

The story of Electrolux

More than 90 years have passed since the company was established by Axel Wenner-Gren. This visionary understood how to develop products for the future. Axel Wenner-Gren underlined Passion for Innovation, Customer Obsession, and Drive for Results, and these values still comprise the foundation for Electrolux operations.

Passion for Innovation

"This task is not an easy one, but one that will transform homes around the world," Axel Wenner-Gren said to the team of engineers and scientists sitting before him. Next to Wenner-Gren was a basic prototype of an absorption refrigerator created by two young engineers, Baltzar von Platen and Carl Munters, for a University degree project.



Wenner-Gren's decision to acquire the patent for the absorption refrigeration technology, which used electricity, gas or kerosene to circulate water and safely turn heat into cold, was his first step toward diversifying Electrolux. However, it was a bold step, because although Electrolux had secured its spot as the world leader in vacuum cleaners, absorption refrigeration was a concept that was far from fully developed.

"We now know that you can create cold through heat using water," Wenner-Gren said to the engineers. "But a problem with this technology is that not every household has running water and every household from China to America will need a refrigeration machine." Wenner-Gren paused, and looked at each member of the team. "That is why we are going to cool with air, because we all have access to that."

ELECTROLUX TODAY

One of the main consumer problems associated with freezers, extensive research shows, is defrosting. Electrolux Glacier is, like most of the Group's freezers, frost-free. It is also the first freezer to combine European standard dimensions with a built-in ice-maker. The user always has access to ice-cubes without having to remember to fill the container with water.

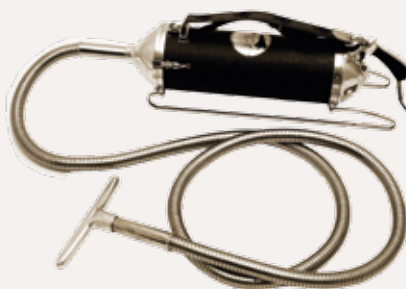


Insight into consumer behavior is the basis for all product development within the Group. Electrolux developed Ergorapido, a cordless vacuum cleaner, for people who want the vacuum cleaner easily available. Sleek in design and lightweight, Ergorapido is too good looking not to be left in sight.



Customer Obsession

Axel Wenner-Gren unfolded a sketch made during a board room meeting for a team of Electrolux engineers to examine. On the page was a drawing of a vacuum cleaner. Rather than standing like the traditionally shaped bucket,



however, Wenner-Gren had sketched the vacuum cleaner laying on its side, with rounded edges and sled-like runners attached to the base. "This will be our next model," Wenner-Gren explained.

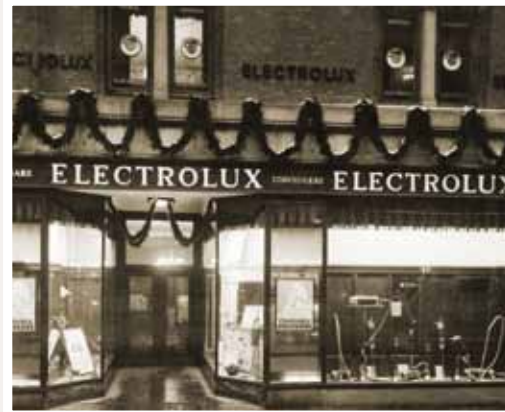
The idea had come to him a few days earlier when a young salesman visited his office to report that a customer was having a difficult time with her vacuum cleaner. The lady had told the salesman that her vacuum cleaned well, but that she found it tiring to lift and carry the machine throughout the house.

From that moment, Wenner-Gren was resolute on making the vacuum cleaner move easier.



"The Electrolux Spirit acknowledges no obstacles and submits to no defeats. It is a combination of enthusiasm, loyalty, aggressiveness and belief, which is inspired by confidence in our organization and products, and faith in our success and our future."

Axel Wenner-Gren, founder



Drive for Results

Axel Wenner-Gren barely noticed the stores as he walked down the biggest shopping street in Vienna. The year was 1908, Wenner-Gren was on his way to a meeting and his broad steps and freshly pressed suit signalled a sense of purpose. That is, however, until something caught his eye, brought him to a stop, and pulled him to a shop window for a closer look.



