

PKC history in short

Pohjolan Kaapeli's wiring harness factory 1969-1980

Pohjolan Kaapeli, Nokia's subsidiary in Oulu, founded a wiring harness factory in Kempele in 1969. In its first year of operations, the factory employed over 40 people. The company embarked on a completely new challenge with wiring harness manufacturing, as a subcontractor of the car factory in Uusikaupunki that was founded in the same year.

The company's success has always rested on three cornerstones: persistent work, knowhow and internationalisation. As early as the mid-1970s, the company's clients included Scania and Volvo, and successful cooperation with them still continues today. Other significant clients in the 1970s included Kone and IBM.

In the beginning, Pohjolan Kaapeli was strongly personified with Industrial Counselor Matti Pesola who worked as the company's President and CEO from 1966 until 1981. Matti Pesola was an influential figure in the society who can be accredited with the growth of the Kempele factory in the 1970s. By the end of 1979, the Kempele factory employed 430 factory and 35 clerical workers.

Merger with Nokia 1981-1990

The Kempele wiring harness factory became more closely associated with Nokia Corporation in 1981, when Pohjolan Kaapeli merged with Nokia Kaapeli. The wiring harness factory in Kempele remained a very independent unit that in many ways had a different role in terms of its production compared with the rest of the group.

Trade with the Soviet Union was extremely important for Finland in the 1970s and 1980s, which was also evident in the exports of Nokia Corporation. The Kempele factory failed to gain a market share in the Soviet Union, because the Russians at the time wanted to manufacture their wiring harnesses themselves. Subsequently, however, the factory became strongly involved with the new Russian trade after the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

The Kempele factory was at its largest in 1988, employing over 900 people. The incorporation of the company in 1990 meant that it was renamed as Nokia Johdinsarjat Oy.

The international automotive industry was faced with difficulties in the late 1980s, and the downturn continued long into the 1990s. Nokia Johdinsarjat Oy was equally affected and was forced to cut its workforce by 70 percent in 1990–1994, reducing the total number of employees to some 200 people.

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The first listed company in northern Finland 1990-2000

Nokia Johdinsarjat underwent long negotiations with General Motors in the early 1990s, but the talks never led to actual production. The reason was that the Finnish production costs were too high. To maximise cost-efficiency, subcontracting in Estonia and Russia began during 1990–1992. Nokia Johdinsarjat was a pioneering company in this.

In 1994, Nokia made the decision to focus on telecommunications, resulting in the sale of Nokia Johdinsarjat Oy. At the same time, the manufacturing of wire harnesses for cars was discontinued. Manufacturing of wire harnesses for commercial vehicles became the main business sector.

In June 1994, PK Cables carried out one of the largest management buy-outs in Finland when the acting management acquired the wire harness business operations of Nokia Johdinsarjat Oy. The business was incorporated into PK Cables, and its founders were Tom Hakalax, Risto Luostarinen, Leo Ojala, Hannu Rahkamaa, Veikko Ravaska and Timo Saukkonen, who collectively owned 38.1 percent of the company. Tom Hakalax, formerly in charge of Nokia Johdinsarjat, was named President and CEO of PK Cables.

In 1996, the company took a turn towards a very bright future after several years of gloom. The upward trend and the pressures of internationalisation led to the company being listed on the Helsinki Stock Exchange. PK Cables Oyj was listed in the spring of 1997, the first company founded in northern Finland to do so.

Following Tom Hakalax's move to the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors in 1998, Timo J. Niemi was nominated as the new President and CEO. He held the position from 1998 to 2000.

The international growth of PKC Group continued in 1998 when its subsidiary PK Cables do Brasil began its operations. The acquisition in 1999 of Oy Raahen TH-Elektroniikka Ab (currently PKC Electronics Oy) in Raahe, Finland, was also a significant expansion

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Period of strong international growth 2000-2008

Since 2000, the company has operated under the name PKC Group Oyj. In the same year, the Kempele factory and the head office of the group moved to Kempele by Lentokentäntie Road, and the subsidiary PK Cables Nederland B.V. began its operations.

Tom Hakalax returned as the President and CEO for 2001 and 2002. His mission during his second stint as the CEO was to refocus the company's operations on its core area of expertise.

The period under the leadership of Hakalax's successor, Harri Suutari, between 2002 and 2005 was marked with strong growth, the rationalisation of operations and strong internationalisation.

