



# ABB – A global technology giant with its sights set on the circular shift



*ABB is a leading global technology company that drives the transformation of society and industry to achieve a more productive and sustainable future. Through pioneering engineering where software is linked to products in electrification, robotics, automation and motion, ABB creates solutions that drive technology's possibilities to new heights. The company's success is based on a long history of technical leadership that stretches back more than 130 years and is driven forward by around 110,000 skilled employees in more than 100 countries.*

According to Lena Westerholm, head of sustainability for ABB Sweden, the circular economy requires modern technology and new collaborations. She sometimes encounters somewhat vague descriptions of what circular economy really means. Quite unnecessarily, according to her, the circular economy is anything but fuzzy. It's simply about zero waste.

Lena Westerholm believes that ABB has an important role to play in the ongoing transition. Their robot automation and digitization solutions streamline processes and can contribute to a circular economy. She points out that many important resources are running low. Globally, we live as if we had access to one and a half globes. In Sweden, we live as if we had over four globes! These are crazy numbers that, of course, are not sustainable in the long run. And the changes that need to be made need to be made now. Switching from a linear to a circular economy is just such a change. It is one of many steps we need to take to achieve the UN's global sustainability goals and Sweden's national environmental goals, which, among other things, are about making better use of the earth's resources.

When asked what challenges she sees in the shift to a more circular economy, Lena Westerholm mentions several. Unfortunately, the fact that the definition is simple does not mean that the changeover is as easy. The linear economy, with raw materials, manufacturing, consumption and waste, is deeply rooted in society. In a circular economy, nothing is thrown away! All materials used must be degradable or recyclable. Products are designed so that they are easy to replace or supplement with new parts. They build for long durability and plan for products to have both a first and a second life. The circular economy is also based on business models other than the traditional ones. It is about selling a function instead of a product, where it becomes natural to lease, rent or share with others.

If modern technology is one of the prerequisites for the success of the circular economy, then cooperation is another. Both internally and externally, regardless of whether you are a salesman or product developer, you must see the business with circular eyes. That is why ABB collaborates with both customers and others, and in the future, we will certainly also collaborate with completely different types of players that we do not yet see in front of us. For there are big changes that need to be made.

Lena Westerholm points out that there are many who think along the same lines. When Stena Recycling invited ABB to the Circular Initiative, a new arena where innovation, collaboration and sustainable business strategies will create conditions for circular flows, ABB, of course, said yes. Such initiatives and participating as partners in programs such as Mistra REES are excellent platforms where key players can learn a lot from each other and drive the transition forward.