



# Gente.

INTELLIGENTE EST. 2021

## GENTE UF

### BUSINESS REPORT

2021-2022

STADS GYMNASIUM • VI BILDAR FRAMT





## INFO

### Contact

intelligente.uf@gmail.com

### School

Jakobstads gymnasium

### Location

Jakobstad, Finland

### Link teacher

Mia Mattsson

### Advisor

Wilma Löfs & Marja Rak

## TEAM

### Chief Executive Officer

Emilia Ståhl

### Chief Financial Officer

Rebecca Eklund

### Social media & marketing manager

Alva Porthin

### Account manager

Ella Östberg

### Product manager

Ebba Kivilehto

# THE GENTE TEAM

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**Emilia:** Emilia is a bomb of happiness that is about to explode in words. She can convince every human on this earth about anything. She is a natural leader, born to greatness and therefore, she is the CEO of this company. She is the face of Gente and our inspiring spokesperson.



**Ebba:** Ebba's sense of humor puts a smile on our faces, but when it comes to business she is not messing around. Ebba is our product manager and responsible for the heart of the company: Our product. Moreover, she is brave and an excellent sales woman too.



**Rebecca:** Rebecca is a intelligente superwoman, who knows her languages. You can always trust her with numbers - her accuracy and diligence make any accountant shed tears of happiness. Thus, Rebecca is our Chief Financial Officer. The matter of fact - she is the only one in Gente, whose bag is in order.



**Alva:** Alva is our social media wizard. She knows how to make us look fabulous and makes our feed look like a happy (and orderly) place. Therefore, she is responsible for our social media and marketing content.



**Ella:** Ella is our ray of sunshine. She spreads happiness and joy to our team and to our customers. As Gente's account manager she knows how to deal with customers in a gent(l)le way. Happy customers with their bags in order is her priority!



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**We are Gente UF** from Pietarsaari, on the West coast of Finland. The visual theme of this report is the sea, as we were all raised by sea. For us the sea represents our core company value: Sustainability. Gente UF stands for an intelligent(e), happy and brave life, where intelligent(e) points to leading a sustainable life and making smart choices; a happy life means being true to oneself and a brave life implies embracing opportunities.

**We want** our product to be practical and easy to use. To find the perfect solution for our customers, we have tested different styles and designed pockets and other solutions suitable for e.g. smart phone, keys and small things.

**Gente UF** designs bag organizers for every type of bag. Made out of recycled fabrics, every bag organizer is washable, handmade and unique, since every fabric is different. To ensure that our product is of high-quality and that resources are effectively used, we have outsourced the production of bag organizers to a professional seamstress.

**Our year** has been full of exciting events. We've participated in fairs and been appointed the best JA-company in Finland. This year has also been challenging, but as the strong team we are, we have succeeded to overcome the challenges together.

**Our vision and values** are of great importance to us. Our product is made out of recycled fabrics, and sustainability is a great value for us. So is quality, which our seamstresses make sure of. Our customers' satisfaction is important, and their feedback is of great appreciation to us

**"Our product is made out of recycled fabrics, and sustainability is a great value for us."**

Though our bag organizer makes your everyday life easier and more organized, our solution isn't only smart and trend conscious, it's also a way to be more sustainable.

**The Gente** journey has entailed many insights and we have found our own Gente way of doing business. Firstly, our network of customers, collaborations and subcontractors are essential for our success. Secondly, for us customer satisfaction is important and we take customer feedback seriously. Actually, customers provide us with the best ideas and solutions. Finally, the Gente way is about giving 100 % as a team - supporting and motivating each other, having an open mind, working passionately in reaching our common goals. We have learned many things during this year. For example, we have become great at selling, which has led to many products being sold.

# OUR YEAR

From a chaotic bag to best JA-company

## THE BEGINNING

Gente started with the chaos in Emilia's, our CEO's, bag. She could not find anything in her bag and it was obvious that she needed a smart solution for this constant problem. In her frustration she told the team about her problem and together we decided to solve it.

Before this turning point, our journey actually had just started in Pietarsaari's upper secondary school, where we all chose a course in entrepreneurship. More importantly, **we all felt instantly that we wanted to start a business together.**

In the beginning, the idea was to make tote bags with pockets. On the other hand, the world is full of bags - the actual problem was how to keep your bag organized. Moreover, sustainability is a key value for us: We wanted our business to be sustainable. We brainstormed together and the idea of a "bag organizer" came to us: **You don't need a new bag - you need a bag organizer that can be put in every type of bag.** Voilà - there it was - our business idea and a master solution to every chaotic bag! Our journey had started!

