

BJÖRN VIKARD

The Anti-Consultant

FAMILY BUSINESS SUCCESSION · MANUFACTURING · CROSS-CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

PRESS KIT

“If your business can’t run without you, that’s not dedication — it’s risk.”

bjornvikard.com · bjorn@bjornvikard.com

[linkedin.com/in/bjornvikard](https://www.linkedin.com/in/bjornvikard)

Bangkok, Thailand (UTC+7)

Vikard Coaching

MEDIA BIO

The Short Version — for show notes and intros

Björn Vikard spent nearly two decades in aerospace manufacturing — from CNC operator to Managing Director across six countries. Now he partners up with family-owned manufacturers to build succession systems that work without the founder. Author of *Leading with Character Across Cultures* (Amazon Best Seller) and *Don't Exit Wrong* (July 2026).

The Full Version — for hosts who want the backstory

Björn Vikard is a family business succession coach — or as he calls it, the Anti-Consultant. He works with second- and third-generation family-owned manufacturing businesses to reduce founder dependency, professionalize operations without unnecessary corporate complexity, and prepare the next generation to earn authority through performance.

His approach combines aerospace-grade systems, leadership capability building, and cross-cultural execution, with a specific focus on companies operating across Europe and Southeast Asia. He brings more than 20 years of operational leadership experience across manufacturing and industrial businesses in Sweden, the United States, Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, and Thailand, including COO and Managing Director roles.

His typical clients include mechanical production companies, aerospace and industrial suppliers, and industrial distribution businesses with revenues between \$25 million and \$100 million.

His career started on the shop floor at Volvo Aero Corporation — nearly twenty years on the JAS 39 Gripen fighter program, from CNC operator to Purchasing Leader on the GENx and Airbus A350. He went on to lead manufacturing operations in Sri Lanka, India, and Indonesia, including a COO/Managing Director role overseeing a €46M P&L and a factory that grew from €29M to €46M in output in two and a half years.

The Indonesia turnaround taught him the lesson he now builds his entire practice around: compliance is not commitment. When he stopped leading the Swedish way and started listening, the business took off. That experience — and the \$44M family business collapse he watched happen when a founder died without succession systems in place — are the stories behind everything he does today.

ONE-LINER

I help family-run manufacturers stop depending on the founder and start depending on systems — so the legacy survives the retirement.

INTRODUCE ME AS

“Björn Vikard — family business succession coach and the Anti-Consultant. He spent two decades in aerospace manufacturing, from CNC operator to Managing Director across six countries. Now he helps family-owned manufacturers build succession systems that actually work without the founder.”

TOPIC ANGLES FOR YOUR SHOW

Each angle below includes ready-made episode titles. Pick the one that fits your audience, or combine elements. I bring floor stories to every conversation — no abstract theory, no consultant-speak.

ANGLE 1 —

The Succession Crisis in Family Manufacturing

70% of family businesses don't survive the second generation. Not because the plan was bad — because nobody executed it when things got difficult. I watched a \$44M US manufacturer collapse overnight when the founder died without systems in place. The family fought, the customers left, the veterans walked. That story is the reason I do this work. This angle works for business, entrepreneurship, and family business audiences.

Ready-made episode titles

- *Why Your Family Business Probably Won't Survive You*
- *The \$44 Million Collapse: What Happens When Founders Don't Build Systems*
- *Succession Isn't a Retirement Party — It's an Operating System*

ANGLE 2 —

From CNC Operator to Managing Director: Leadership Across Six Countries

I started on a factory floor in Sweden at Volvo Aero and ended up running manufacturing operations across Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, and Thailand. Along the way I learned that what makes a good leader in Stockholm will get you nowhere in Jakarta. I did a public apology on a factory floor in Indonesia because I'd been leading the Swedish way and nobody was following — they were just complying. This angle works for leadership, manufacturing, and cross-cultural audiences.

Ready-made episode titles

- *The Factory Floor MBA: What 20 Years in Aerospace Taught Me About Leadership*
- *Compliance Is Not Commitment: Leading Across Cultures Without Losing Trust*
- *What a Public Apology on an Indonesian Factory Floor Taught Me About Authority*

ANGLE 3 —

The Anti-Consultant: Why I Refuse to Call Myself a Consultant

When I started at Volvo, a consultant walked in and I gave him grief. He smiled and said: “You tell me what doesn't work, and I'll tell management — because they listen to me since they pay me so much money.” That conversation stuck with me for 20 years. I build systems with you, on your floor. When I leave, you own everything. This angle works for entrepreneurship, coaching, and contrarian business audiences.

Ready-made episode titles

- *Why I Spent 20 Years in Factories and Still Won't Call Myself a Consultant*
- *The Anti-Consultant: Execution Over Recommendations*
- *Stop Hiring Consultants Who Leave You with a Binder*

ANGLE 4 —

Building Organisations That Outlast Their Founders

The founder is “the spider in the company” — holding every thread, every customer relationship, every technical decision. That's not dedication, it's a risk the entire business is carrying. I help founders install the operating systems, develop the next generation, and test whether succession actually holds — through planned absences where we find out if the business runs without them. This angle works for M&A, exit planning, wealth management, and operational audiences.