The organisation revamp in 2002 saw the establishment of five separate business units with profit accountability within the group. Three of the business units manufacture wiring harnesses for vehicles. The fourth business unit produces solutions for the cabling of electronic appliances, and the fifth unit provides R&D and contract manufacturing services for the electronics industry. Following the revamp, the group has two core sectors: wiring harnesses and electronics.

At the start of the 2000s, subcontracting in Russia and Estonia has played a significant role in the growth of PKC Group. With the acquisition of the Estonian AS AJT Harju Elekter (currently PKC Eesti AS) in 2002, PKC Group became the owner of the Haapsalu and Keila units. PKC has invested strongly into the development of PKC Eesti AS.

The Carhatec Group became part of PKC Group in 2003. In addition to its units in Finland, Carhatec owned a factory in Kostomuksha, Russia. The Kostomuksha unit underwent significant developments at the start of the 2000s.

In 2004, PKC Group split its electronics operations into a subgroup and established a unit in the United States. A decision was taken in the following year to establish a subsidiary in China, where production started in 2006. Harri Suutari transferred to the Board of PKC in 2005, and Mika Kari was appointed the CEO of the company.

PKC expanded to North America by acquiring the Electro Canada companies with units in Canada, USA and Mexico. Through the acquisition, PKC Group became the main global supplier of wiring harnesses to Bombardier Recreational Products.

The PKC Group streamlined the group's management system by revising the management teams of the group and the business segments and by adopting a matrix organisation.

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New significant market segments and customer accounts 2008-

Harri Suutari returned as the CEO of PKC in 2008. His management period included major corporate acquisitions, and the group expanded significantly to new client and market areas.

At the end of 2008, PKC acquired the wiring harness business operations of MAN Nutzfahrzeuge AG from MAN Star Trucks & Buses Sp. z.o.o. in Poland. PKC's Polish subsidiary, PKC Group Poland Sp. z.o.o., continued the wiring harness operations. The acquisition brought a significant addition to PKC's customer base when MAN Group became PKC's customer on the basis of a long-term supplier agreement signed at the same time.

In 2009, PKC reorganised its wiring harness operations into a separate subgroup. The aim was to streamline the operations and to improve the company's opportunities for continuous development.

In the spring 2011, the subsidiaries of PKC Group purchased all shares in the Segu companies operating in Germany, Poland and Ukraine under a share purchase agreement signed by PKC Group. The Segu companies manufacture and develop wiring harnesses for the automotive and construction equipment sectors. The corporate acquisition continued the acquisition made in Poland just over two years ago. The Segu companies and the Polish unit of PKC formed a business unit serving the Western European markets with annual sales of about one hundred million euros and about 2,500 employees

. In addition to interesting new OEM clients, the acquisition of the Segu companies helped PKC to establish a strategically important foothold in Germany, bring benefits due to its size and increase the company's corporate credibility.

In the autumn of 2011, PKC Group signed an important agreement for the purchase of the AEES companies from funds controlled by Platinum Equity. AEES was one of the leading North American wiring harness manufacturers for heavy and medium duty trucks, and it also had a significant share in light vehicle wiring harnesses. AEES also provided components and wires to other contract manufacturers.

The largest clients of AEES in the truck industry included Daimler Trucks North America, Navistar and PACCAR. Important clients in the light vehicle sector included Continental, Ford, General Motors, Harley Davidson and Lear.

AEES operated in the USA, Mexico, Brazil and Ireland and had about 13,800 employees at the end of June 2011. By combining AEES, a major North American truck wiring harness manufacturer, with PKC, one of the leading wiring harness manufacturers for trucks in Europe and South America, a leading global truck wiring harness supplier was created.

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Following the completion of the transaction, the combined entity supplies wiring harnesses to the six leading heavy and medium duty truck manufacturers in the West.

The transaction also opened the doors for PKC as a supplier in the North American and Brazilian car manufacturing markets. The acquisition thus provided PKC access to new customer segments as well as an opportunity to expand its product and service selection through, among others, the manufacture of components and wires.

Harri Suutari returned to the Board of PKC in 2012, and Matti Hyytiäinen was appointed CEO of the company.

The headquarters of PKC Group Oyj moved to Helsinki in the same year, and the acting management at the time transferred to the capital region.

The headquarters of the wiring systems and electronics operations remained in their respective operating regions in Kempele and Raahe.