



NEXXER

BUSINESS BY THE DOCKS 2026

A summary of the event and industry priorities towards 2035

INTRODUCTION

On May 29, 2026, leaders from across the automotive ecosystem gathered to explore one central question: **How can Europe and Sweden remain competitive in the automotive industry towards 2035?**

With the current rapid technological change, increasing geopolitical uncertainty and global competition, the discussions focused on the capabilities, partnerships and strategic choices needed to secure future growth and leadership.

This report summarises the discussions, audience perspectives and strategic priorities that emerged throughout the day. The insights combine findings from the live audience polling and discussions from the different expert panels.

WHO ATTENDED?

Business by the Docks brought together more than 200 participants from across the automotive value chain.

Summary of participant industries:

OEMs / Automotive	58%
Technology & Software	15%
Mobility Innovation	12%
Academia & Research	6%
Consulting & Strategy	5%
Public Sector	3%
Other	1%



PANEL 1: SUMMARY

Who becomes the winner in the new automotive era?

The first panel explored how software, AI, data and ecosystem dynamics are reshaping value creation in the automotive industry. While no single company model emerged as the future winner, the discussion revealed several themes.

Panel: **Stefan Widlund**, Electromobility Director at Volvo Buses, **Dr Jan Bosch** from Chalmers University of Technology, **Anna Börjesson Sandberg**, VP at Volvo Group Trucks Technology, **Johan Lundén**, CEO of Coretura, and **Sahar Tahvili**, PhD, Head of Verification and Validation at Einride.

1. Learning after deployment will define success

A recurring message throughout the discussion was that competitive advantage is increasingly created after products reach the market. The organisations that can deploy solutions quickly, learn from real-world usage and continuously improve their offerings will be best positioned to lead. Traditional development models based on long planning cycles are giving way to continuous learning and iteration.

2. Organisational transformation is the real challenge

The panel repeatedly returned to the importance of transformation. While technology adoption remains important, participants argued that the biggest challenge is often organisational rather than technical.

Leaders must create organisations capable of adapting continuously while also helping teams let go of legacy ways of working. As one panellist noted, learning new skills is difficult. Unlearning established behaviours can be even harder.

3. Ecosystems will outperform individual players

The future automotive industry will increasingly be built through partnerships. OEMs, software companies, AI specialists and technology providers each contribute different strengths. Rather than a single winner-takes-all scenario, the discussion pointed towards a future where success depends on orchestrating capabilities across an ecosystem. Open platforms, collaboration and shared innovation were highlighted as critical success factors.



4. AI must move from experimentation to operations

The conversation focused less on AI hype and more on practical implementation.

Participants emphasised the need for:

- Trustworthy AI systems
- Verification and validation
- Continuous compliance
- Scalable deployment models
- Real-world business value

The ability to operationalise AI effectively was seen as a key differentiator.

5. Customer outcomes will matter more than products

The panel also discussed a broader shift in value creation. Future competitiveness will increasingly depend on delivering customer outcomes rather than simply selling products. Whether through connected services, intelligent software or new mobility models, organisations must focus on the value created for customers rather than ownership alone.

PANEL 1 CONCLUSION:

The discussion highlighted a fundamental shift in how value is created within the automotive industry. Future leaders will be defined not only by technology adoption, but by their ability to learn faster, transform continuously and collaborate effectively across ecosystems.



PANEL 2: SUMMARY

Time to act: Sweden's position in the new automotive landscape

The second panel focused on Sweden's and Europe's strategic position. Discussions centred on geopolitics, competitiveness, industrial policy and the choices required to secure long-term growth.

Panel: **Per Österström**, Senior Director at Business Region Gothenburg (BRG), **Jessica Span**, Head of Customer Excellence at Volvo Cars, **Per Ansgar**, CEO of Geely Sweden Holdings, **Andreas Jönsson**, Founder of Evroc, **Axel Josefson**, Deputy Mayor of the City of Gothenburg, and **Theo Kjellberg**, Head of Corporate Communications at Polestar.

1. Geopolitics has become a business reality

Participants agreed that geopolitics now directly influences business decisions. Questions surrounding data sovereignty, cloud infrastructure, supply chains and strategic dependencies have become critical considerations for organisations across the automotive ecosystem. Resilience and strategic autonomy are increasingly viewed as competitive necessities rather than policy discussions.