Ready-made episode titles

- *Are You the Spider in Your Company? How to Build a Business That Doesn't Need You*
- *The Founder Independence Test: Can Your Business Run for a Month Without You?*
- *From Founder Risk to Founder Freedom: Building the System That Lets You Leave*

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These are conversation starters, not a script. Pick the ones that fit your format and your audience. Each one opens a story.

1 You went from CNC operator to Managing Director across six countries. What's the biggest thing that career arc taught you about leadership?	2 You call yourself 'The Anti-Consultant.' What does that actually mean — and what happened at Volvo that made you adopt that label?
3 You talk about the '\$44 million collapse.' What happened to that family business, and what should every founder learn from it?	4 You did a public apology on a factory floor in Indonesia. What went wrong, and what changed after that?
5 You say 'compliance is not commitment.' What does that look like on a real factory floor, and how do you tell the difference?	6 Your succession system has something called 'founder independence testing' — planned absences where the founder deliberately disappears. How does that work, and what usually breaks?
7 What's the number one mistake you see family business owners make when they start thinking about succession?	8 You work across very different cultures — Sweden, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand. How does culture change the way succession works in a family business?

QUICK-REFERENCE SOUND BITES

Use these in promos, show descriptions, or social posts. They're things I actually say.

If your business can't run without you, that's not dedication — it's risk.

I'm the anti-consultant. I don't leave you with a binder. I build the systems with you, on your floor, and when I leave, you own everything.

Succession isn't a retirement party you plan in your last year. It's an operating system you build while you're still strong enough to build it right.

Compliance is not commitment. The team was following instructions without engaging. When I changed my approach and admitted my mistakes openly, the transformation actually began.

The next generation has to earn authority through performance — not inherit it.

CREDENTIALS & RESULTS

Books

Leading with Character Across Cultures — Amazon Best Seller, January 2026.

A nine-capability leadership system tested across more than a dozen countries in real manufacturing environments.

Don't Exit Wrong — 391 pages, published July 2026.

The deep dive into what happens when founders get succession wrong and how to get it right.

Documented Outcomes

15–30%

EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT

20–40%

ENTERPRISE VALUE UPLIFT

~35%

HIGHER CONTRACT VALUES

Career Highlights

Nearly 20 years at Volvo Aero Corporation (now GKN Aerospace) — CNC operator to Purchasing Leader on the JAS 39 Gripen fighter program, GENx, and Airbus A350.

COO/Managing Director, Guentner Group Asia — €46M P&L, Indonesia. Factory output grew from €29M to €46M in two and a half years.

General Manager, ELSTEEL India — 350 unionized employees. Re-engineered delivery delays from 92 days to 3 days.

Founded iQMC Lanka — built AS9100 quality systems for a European aerospace Tier 1 supplier in Sri Lanka. The systems outlasted his tenure.

PREVIOUS PODCAST APPEARANCES

Factory of the Future — *AW Schultz (USA)*

Deep dive into manufacturing, the Sri Lanka greenfield, women in manufacturing, and the Indonesia turnaround. Most story-rich episode.

The Thoughtful Entrepreneur — *Josh Elledge (USA)*

Tightest format. Clear articulation of positioning, the CDLM structure, and the succession problem. Includes the Volvo consultant origin story.

Pre-Zero Sports Talk — *Sid Bensalab (Sweden)*

Longest conversation, most personal. Covers leadership across cultures, succession failure in elite sport, AI in consulting, and natural humor.

WHAT PODCAST HOSTS HAVE SAID

What you've done is really something to be proud of and I'm considering myself honored to have met you.

— *AW Schultz & Alexandria Bjerg, Factory of the Future*

You've got a lot of expertise. And I think it's a really, really important topic.

— *Josh Elledge, The Thoughtful Entrepreneur*

LOGISTICS & TECHNICAL SETUP

LOCATION: Bangkok, Thailand (UTC+7). Available for recording during US/EU business hours — I'm used to late sessions.

EQUIPMENT: External microphone, headphones, professional lighting. Tested and podcast-ready.

RECORDING PREFERENCE: Zoom, Riverside, or your platform of choice. I adapt to your setup.

FORMAT: Best in conversational, story-driven formats (30–60 minutes). I lead with floor stories, not tips lists. Ask me about a real situation and I'll tell you what actually happened.

TURNAROUND: I cross-promote every appearance on LinkedIn (personal page) and will engage on your posts to boost visibility.

BOOK BJÖRN FOR YOUR PODCAST

bjorn@bjornvikard.com

bjornvikard.com

linkedin.com/in/bjornvikard

Headshot and logo files available on request.