



Kenneth Ekman, of Kokkola-based chemicals company CrisolteQ, is 2013 Chief Technology Officer of the Year

Kenneth Ekman, CEO of CrisolteQ, a Kokkola-based company specialising in recycling for the chemical industry, has been chosen as the 2013 Chief Technology Officer of the Year. Technology Academy Finland (TAF) gives this award in recognition of the work of a CTO who has made a significant contribution to the technical performance and growth potential of their company, is an inspiring leader and is actively involved in professional organisations and discussion on the role of technology. The award is made in partnership with Spinverse Oy, the Confederation of Finnish Industries EK and Sitra.

CrisolteQ Oy develops processes for recovering valuable elements from the by-product flows from the chemical industry. It uses materials that it has developed to separate and recycle industrial metals that are usually difficult to recycle. Metals that can be recycled include cobalt, rhenium, nickel and precious metals. These metals can be re-used in computer and smartphone batteries, for example, and in catalysts used in the production of chemicals.

Finland needs more technology small businesses

This year, in contrast to previous years, the jury decided to give the award to a small start-up company. A couple of dozen strong candidates were proposed for the award, from both small and large companies. According to chairman of the jury **Yrjö Neuvo**, with its decision the jury also wanted to give a signal that Finland genuinely needs more technology small businesses.

“With his background in research, Kenneth Ekman represents precisely the sort of business entrepreneurship that Finland needs. CrisolteQ is actually his second company. Ekman is now running a business in a sector that will become increasingly important, namely recycling. The business is based on patented inventions, the company has grown and it is making a profit. He is a model example of how to build a new chemical industry in Finland,” states Neuvo.

Kenneth Ekman hopes that the CTO of the Year award will encourage many other researchers to choose a career in academic entrepreneurship.

“Personally I am very happy that I have been able to run my own business and support myself and my family for nearly 20 years, and that with my business I have had the chance to create jobs for others, especially young people. It has been very rewarding being able to turn research ideas into industrial production, and then follow how they develop. As I see things, I have received an excellent free academic education at the taxpayers’ expense, and now it is my turn to create jobs for others.”

During the current year CrisolteQ is moving into a new phase when it starts to refine materials into end products at Kemira Corporation’s aluminium sulphate plant in Harjavalta.

TAF

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"This is an excellent solution for CrisolteQ. We can utilize the existing infrastructure, premises and production equipment, and Kemira's personnel has process knowhow especially in handling large material flows. We are also trying to attract other chemicals start-up companies to the area. Negotiations with several parties are already at an advanced stage," says Kenneth Ekman.

For further information, please contact:

Media

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2013 CTO of the Year

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