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GNT is now ALSO

Europe's fourth-biggest and Finland's leading wholesaler has strong belief in the Nordic markets.

*GNT, the leading service and logistics company in information technology and consumer electronics in Finland and the Nordic area, will adopt the name ALSO for its operations in the Nordic region and the Baltic States. The change will take effect on 10 April 2010. According to **Maija Strandberg**, Managing Director of ALSO Finland and member of the ALSO Group's management board, the group sees Northern Europe as an innovative area and a growing market.*

- When people from Central and Northern Europe join forces to develop a single company, it is a good and dynamic mixture of different cultures.

ALSO Finland is part of the ALSO Group, which is the fourth biggest distributor in Europe. The group is listed on the Swiss stock exchange and operates in Switzerland, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Norway. The head office of the Finland operations is located in Tampere.

- Part of our strategy is to remain a strong local focus. However, European-wide cooperation provides us with more resources and opportunities in such areas as purchasing, vendor cooperations and the development of group wide operations. Our target is to provide our customers with right services at right times, with the highest degree of innovation.

Award-winning expertise

For the second year running, ALSO Finland was chosen as the Northern European Distributor of the Year. The choice was made at the EMEA Channel Academy event in Monaco in late February. The choice was made by European leaders of information technology and consumer electronics companies in an impartial vote.

- The fact that we have received this respected award shows that our partners see us also as a development partner of their business. This is also one of our aims. We also aim to provide our reseller customers with a partnership that sets their own business in motion, not only by logistical means but also by means of sales, marketing and risk-management solutions.

ALSO Group has a strong position in Northern Europe. It is the market leader in its field in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and shares the leading position in Norway.

The sector has already bottomed out

According to Strandberg, the demand in information technology and consumer electronics has already bottomed out.

- I believe that the year 2010 will be a year of growth. The first half of the year may still be challenging. Willingness to invest has recovered in the Finnish market. There was already recovery in consumer demand during the last quarter of 2009 and all signs are that the trend will continue.

According to Strandberg, the economic downturn strengthened the role of wholesalers.

- In fact, it may even have made traditional wholesaling more important. Our customers forecasting uncertainties even further lowered the inventories carried inside the channel. End of 2009 we were able to respond to demand changes and to ensure that our customers received goods when they needed them.

Strandberg expects that in 2010 cloud solutions will be a growth area in the corporate sector and that more and more companies will replace desktop computers with laptops. On the consumer markets, demand for computers will increase as more and more household members want to have their own computers. Households will also buy larger television sets and more television-related electronics, such as blu-ray players and home theatres.

- It is difficult to predict how prices will develop. There are signs, however, that as a result of currency fluctuations there is pressure on prices in both consumer and corporate sectors. The sector and whole distribution channel has suffered from price erosion for years, explains Strandberg.

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ALSO is one of the European companies in the wholesale and logistics sector for information technology and consumer electronics (ICE). ALSO is active in 7 European countries and the market leader in the Nordic region. The group operates in seven European countries: Switzerland, Germany, Finland, Norway, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In 2009 ALSO had a turnover of CHF 4.4 billion and employed 1,490 people. The group has its head office in Hergiswil, Switzerland. The company was established in 1984 and has been listed on the Swiss stock exchange since 1986. The Schindler Group is the main shareholder in the company. The head office of the company's Finnish operations is located in Tampere and in Finland it also has offices in Helsinki, Turku and Oulu.