants continuously crave new and interesting things to do. Giving rise

to creativity in every form, from trendsetting musicians to creators of gaming apps like Candy Crush and Minecraft, the country is changing how people pass their time.

Stockholm-based Fox in a Box, which has revolutionized the escape-room game genre, is looking to capitalize on its tremendous local success and export its innovative approach around the world.

As escape-room games gain more global fans, Fox in a Box recently partnered with Red Bull for the World Championships next year.

But Sweden's global impact is not limited to the capital's tech start-ups and industry giants. Small entrepreneurial companies are also making a huge impact.

Bardexa Norden, a family-run company based in Alingsås, produces customized first-aid kits and other emergency medical response equipment for public and private organizations all over the world. It recently provisioned disaster-relief packages to Haiti in the wake of Hurricane Matthew.

As the world gets smaller and global business grows more integrated, Sweden's little-known impact on the world is sure to become more prominent in the future. ■

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Real-life Escape Games Redefine Entertainment

Imagination. Creativity. Adrenaline. Adventure. These are just some of the elements of the genuine rush that many gamers equate with fun.

Growing more popular globally, escape-room games require players to free themselves from captive surroundings using their creativity and problem-solving skills.

Opened in 2013, Fox in a Box introduced Europe to this innovative and exciting genre of entertainment. "You pay us to lock you up in a room," CEO Bob Melkus simplifies the concept.

Fox in a Box, a name inspired by one of nature's most cunning animals, continues to redefine the genre by creating more meaningful and mission-based challenges, all anchored in well-integrated stories and tailored for small, intimate groups.

"We set up our games for between two and six players and incorporate a story. At Fox in a Box, you play only with your

friends, family or colleagues, not with strangers. This only enhances the experience," Melkus explains.

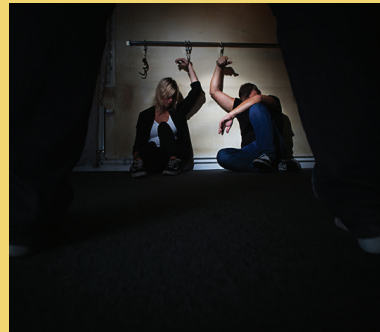
Aside from local and visiting enthusiasts, Fox in a Box also markets itself to companies looking for fun and effective team-building exercises. Based on the many customer reviews, it has succeeded

tremendously.

Today, the business has expanded to 28 locations worldwide, including the United States, India and Jordan, thanks to a widening network of franchise partners, many of whom discovered the genre as visiting players.

"We want to bring this beautiful game to the world with partners who are passionate about doing something fun. We are now looking to expand not only through franchising, but also to share our vast experience through business-to-business consulting," Melkus says. ■

→ foxinabox.se/franchise



Escape-room games: providing a new key to having fun