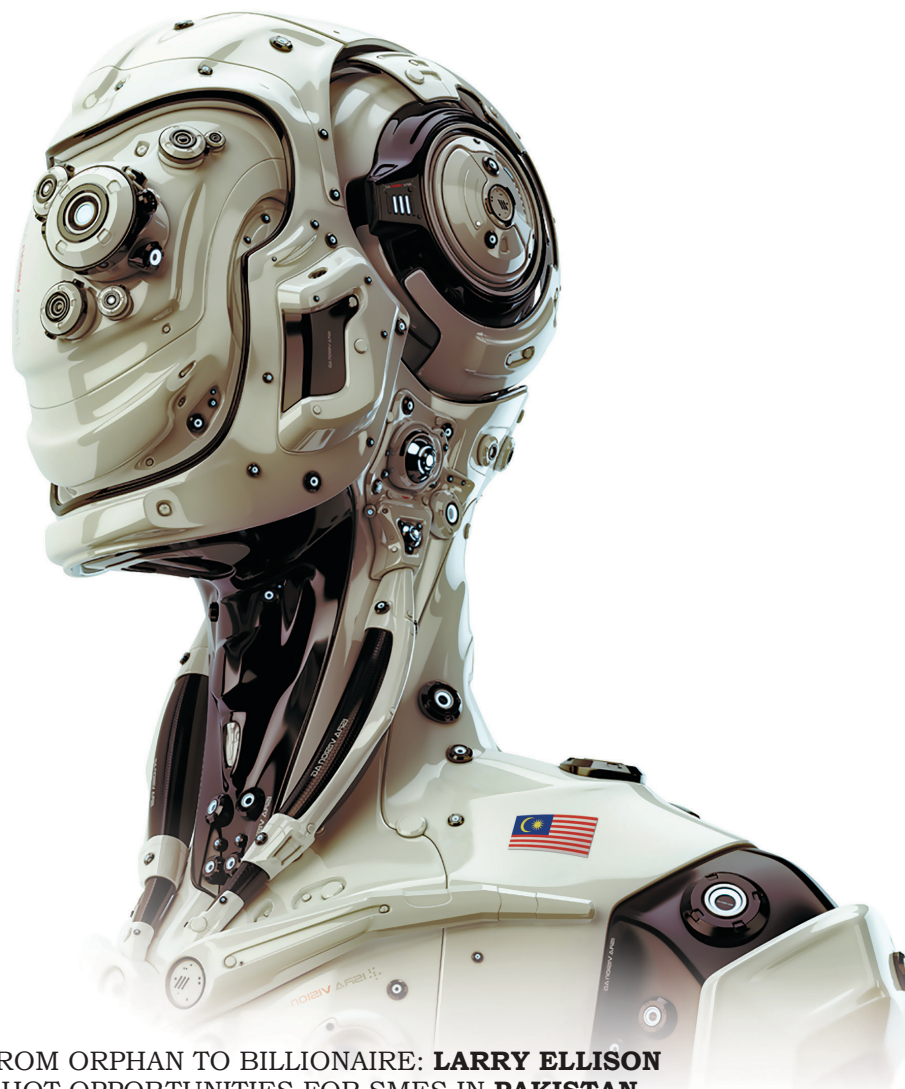


ASIA'S FASTEST GROWING BUSINESS MAGAZINE

# SME

## THE ANIMATION INDUSTRY AN INSIDER'S GUIDE



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- FROM ORPHAN TO BILLIONAIRE: **LARRY ELLISON**
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## &gt; FUTURE SNAPSHOTS &lt; with Anne Lise Kjaer



## PRACTICAL LESSONS FOR BUSINESSES FROM THE NORDIC MODEL

Is Scandinavia the new global role model for business? Certainly, many economists and governments are currently examining what the Nordics do differently. As a Copenhagen Goodwill Ambassador and native Dane myself, I believe, that right now, my 'home turf' is a great place to look for future inspiration.

### WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

Some people will say that the future has already started in the Nordic countries. Indeed, it has become a global role model for key areas that mark out a resilient and healthy economy: innovation, competitiveness, social inclusion and happiness. There is also the emergence of a 'cultural renaissance' – or rather, there is as far as global commentators are concerned – with high-profile exports of Scandi culture, architecture and design. People are also examining how society and business operate – in particular social welfare provision and work/life balance – to produce what economists and social analysts now describe as the 'Nordic model'. As an insider, I can say with confidence that Scandinavia has always been doing things its own way. It's just that now, in the face of global economic turbulence, others are looking at us a bit more closely.

### 'GETTING TO DENMARK'

While for many years Scandinavia's most high profile exports were ABBA and IKEA, the region has been quietly building world-class companies and ideas for decades. It is a world leader in energy production, in shipping with Maersk, in toys with Lego, in beverages with Carlsberg. We have always

been technology innovators – currently accounting for a third of the world's wind-turbine production and our pioneering sustainable and 'eco-city' concepts have been exported as far afield as South Africa and China. We were ahead of the curve in introducing the mobile network in the 1980s and the GSM standard in the '90s, and have contributed Linux, Skype, Spotify and Angry Birds to the tech revolution. Success has become such a hallmark that the World Bank coined the term 'getting to Denmark' to describe the processes of successful modernisation. A report in the Economist early this year noted that: "the main lesson the Nordics can teach the world is not ideological, but practical." To me, that's a key phrase. The highly 'practical' and 'democratic' approach – in a region isolated by its geography and rural traditions – is to recognise that everything local will become a priority in the future. We know that focusing on regional economic ecosystems builds self-sufficiency, enabling both

local community welfare and economic growth that competes internationally.

### OPEN SOURCE, OPEN MINDS

'Access' and 'open source' are also 'practical' innovations that have assisted Scandi strength. For instance, pop-up cultural events are commonplace in Finland and Denmark scores second on the e-intensity index, which measures the Internet's positive impact on business and society. Currently the Nordics are updating their version of capitalism to deal with a diverse world. In doing so, they have unleashed a huge amount of creativity. Nordic entrepreneurs are expressing their business and cultural confidence in a way not seen since the early 20th century – with everyone from architects and designers to restaurateurs and authors becoming international hot property. And in case it sounds by this point as if I'm immodest – this hasn't been a smooth journey but a rough ride. Ultimately, the Nordic story is

one of resilience, for this region – once a 'poor man of Europe' – has had to reinvent itself several times over recent decades.

### SO WHAT'S THE LESSON?

According to the World Values Survey – which monitors long-term value shifts in over 100 countries – the Nordics are the world's biggest believers in individual autonomy, regarding the state's main job as promoting individual freedom and social mobility. This long tradition of 'good governance' emphasises not only consensus but also transparency. Denmark has the lowest corruption rate in the world according to the OECD – people can vote by SMS – and in Norway and Sweden salaries are published publicly. For my 18th birthday, I received a card that sums up the Nordic approach pretty much perfectly. It said: "Life does not consist in holding good cards – but playing those you do hold really well". That, to my mind, is the biggest lesson Scandinavia is now teaching the business world.



IMAGE: LOOP City is a master plan for the suburbs of Copenhagen by BIG

Anne Lise Kjaer is a futurist and Copenhagen Goodwill Ambassador and the founder of London-based Trends Management agency that helps corporations plan their future strategies. Anne Lise is also a visiting lecturer at Hertfordshire Business School. She is currently writing a book, 'Trends Management Toolkit', for publication in 2014. **SME**