Propped on display was a machine that must have weighed 20 kilos with a price tag that could suck up the savings of almost any wealthy household. Window shoppers either smirked at or ignored the industrial display, but Wenner-Gren couldn't take his eyes away from it. In his mind, the machine became smaller, lighter, sleeker and less expensive. He envisioned women gliding small vacuum cleaners around their houses. He would bring convenience to houses around the world.

Importance of Design

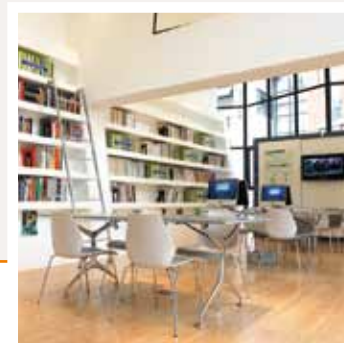
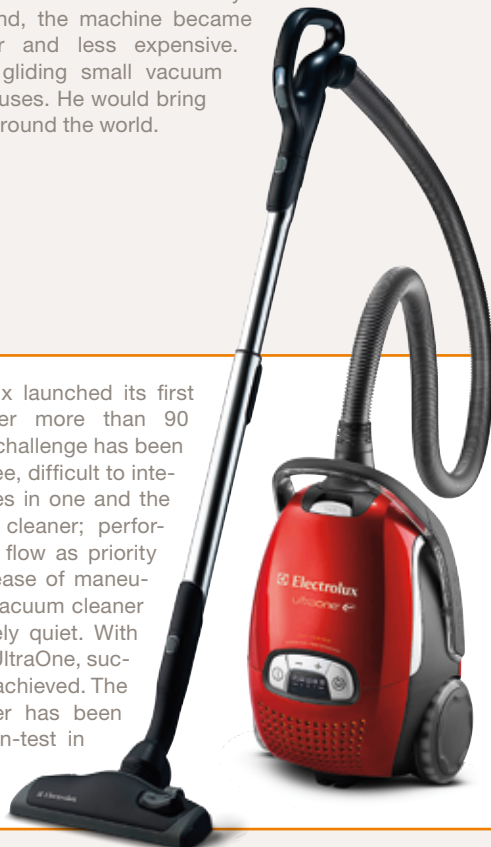
Axel Wenner-Gren had visited Electrolux showrooms in around thirty countries, and was always amazed by how captivated people would get, even though nothing was actually for sale. The atmosphere in the showroom on this day was different, however. The crowd was still, hushed, and gathered around the latest addition to the Electrolux collection: the Model XXX vacuum cleaner.

The Model XXX shaped by the internationally renowned industrial designer Lurelle Guild, was one of the first vacuum cleaners in history to be created with aesthetic appeal in mind. As cars and trains had become streamlined, Wenner-Gren saw the value in bringing a similar sleek elegance to home appliances. In fact, he had personally tracked down the foremost industrial designers, so that life for Electrolux customers would not only be cleaner and easier, but also more attractive.

Looking at the Model XXX vacuum cleaner, Wenner-Gren said to Guild: "You have given Electrolux products attractive design and perfect form."

ELECTROLUX TODAY

Since Electrolux launched its first vacuum cleaner more than 90 years ago, the challenge has been to combine three, difficult to integrate, properties in one and the same vacuum cleaner; performance and air flow as priority together with ease of maneuverability in a vacuum cleaner that is extremely quiet. With the Electrolux UltraOne, success has been achieved. The vacuum cleaner has been selected best-in-test in various countries.



The Electrolux Design Center in Shanghai, China, was inaugurated in 2007. The Design Center hosts an exhibition space, flexible meeting areas, and a functional working kitchen with exclusive Electrolux appliances featuring attractive design.

A key element of the Center is the Design Library, which offers thousands of books and magazines on design. The Design Library is an initiative taken by the Italian Association of Industrial Designers (ADI). This cooperation establishes the one and only ADI Design Library located outside Milan.