

Birger Karlsson

UK and Ireland sales manager, Lano Carpets

■ **Did you get into trouble at school?** Yes! At the age of 16 I was caught smoking during a school trip to Canterbury. I had to write a 20-page report about 'why I made this error' ...

■ **What was your first part-time job?** Working in a restaurant at weekends.

■ **What did you spend your first pay cheque on?** On a bottle of champagne, to celebrate!

■ **What was your first full-time job?** At Cargill in Ghent (Belgium), as a back office assistant processing orders. This company makes bio diesel among other things.

■ **What was the best piece of advice you have been given?**

Always remain who you are, no matter what position you have in a company. That's the only way to get trust and respect from colleagues!

■ **What was your worst business mistake?** On my first meeting abroad with a Latvian customer: I ended up at the wrong address of another customer and started the meeting thinking I was speaking to a different person!

■ **What was your greatest business achievement?** Winning a 4200sq m chromojet carpet project in Tallinn, Estonia, from a much bigger German competitor. The total project value was about 75.000 euros, quite a lot for a carpet contract in the Baltic States.



Birger Karlsson with his girlfriend in Amsterdam, perhaps visualising it as a location if he was a movie star

■ **What car do you drive today and what does it say about you?** I still drive my first company car, a VW Golf Variant. It doesn't reflect my personality at all!

■ **If you could have invented any product what would it have been?** Hangover-free beer!

■ **What do you most like about the flooring industry?** The people, the meetings, the developing processes.

■ **What do you least like about the industry?** The hard competition.

■ **Name one change you would make to the industry.** Clear all the cheap polyprop stuff and start focusing again on quality flooring!

■ **Which company in the flooring industry, other than your own, do you admire?** B.I.C. Carpets (Belgium): They have the most sophisticated types of flooring in their collection, including some really high end products! They carry many design award winning carpets.

■ **Where should we have a flooring show?** We have enough shows around the world, no need to start organising extra shows!

■ **Which single possession would you rescue if your house caught fire?** My girlfriend of course!

■ **Do you have any pets?** We have a 13 week old British short hair cat called Viktor, who cost us a fortune.

■ **How do you relax?** Take my girlfriend out for some quality time (a restaurant...) or go to the gym.

■ **Do you have any hobbies?** I used to play football till the age of 18, now I try to go to the gym about twice a week.

■ **What is your favourite tittle?** Vodka-Redbull,

■ **How many times a year do you take a holiday and what is your favourite destination?** About twice a year to any place that has a nice beach, good weather, and tasty cocktails.

■ **What is your idea of heaven?** Winning the Lottery!

■ **What is your idea of hell?** Knowing I have to work until 65 before I can apply for a pension!

■ **Which one record and book would you take to a desert island?** U2: with or without you.

■ **Who would you like to be stuck in a lift with?** Catherina Zeta Jones.

■ **If you could be anyone (living or dead, fictional or real) who would it be?** Michael Douglas (just to be with Catherina Zeta Jones.)

■ **Choose five words that describe yourself.** Scrupulous, empathic, energetic, perfectionist and lover of life (bon vivant).

■ **Any regrets?** None that I can think of.

■ **Any unfulfilled ambitions?** To visit the United States.

■ **If you had to choose another career what would it be?** Movie star. **CFJ**

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Tel. 0800 6128215

Unit D, Kiln Way, Shilton, Coventry CV7 9QL

Email. quoteme@superflooruk.com www.superflooruk.com