2. Openness remains a competitive advantage

Several speakers highlighted that Gothenburg's automotive success has been built through international collaboration, investment and openness. The region's ability to combine European, American and Asian perspectives was identified as a unique strength. The panel cautioned against excessive protectionism and emphasised the importance of maintaining an attractive environment for investment and innovation.

3. Gothenburg occupies a unique position

Few regions combine global OEMs, advanced software capabilities, world-class engineering expertise, research institutions and strong public-private collaboration in the way Gothenburg does. Participants repeatedly pointed to the region's ecosystem as one of its greatest competitive assets.



4. Europe needs direction and scale

The discussion highlighted a need for clearer long-term direction and stronger conditions for growth. Several priorities were brought up:

- Strengthening the European single market
- Improving access to growth capital
- Supporting strategic infrastructure investments
- Reducing unnecessary regulatory complexity
- Creating predictable frameworks for industry investment

5. AI leadership and strategic partnerships must be prioritised

Looking towards 2035, panellists consistently returned to three areas of focus:

- AI and software leadership
- Strategic European partnerships
- Infrastructure supporting electrification and autonomous mobility

Together, these were identified as the foundations of future competitiveness.

PANEL 2 CONCLUSION:

Sweden and Gothenburg are entering the next decade from a position of strength. However, maintaining that position will require continued openness, stronger collaboration, faster execution and a clear long-term strategic direction. Open platforms, collaboration and shared innovation were highlighted as critical success factors.

AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVES

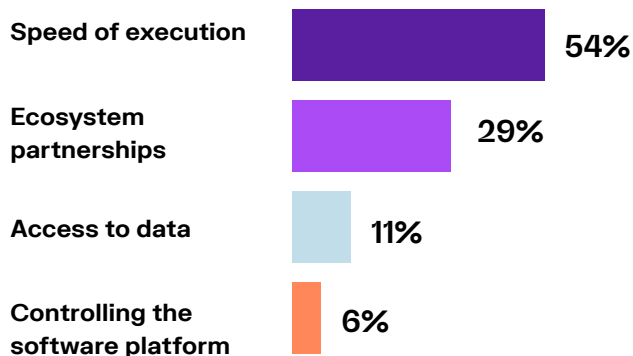
HOST: PIERRE RENHULT Automotive Industry Partner, Nexer Group



Throughout the day, participants shared their views on Europe's automotive future through a series of live polls. The first three questions received responses from a total of 109 participants.

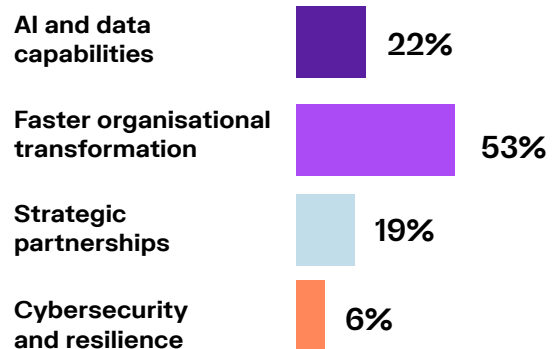
Poll question: What will matter most for staying competitive in the future automotive ecosystem?

Innovation velocity emerged as the most decisive competitive factor. Participants believe that organisations capable of experimenting, learning and adapting faster than competitors will be best positioned to succeed.



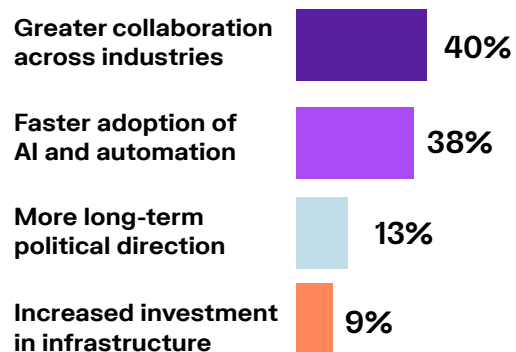
Poll question: What capability will matter most for automotive companies before 2035?

The audience clearly believes that organisational change, leadership and culture will matter more than technology alone. While AI and data capabilities remain important, transformation capacity was seen as the defining capability of future winners.



Poll question: What does the automotive industry need most between now and 2035?

