

## **History**

### **1939-1945**

Jens Bjerg Sørensen moves to the town of Herning and establishes a new career for himself. He sees the potential for earning money from spooling yarn onto cards and producing various items of clothing such as socks, sweaters etc. and sets about obtaining all the leftover yarn he can. The start of the war a few years later brings everything to a standstill and means a scarcity of raw materials. This presents the newly established company, now called Jens Bjerg Sørensens Trikotagefabrik, with a major challenge. However, Jens Bjerg Sørensen's Jutlandic stubbornness and a dogged determination to make a go of things makes the difference.

### **1946-1952**

JBS starts manufacturing nightwear and underwear. This is the original 300 series. Around this time, the Korean War breaks out, again leading to an international crisis and the rationing of materials. Jens Bjerg Sørensen and his brother Preben, who established the shirt factory Bosweel, set up "Hakkelsesskæreriet" in Dalgasgade in Herning together with two childhood friends from Rødding, brothers Mads Eg and Aage Damgaard, who are the names behind the carpet manufacturer Ege Tæpper and the Angli shirt, the idea behind the venture being that they could help each other with production under one roof. Hakkelsesskæreriet is a dynamic type of production collective where the entrepreneurial spirit manifests its potential in the young, local men, who all have grand plans for the future.

### **1953-1960**

The company JBS, with its fifteen or so employees, takes on the Danish textile giants. A fight which, on paper, looks like "mission impossible", but which, little by little, results in the company starting to supply gentlemen's outfitters throughout Denmark.

The strategy to fight one's corner is established! A complete underwear collection with four models; small deliveries, so that shops are not left with surplus stock on their hands; delivery from day to day/week to week, all coupled with good, old-fashioned Jutlandic virtues: honesty, decency and keeping your promises. Your word is your honour.

This strategy soon pays off! Partly because the major manufacturers display a certain arrogance, and partly because they are only interested in supplying large volumes. Jens Bjerg Sørensen has a major advantage in that his company is far more enterprising than his main competitors, with JBS providing the stores with a better and more personal service.

### **1961-1965**

JBS expands its collection and increases focus on fit and optimised design. Funnily enough, the alternative to white underwear comes about quite by chance. A roll of fabric gets dirty in production, and a decision is made to dye it black. The black fabric is used in an experiment for a new range of underwear.

It is an altogether different JBS that shows its new collection at the trade fair at Bellahøj in Copenhagen that year. Increasingly, Jens Bjerg Sørensen is beginning to stage his “brand” as the cheeky and groundbreaking underwear label on the market. At the trade fair, JBS has a big, black male model to present the “new” black underwear collection. It causes quite a stir and gives Jens Bjerg Sørensen exactly what he wants: PUBLICITY.

### **1966-1970**

JBS is one of the first companies in Denmark to team up with various “hot” designers, who are given the task of designing collections with their own special look. One of the biggest successes is Margit Brandt’s spectacular collection, which sells like hot cakes. JBS has now established its reputation as one of the coolest Danish underwear labels.

A major milestone is when, on 22 December 1969, the company moves to new premises at Bornholmsvej 1 in Herning, a newly built and extremely attractive facility, which signals and underlines JBS’s deep-rooted company values.

The building, which still attracts comment, was designed by architects Friis and Moltke on the basis of Jens Bjerg Sørensen’s desire to rather invest more money at the outset to create something special and a building which would last for many years – thus reflecting the spirit of the company.

### **1971-1975**

JBS undergoes its greatest development and establishes itself as a company that is going places. Many of the large companies with and against which JBS competed in the beginning are closing down, and the fierce competition abates for a while. JBS consolidates its position on the market more as a label for the whole of Denmark.

### **1976-1979**

The trend is “unisex”, and men and women are beginning to dress alike. JBS develops yet another sales success – briefs by the name “det lille under”, which can be worn by both men and women. Then Jens Bjerg Sørensen wakes up one night having come up with one of the best slogans in Danish advertising history: “Ikke bare til mænd, men

også til bare piger”, which translates as “Not only for men, but also for naked girls” (In Danish, a play on the word “bare”, which means both “only” and “naked”). On waking the next morning, he calls his advertising agency, which feels that the slogan is perhaps a bit too risqué. But Jens Bjerg Sørensen is insistent, and the slogan comes to mean a lot for the company over the next many years.

A well-known designer and advertising man from Copenhagen presents Jens Bjerg Sørensen with the logo as we know it today with the three distinctive frames around the initials. Jens Bjerg Sørensen is really taken with the logo and wants to use it, but the designer demands DKK 40,000 in payment, which simply seems too much for JBS. However, having had a week to think about it, Jens Bjerg manages to come up with the money and buys the logo with all future rights.