## COMPANY NAME

When the business idea was clear to us, the next step was to figure out the name of our company. We thought that our product was a smart solution to an everyday problem. Actually, quite an intelligent product in our opinion. Therefore, from the word "**intelligente**" we deduced the shorter "**Gente**".

**"We wanted our business to be sustainable"**



# PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The problem we wanted to solve was crystal clear and it was time to make product prototypes. We struggled quite a bit, as it was very hard to figure out all the measurements and how the pockets should be placed. After trying different sizes and different designs, we finally came up with how we wanted our product to look like.

**We wanted to make our bag organizer as sustainable as possible.** We came up with the idea of only using recycled fabrics and started the hunt for perfect fabrics. To begin with, we realized that window curtains at home were perfect!

**"After trying different sizes and different designs, we finally came up with how we wanted our product to look like"**

We continued by contacting people through social media, we visited every second hand shop in Pietarsaari, and asked our friends if they had any fabrics at home that we could use. It was difficult to find fabrics that we could use, however, after a couple of weeks a woman contacted us on Facebook and suggested we should visit her and take a look at some fabrics.

As a matter of fact, the woman was the owner of a textile shop that had been closed down. It was in the countryside, forty minutes from Jakobstad, so after school on a Monday, we went on a roadtrip to Terjärv.

When we arrived at the woman's old fabric shop, we were greeted by a very nice lady. She had presented some boxes that we could choose freely from. There were many fine fabrics made of good quality. They were washed, and the lady was happy to have us there, so the fabrics didn't have to be thrown. We chose our favorites and bought them for a very reasonable price. 25€ for seven big fabrics. We were very satisfied. Now we had something to start with, because it would turn out that we needed a lot more fabrics in the future. **The rest is history-we got the fabrics needed.**

Besides sustainability, we also knew that quality was a key value for us: **We wanted our product to be of a high quality.** Therefore, we consulted an expert on this issue, who knows the characteristics of different materials and the world of design.





The consultations with **Marja Rak**, a Finnish renowned designer with her own clothing brand, were very rewarding. Marja gave us a lot of good advice on how to develop the product. As graphic design is important in our business, we also consulted **Wilma Löfs**, who is a graphical design student and runs her own business. However, at the end of the day, the team always made our own decisions.

After having solved the issue with fabrics, it was time to put our sewing skills to the test and wipe off the dust of the sewing machine. We were quite confident at that point, but after 2 painstaking hours with just one poor bag organizer finished, we reached a conclusion: **We need a seamstress**. If we wanted this to be a profitable and scalable business we needed to outsource the production. We contacted a seamstress, who was willing to sew our products. This was another turning point: By realizing that we could achieve higher quality, larger product quantities, more efficient use of resources (including our own time and strengths) and consequently, reach higher sales through outsourcing the production, Gente's business potential surged.



First fair and first  
time selling our  
product. We got price  
for best JA-company

Best JA-company in  
Ostrobothnia

Best JA-company in  
Finland

dec 2021

feb 2022

april 2022

In December 2021 we attended our first fair, which was held in Campus Allegro in Pietarsaari. A number of JA-companies from local schools attended and presented their products or services at the fair. Gente was appointed **"Best JA-company"** at the fair.

A few months after the fair at Campus Allegro, we participated in the semifinal in the "Uskalla yrittää"-competition for JA-businesses from Ostrobothnia. The competition was held in february 2022 and due to covid-19 it was an online event. Despite the hard competition, we won the prize **"Best JA-company in Ostrobothnia"**. Thus, we also became one of the 60 finalists that had the opportunity to participate in the finals in Helsinki, where the best JA-company in Finland would be appointed.

In april 2022 it was time for the big final in Helsinki, where all the best JA-companies in Finland would compete for the title Best JA-company in Finland. All of us were very excited. **Meeting other JA-entrepreneurs and getting to know their JA-companies is an experience we value.**

During the finals in Helsinki Gente won the prize **"The best JA-company in Finland"**. Winning the final competition has led to many things. The number of customers has increased, we have more followers on Instagram, more views on TikTok and we have got invitations from local organizations to attend their events in order to tell people about our business. Five intelligent, brave and happy Gente-entrepreneurs have rendered a lot of attention and we hope we can inspire people to live a more sustainable life - **and of course, to keep their bags organized.**

# VISION & VALUES

**Sustainability and quality** is very important for us. We design our product and cut the fabric into pieces by ourselves. Our professional seamstresses sew the pieces together, which adds to the quality of our product.

