

Niklas Thulin - new Head of Digital at Aareon Nordic

What will be your primary task during your first month at Aareon?

- My first objective will be to get to know our customers and their industry. I want to know what our customers face. Their challenges and opportunities. That's what drives me. If my journey began somewhere else, that would be wrong.

"It's all about placing digital development on the agenda and seeing the potential"

Who are you, and what have you done before?

You could say I'm a hybrid – half economics and half IT. This has given me a good understanding of what development involves, the need for interaction and insight into the importance of measurability for business.

After having done my share of coding as a solution architect, I've mainly been working with automation and digital strategy in various roles. As a CTO (Chief Technical Officer), and most recently as SVP (Senior Vice President) at Enfo, where I've worked for ten years on a number of digital initiatives for various industries. So the property industry isn't entirely new to me: I've worked with a number of major corporations, both property owners and service management stakeholders.

Head of Digital is a new role at Aareon – what will your job be?

For our customers, I'll be someone who can help them to drive their digital development forward. It's all about placing digital development on the agenda and working together to see what potential is available. I want our customers to entrust their digital agendas to us, and I want Aareon to be a natural part of the journey they have to make.

In purely practical terms, this may involve us helping customers to find the right digital products among our ready-made selection or arranging workshops where we look at what's happening on the market and assess the maturity of the customer's situation and their opportunities and ability to digitise. Then we define an objective for this, giving us a digital strategy.

The property industry is relatively new to you – what is your view of the opportunities and challenges presented by the industry?

I see that there's a steep learning curve. I have to learn this industry, and I feel a sense of humbleness and respect for this task. I have to understand the day-to-day work of our customers so that I can help them.

In this regard, I think Aareon – which is such a huge company that's worked with so many property industry stakeholders – has the ability and the opportunity to come up with effective solutions. We already have a robust product portfolio of digital solutions and the desire to build on that together with our customers. The property and IT know-how shared by Aareon and our customers can give quick results and provide opportunities for innovation.

What's your vision for Aareon – have you thought about where you want to be in a year's time?

We should be able to find a working method and offer expertise to drive the digital process forward, more quickly than our customers would be capable of achieving on their own. I believe this is an extremely important aspect that I want to bring with me to Aareon and that I hope we'll have settled into within a year.

Finally, the outside world – done any scouting?

When we talk about digitisation, there's a risk that it'll seem too difficult and too far away. I believe we can start off on a really basic level – the step towards adding value from digitisation doesn't need to be all that huge. For the property industry, I believe it could involve something as simple as effective cooperation. A property manager should be able to interact easily with their tenants. The property manager and tenants should also be able to interact jointly with an electrician.

After that, it's all about finding and automating the situations where we shouldn't need to interact.