Jens Bjerg Sørensen starts taking an interest in sports advertising, as he sees it as a way of building awareness about JBS quality underwear among young consumers. This turns out to be a strategy that would have major implications for the future activities of the company.

An agreement is reached between Jens Bjerg Sørensen and Helge Sander, the former mayor of Herning and current Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation, who, at that time, had connections with the Herning Hallen sports hall and was also one of the forces behind the introduction of professional football to Denmark, that JBS should be chief sponsor – a groundbreaking concept back then – of the six-day cycle race taking place at Herning Hallen. Sponsorship agreements are then entered into with various sporting associations and clubs, such as Ikast Football Club, as well as agreements concerning the sponsoring of various boxing matches and dance competitions.

One of the biggest sales successes in the history of the company occurs in 1976, when the six-day races are taking place, and the US is celebrating its bicentenary.

JBS produces a T-shirt with a print of the Stars & Stripes – stars on one side and stripes on the other, something which had never been seen before! At the same time, the company runs a massive marketing campaign, which was also groundbreaking back then. JBS places full-page ads on page 3 of the Danish daily newspapers. The design of the advertisement is extremely simple: The T-shirt in 01:01 and, in the bottom right-hand corner, the new and easily recognisable logo. JBS is hammered into the awareness of the Danish people.

## **1980-1985**

The 1980s prove a tough decade for JBS. The company tries out new product lines – leisurewear and jogging clothes. But this turns out not to be the right move for the company. The collections do not really make headway, and production also proves to be very costly.

### **1986-1989**

As a natural part of the company's generational succession, Sørensen's son, Claus Bjerg Sørensen, assumes the position of Managing Director on 1 November 1986. From the outset, he focuses on strengthening the underwear segment. The strategy advocated by Claus is a return to solely producing underwear. The philosophy of a complete collection which covers everything within the underwear segment is in place.

In 1987, Jens Bjerg Sørensen, one of the most notable and visionary pioneers from the moorlands of Jutland, dies.

### **1990-1995**

Growing globalisation means heightened competition from major international labels, which increase in popularity in line with the needs of the metrosexual man for self-representation.

The old-style underpants and socks are replaced by designer products, which can be worn on show, if the opportunity or trend allows. Another significant change is that men are beginning to buy their own underwear, whereas before this was generally done for them by their mothers and wives.

### **1996-2005**

JBS has its sights set on breaking into the Norwegian market and gets the opportunity to purchase the Norwegian factory "Dovre". This strengthens the company considerably, as it gives JBS a strong Norwegian sales network from day one and a network which readily accepts the JBS collections into its sales portfolio.

JBS sees rapid growth and development at a level never before witnessed in the company's history. The synergies of many years of hard work and a focused strategy are now becoming apparent and are used to full advantage.

This applies to both sales and production, with JBS moving the remainder of production to its own factory in Lithuania in 2001.

The company opens its own shop in the Illum department store in Copenhagen in 2002.

11 November 2002 is a dark day in JBS's history. There is a fire at the production facilities at Bornholmsvej which burn down. Thankfully, production has already been moved abroad, and JBS opts to rebuild, but also to convert the former production buildings into a new administration and sales building. The attractive new building, which, like the original building, is designed by Friis & Moltke, injects renewed energy into the company, and a negative situation is turned into something positive. The beautiful, new and extravagant surroundings help to draw attention to the brand, while instilling both pride and solidarity among the company's employees.

### **2006-2008**

During autumn 2006 JBS launches a new groundbreaking viral film on the Internet. In the film, which stem from the JBS campaign "Men don't want to look at naked men" the traditional sexes roles are turned upside down, and a young woman, only wearing a white pair of men's trunks, behave like a "real man"...

In a few months the JBS-commercial is seen by no less than 11,000,000 people and almost reaches cult status.

In 2006, JBS is nominated as one of 330 Danish B2C (Business-to-consumer) SUPERBRANDS by the International Brand Council. In Denmark, the Council decided, after analysing 2,100 consumer responses, which brands, among the many thousands of B2C brands on the Danish market, would receive the classification B2C Superbrand 2006.

The definition of a B2C Superbrand is as follows: A SUPERBRAND offers considerable emotional and/or rational advantages compared to competing products, which consumers, consciously or unconsciously, recognise and are willing to pay extra for.

To coincide with the nominations, the book: Superbrands B2C 2006 is published, in which the newly appointed SUPERBRANDS appear with a presentation of each brand.

In 2008, JBS was yet again selected as SUPERBRAND

JBS expands yet further in 2008. This time with the takeover of the sock manufacturer Egtved Strømper, which is integrated as a supplementary element into the JBS collection.

In 2009, JBS will proudly celebrate its 70th anniversary, safe in the knowledge that it is Denmark's largest and leading underwear manufacturer.