**We have used recycled fabrics** for our product since the start. Recycling and sustainability is one of our biggest values, and we will always have sustainability in mind, and consideration in everything we do. Circular economy is another important value for us. And that is also why we use recycled fabrics and materials.

**Our customers' satisfaction with our bag organizers is very important to us.** We want our product to make lives easier and it has to work smoothly. Therefore, our customers' feedback is of great importance; we listen to their smart ideas and take them into consideration.

**Feedback is not a bad thing - it makes Gente even more intelligent(e).**



**Customer feedback has been the backbone of Gente from the start.** First, we got feedback about the bag organizer not sticking into its place inside the bag. How could we fix it? First we tried ribbons, but it did not work. Then we got the idea of putting eyelets on the bag organizers to make it more flexible and user friendly. Another customer pointed out that keys always disappeared in a bag and easy access to keys is a timesaver and reduces everyday frustration. Our solution is a small loop, where you fasten your keys or other small belongings that usually get lost in your bag.

## MARKETING AND SALES

**Gente's bag organizer is an innovation that makes everyday life easier.** The product has rendered a genuine interest and our brand resonates with our main customer group: Mostly female students, but also others tired of chaotic bags.

**Our marketing is based on an active social media presence.** Our most important channel is Instagram, **@genteuf**, through which potential customers have easy access to viewing our products, getting acquainted with our company and our values. More recently, we have also become active on TikTok, through which we reach a younger group of customers.

In building our brand we emphasize our key values: Sustainability and high quality. We also strive to bring forward the characteristics of Gente: **Intelligent, happy and brave.**



Social media provides an important means for sharing information. For example, we post information on when new collections are dropped or if we have developed the product in some way.

We sell 50 % of our products via our social media channels, another 50 % is sold directly to customers on fairs and events. **Most of our customers reside in different parts of Finland, but products have also been sold to Sweden.**

February, we started working on our website, which in the future will include an online shop, where our customers can easily buy our products. Today, our website contains information, access to social media, e-mail and a contact form for feedback.



The Gente journey has entailed many insights that have led to a Gente way of doing business. **Firstly, our strength lies in our network.** Our network entails different customer groups, subcontractors and established collaborations with other entrepreneurs, who today act as our mentors.

In the beginning, we were struggling to find the right subcontractors and when our seamstress moved away from Pietarsaari, we faced a real dilemma. Since we are driven, we found not just one, but three new seamstresses on the same day. Also, the start-up phase was difficult, as the company required a large start-up capital. Moreover, we have learned how tough it can be to find the right materials and to have an effective production. **Most importantly, we have learned what it takes to make customers happy.**

We have learned to deal with problems quickly and we are grateful for the setbacks and challenges we have experienced. This leads to our second insight: Communication, working together and giving 100 % is essential when starting and running a business. Without an open mind and passion we would not have come where we are today. We have learned to cooperate as a group and we take responsibility for our own tasks in the company. In order to stay motivated you need people that motivate you to keep going, as running a business is time consuming and hard at times. **We have been good at encouraging each other to keep doing our best.**

**"It's a fact that we will never be good at sewing, but we are great at selling, at managing our network, at cooperating and supporting each other."**

# FINANCIALS

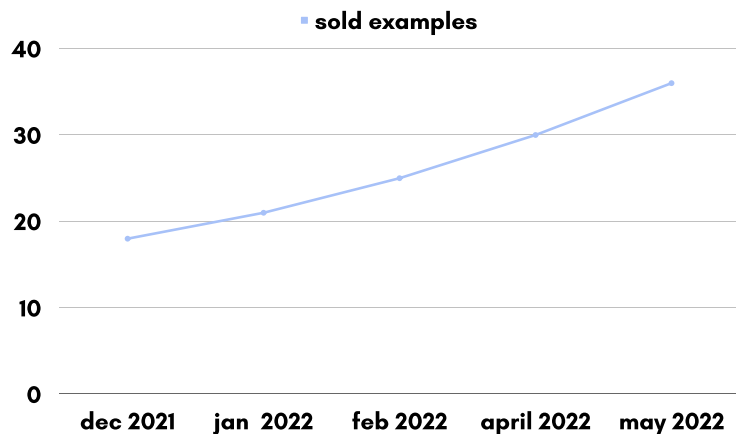


Chart 1.

**Chart 1** shows how our sales have developed and the number of sold products. As can be seen from the chart, the increase in sales is stable and reflects the fact that we have reached more customers after participation in fairs and in contests. The contests have given us valuable visibility.

