



Recently, Automotive IQ Editor, Will Hornick, sat down with **Karin Broman**, Co-operative Director of Sentient, to discuss the future outlook of steering systems and how innovations in this area will result in a safer driving experience for end users.



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**What are the biggest challenges to your industry at the moment and moving forward?**

**Karin Broman:** It's interesting that you ask the question of challenges because in our world we primarily see more opportunities than we see challenges. But speaking of challenges, on a general level, the industry and especially the automotive manufacturers across the world set the platform for our industry outlook, and what we are now seeing is that the third quarter was recorded with poorer results than forecasted for some OEMs. The first quarter of next year is forecasted also to be extremely tough. As a consequence of these tough market outlooks and the automotive manufacturers we will see increased pressure on price reductions and volumes may come down even further. So that will sort of set the forum for the various challenges we have ahead of us. At Sentient, we see a challenge in coping with, efficiently, communicating the advantages of our products and technology in some respect due to that our products represent some news in terms of technological conceptual solution. Communicating excellent steering feel is indeed a challenge! We just talked about this here at the conference this morning. So we have a challenge when it comes to marketing our own products and technology.

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**Do you mind speaking a bit how you are specifically working to overcome these challenges, in how you're framing yourselves and marketing your new innovation?**

**Karin Broman:** Well, in general, to start from my first mentioned challenge. We need to make sure that we keep our fixed cost level as low as possible. That will allow us some flexibility and one way of doing that is to ensure we have a flexible workforce. So we work a lot through consultants, and through partner firms. That's one way to handle flexibility if there's going to be additional pressure, postponement of orders etc. As for the other challenge of communicating and marketing our own products and our technology, going to this conference is one way of addressing that challenge. We will see in the near future that the launch of OEM manufacturers' products will result in the people here putting two and two together and realizing, ah, this must be Sentient's solutions installed in that vehicle. In addition, we work in a systematic approach with addressing the marketing issues. It is possible to pinpoint the community in this technical area and who to address in order to spread the word around about your company and your products.

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**And you're very much showing by doing, in that sense. Could you maybe discuss the future potential of EPS in terms of the actual driver experience and driver safety, something more on the ground level?**

**Karin Broman:** The way we see it - and especially when addressing the OEM heavy-goods vehicle manufacturers - they are going to see a commercial upside from working with implementing our safety functions. They will see that their end-customers, the drivers suffer fewer injuries as a consequence of a more comfortable steering feel. We will probably see less downtime from heavy vehicles because if you're not ending up in a ditch and there are no accidents and the driver's not ill then you can utilize the capacity of the truck more efficiently. So those will be some of the upsides for our customers and, needless to say, most importantly, the driver himself or herself will enjoy a more comfortable, a more secure driving experience and that's our ultimate goal because the focus of our technology is actually based on drivers' intent as well as the driver's safety and comfort.

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**We're out of time, but is there one thing you'll take away from this conference or still hope to take away from this conference before the end of it?**

**Karin Broman:** I made a couple of reflections on this conference that we still have a lot of challenges ahead of us, bringing on board the ISO 26262 and being fully compliant with AUTOSAR. That will represent challenges for us. In the course of doing that, we need to bring on board our customers as well. This will work to the advantage of the end-customer and this will allow and secure that we will in the end provide safer functions to the good and to the benefit of the end-customer. And what we're also looking at today are things that we need to bring on board that will be state of the art tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. There's no way of saying we will not do that. I think we've heard some really interesting presentations. We heard that there are different viewpoints; different perspectives which show the steering feel area is very complex. I think this event represents a good arena to have these kinds of discussions. I think everybody's going to go home feeling that they met with very interesting people who represent different ideas, different approaches, different perspectives and that we came here from different parts of the world to share these ideas, to look at the different perspectives and to get further understanding. And in that way it's been very fruitful up to now.

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**I'm glad to hear that. Thank you very much for your time and we hope to see you at the next one.**

**Karin Broman:** It was nice talking to you and thank you very much.