

ECCO - A Brief Overview

(excerpted from <http://www.ecco.com/gb/en/aboutus/index.jsp>)

Commitment

Focus and challenges concerning environmental considerations and employee relations are continuously increasing. It is an important area which in the future will fill up more and more in everyday life in ECCO - in headquarter, in sales subsidiaries and in our production units. It applies both ECCO's own factories and at our suppliers. It is a process that never ends. Many people in the ECCO Group are on a daily basis involved and committed in implementing and anchoring our global programme about environment, health and safety. Everybody has the same target: To ensure that ECCO at all times takes the environment into consideration when leather and shoes are manufactured. It takes place in a global community – across the national differences that naturally exist. For a global company like ECCO, Danish roots are an obligation - also in terms of the environment and our employees.

Code of Conduct

1. ECCO is a guest in each of the countries in which it operates and will as such respect the culture of the individual country.
2. ECCO supports, respects and has a proactive approach to the protection of internationally defined human rights.
3. ECCO respects equal opportunities and supports abolishment of discrimination in the workplace.
4. ECCO respects a person's right to freedom of religion.
5. ECCO respects the right to freedom of association.
6. ECCO wishes employees to have access to a workplace free of harassment or abuse and condemns any forms of compulsory labour.
7. ECCO supports the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
8. ECCO provides training, education and further development of human resources on all levels.
9. ECCO aims to be a leading company in the area of environment, health and safety and aims to promote sustainable development.

10. ECCO wishes to ensure that the conduct of its business as an absolute minimum always complies with all relevant laws and regulations.

Environment, Health & Safety

ECCO gives high priority to environmental considerations, healthy and safe conditions to our employees. We are focused on optimising our production methods and on developing new and more environmentally friendly processes. We involve our employees in the Company's environmental, health and safety activities, and each individual employee is responsible for making proactive efforts to continually improve environmental, health and safety conditions. This focus is also reflected in the Group's in-house course 'From cow to shoe' which contains a presentation of ECCO's environmental, health and safety initiatives. This part of the course often provokes a lively and constructive discussion and excites many ideas for future activities based on our employees' extensive experience.

Mission

At ECCO we are passionate shoemakers. We constantly aim to defy conventions. We strive to surprise, and we want to develop innovative designs and products – without having to compromise on the quality and comfort concept that lies at the heart of every ECCO product and indeed of our company. We do not aim to be the biggest – we just want to be the best. We aim to generate profitable growth so that we can maintain the greatest possible degree of financial independence and the financial strength to pursue our long-term targets on our own terms. ECCO's results are created by people who believe and are confident that they will shape the future by doing things differently. This approach was an important part of Karl Toosbuy's business philosophy and outlook on life, and it has characterised ECCO since our company's inception. Staying connected with the best feats of our past will help shape our future.

Business

ECCO has chosen to operate in all segments of the footwear market and in selected segments of the sports shoe market in which ECCO's products can play a leading role, for example Golf , Outdoor, Walking and Running. The core of ECCO's product strategy is and will continue to be products based on direct injected technology. This technology is ECCO's distinctive mark, and together with innovative strength and functionality it represents the philosophy behind ECCO. The large raise in sales over the years proves that the combination of these competencies is very popular with our customers. New, exciting products increase attention and sales and contribute to extending the limits of the technical capabilities of our factories. ECCO masters the production technology better than anyone, and the integral partnership between design, product development, brand development, tanneries, production and distribution is one of the keys to understanding ECCO's business philosophy and results.

Technology

ECCO is a pioneer within the special direct injection technology where the upper part of the shoe, the upper, is placed in a mould before the sole is sprayed directly onto the upper part under high pressure. This unique technology, which guarantees unrivalled lightness, flexibility and quality in the individual shoe, is ECCO's hallmark, and it will form the basis of new and innovative designs in the future as well. ECCO's own control of the use and development of the technology ensures that new materials and production processes can be implemented quickly and efficiently anywhere in our production.

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A Bit About ECCO Company History

(excerpted from <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Ecco-Sko-AS-Company-History.html>)

Key Dates:

1963: Karl Toosbury establishes Eccolet Sko to manufacture shoes in Bredebro, Denmark.

1966: The company begins exporting to Scandinavian markets.

1972: A successful line of clogs is launched.

1974: A production facility in Brazil is opened.

1981: The company introduces Free design, its first million-seller, and enters the Japanese market through a production license to Japanese Achilles Corporation.

1983: The first franchised Ecco retail store is opened.

1990: A full scale entry into the United States begins with the opening of a subsidiary in Massachusetts.

1993: A joint-venture manufacturing and distribution subsidiary in Thailand is created.

1999: The company changes its name to Ecco Sko.

2001: Receptor sports shoe line is launched.

2004: Ecco Sko signs a strategic alliance with sportswear maker Newline and begins construction on a new production site in India.

ECCO was founded in 1963 when Birte and Karl Toosbuy sold all their possessions and moved to the rural village of Bredebro in Denmark. From its humble origins as a single factory building ECCO soon began to grow - fuelled by a pioneering spirit and a determination to make shoes that would follow the foot instead of the other way round.

Always looking to the future, ECCO led the way - fusing innovative technology, European design and traditional craftsmanship with a profound understanding of the human foot and how it works. Before long ECCO was moving into new markets around the world and putting up new factories in Bredebro. The company produced stunning sellers such as the shoe called Joke, which was launched in 1978 and further refining its innovative direct injection method for creating flexible durable soles. ECCO was now known around the world for delivering unparalleled comfort in footwear.

The 1980s and 90s saw dramatic changes in ECCO collections including kids' footwear and dress shoes. The company also led the way in using high-tech fabrics by using GORETEX membranes for enhancing a shoe's breathability and resistance to the elements. A new performance line mixed comfort and durability with performance enhancing properties to let people walk or run or climb almost anywhere.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century ECCO has never been more ambitious. Bucking convention with a stunning line of high fashion top performing golf shoes. Today ECCO is a truly international company with headquarters in Bredebro and tanneries and production facilities in Portugal, Indonesia, Thailand, Holland, Slovakia and China - and sales in countries the world over.

When Karl Toosbuy passed away in 2004, ECCO was handed over to Hanni Toosbuy Kasprzak who continued on the supervisory board while her husband, Dieter Kasprzak, took over as president on the management board. Today, Karl Toosbuy would still be proud of the care put into each one of the millions of ECCO shoes that step out each year onto the streets of the world, just as proud as he was of the first pair he handled in his initial factory in Bredebro.