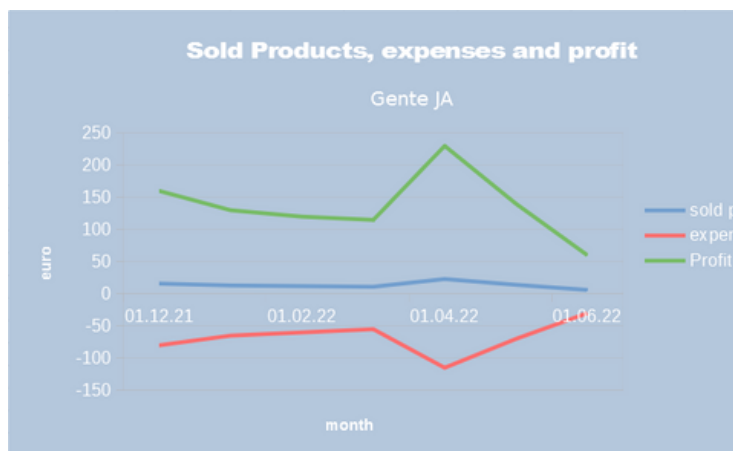


Chart 2.

**Chart 2** shows sold products, costs and profit. As can be seen in the chart, both costs and number of sold products were at the highest April 1 2022. Production costs and sales are intertwined, thus, when more products are produced, also costs increase.

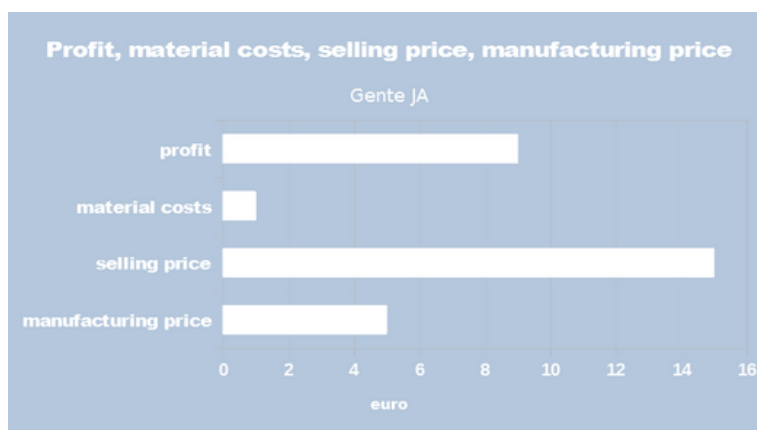


Chart 3.

**Chart 3** shows all the costs. Material costs, production costs, the market price of the product and the profit. The production cost of our product is 5 euro i.e. the seamstress that makes our products charges 5 euros/product. The material costs are about 1 euro, depending on which material is used. The market price of our bag organizers is 15 euros, leaving us with a profit of about 8-10 euros/product.

# FUTURE

We want to develop Gente into a brand.

**We are much more than bag organizers.**

In the future Gente would be a synonym to an intelligent(e), happy and brave life. Intelligent in the sense of leading a sustainable and smart life, happy in the sense of being true to oneself and brave in the sense of embracing opportunities.

**We want to make Gente as good as it**

**can be.** We already have three collections, but we are continuously thinking of how to develop the product - different sizes, different designs - so our customers can find the perfect one for themselves.

**"Intelligent in the sense of leading a sustainable and smart life, happy in the sense of being true to oneself and brave in the sense of embracing opportunities"**

Our original plan, tote bags with pockets, has not been entirely dismissed. Actually, based on customer feedback, there seems to be a market for Gente tote bags as well! The future will show if Gente expands its product range.

**We have a dream of growing and eventually, selling our products globally.**

However, in order to grow, we need to develop our network and especially, we need to consider our sales channels. First, a webshop would make it easier for customers all over the world to purchase our product. Second, we need to broaden our network into retailers. Starting with local shops, we would test what works and what does not, we would learn and thereafter be ready for cooperation with a larger retailer. Cooperating with one or several retailers would really put our company, our brand and our product to the test

**We at Gente always strive to be innovative, sustainable and to listen to our customers.** The Gente way of doing business - learning and giving 100 % - has given us opportunities we never could have imagined.

Now, the intelligent(e) reader of this report might ask: What happened to Emilia's, the CEO's chaotic bag? Well, Emilia is still late for everything, she's full of somewhat crazy ideas and pranks, BUT at least she now has her telephone and keys right where they should be, easily accessible in her orderly bag.





# Gente.

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AN INTELLIGENTE  
SOLUTION FOR  
INTELLIGENTE PEOPLE



Mail: [intelligente.uf@gmail.com](mailto:intelligente.uf@gmail.com)



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