The final poll reinforced two recurring themes throughout the day: collaboration and AI adoption. Participants see these as the most important drivers of future competitiveness.



AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVES

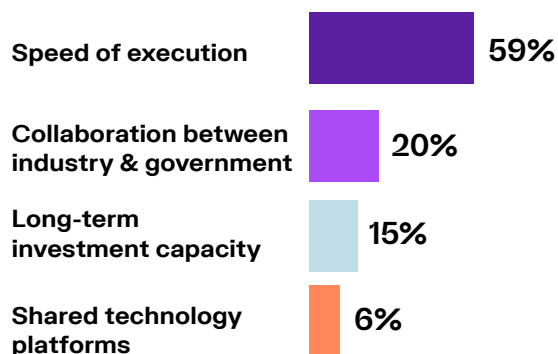
HOST: OLIVIER ROSTANG Foresight & Analyst, Kairos Future



The following three questions received responses from a total of 67 participants.

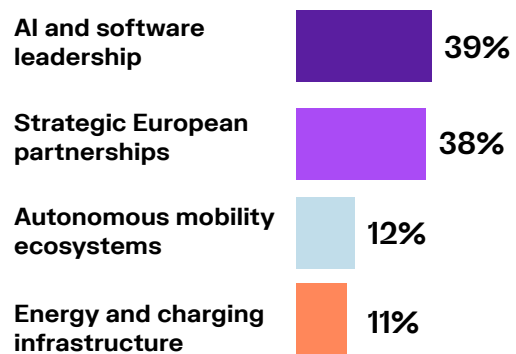
Poll question: What is currently missing most in Europe's automotive strategy?

Participants overwhelmingly identified execution speed as Europe's greatest challenge. While Europe possesses strong industrial capabilities, engineering talent and innovation capacity, attendees felt that decision-making, implementation and scaling often happen too slowly compared with global competitors.



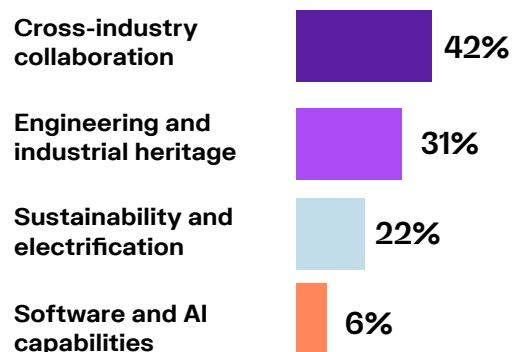
Poll question: What should Sweden prioritise most before 2035?

The audience highlighted AI, software and stronger European collaboration as the most important priorities for Sweden's future competitiveness. The close result suggests that technological leadership and ecosystem collaboration are viewed as equally important enablers of future success.



Poll question: What is Sweden's strongest competitive advantage in the automotive transition?

Participants identified Sweden's collaborative culture as its greatest competitive strength. The ability to bring together industry, academia, public organisations and technology companies was seen as a significant advantage in a rapidly changing market.



KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM BUSINESS BY THE DOCKS 2026

In the audience polling, panel discussions and participant conversations, five themes emerged consistently throughout the day.

1. **Speed matters more than ever.**

Europe's challenge is not a lack of ideas or technology, but the ability to execute and scale faster.

2. **AI must move into operations.**

The focus is shifting from experimentation towards practical deployment and measurable value creation.

3. **Ecosystem collaboration is a competitive advantage.**

Future success will depend on stronger partnerships across industries, organisations and sectors.

4. **Transformation starts with leadership.**

Organisational adaptability, culture and leadership capabilities will be critical differentiators.

5. **Openness and resilience must go hand in hand.**

Europe and Sweden should remain open to talent, investment and collaboration while strengthening strategic capabilities and long-term competitiveness.

LOOKING AHEAD TOWARDS 2035

Business by the Docks 2026 showed that while the automotive industry faces significant challenges, it also possesses unique strengths.

The discussions throughout the day highlighted a shared belief that future competitiveness will not be determined by individual organisations acting alone, but by ecosystems capable of innovating faster, collaborating more effectively and adapting continuously to change.

The decade towards 2035 will be shaped by the choices made today. The perspectives shared during Business by the Docks provide a valuable foundation for that journey.

