



Canon

Everything in Order Behind the Scenes at Riis

Discover how Canon's Therefore solution helped Riis Glass and Metal transform and automate several of their document management processes.

Everything running smoothly behind the scenes at Riis

Text by: Lars Aarønæs

Riis Glass and Metall ranks among Norway's top glass and façade contractors. Based in Trondheim, the company has delivered standout features to some of the country's most impressive new buildings. Behind the scenes, operations have been streamlined thanks to Canon's document management solution.

The Riis Group has specialized in all kinds of glass for 140 years. Its sister company, focused on auto glass, is the largest in the country. Riis Glass and Metal also stands out as a major player in its sector. The company supplies and installs glass for everyone—from homeowners needing a new living room window to professionals in the industry.

Seilet, Byscenen, and Pirbadet

The company's extensive portfolio features many high-profile facade projects. The iconic Seilet Hotel in Molde received its entire glass exterior from Riis Glass and Metal. Other notable projects include delivering to Trondheim's police headquarters, the vibrant new facade for Arbeiderforeningen/Byscenen in the same city, and Pirbadet.

Every project, big or small, demands thorough documentation. In collaboration with Canon, the company transformed massive, unwieldy paper archives into digital files during 2011 and 2012, utilizing Canon's Therefore solution for smoother document management.

Curious about the solution

Managing Director Tor Steinar Johansen and his team received an invitation from Canon: Would they be interested in exploring new, more efficient ways to handle the many documents they process? Johansen's interest was piqued, knowing the need was real.

- “In a company like ours, documentation begins with the very first inquiry from a customer,” Johansen explains. He continues:
- “We provide a quote, and hopefully, that leads to an order. Both we and the customer need everything to be properly documented. In the past, this was all done on paper, with all the drawbacks that came along with it.”

General Manager Tor Steinar Johansen at Riis Glass and Metall now manages all documents electronically. The results include easy storage and retrieval—and enhanced security.

The downsides? A single project could end up filling shelves with binders. Manual processing, the constant need for more storage space, and the fire risk gave us plenty of reasons to look for a better way.

A mountain of paperwork

Tor Steinar Johansen, originally from Harstad, is a trained engineer with many years of experience, including time at Sintef Byggforsk. There, the focus is always on finding new and improved construction solutions. He openly admits that Riis Glass and Metall was a bit behind when it came to information management. Together with Canon, the company took a close look at its systems.

It was striking just how much paper was circulating. Staff spent a lot of time managing it all.

And the process wasn't always the most efficient. There was definitely room for improvement.

Here are some of the findings:

- Old paper storage made it complicated to reuse documents from earlier projects.
- Project documentation could be scattered across paper folders, file servers, and email inboxes. Emails weren't connected to specific projects.
- Invoices were processed manually.
- Internal mail distribution using mail shelves and hand delivery was cumbersome.
- Forms had to be manually entered into computer systems.
- There was no version control for documents.





The glass facade at Byscenen and Arbeiderforeningen in Trondheim, supplied by Riis Glass and Metall, is a creative testament to just how striking and imaginative a glass entrance can be.

Everyone stays informed

Those challenges are now a thing of the past. All new information entering the Therefore system must be digital from the very beginning.

- The new solution has eliminated all the little tasks we used to deal with daily. As a result, we've become much more flexible for our customers. Now, if we just reply to an email, it's automatically saved as an offer and assigned a number. If the team member who responded isn't available when the customer calls back, someone else can quickly pick up without searching. Everything is open and accessible to anyone who needs the information. It's now organized and no longer tied to any specific person. That's a huge advantage, especially since we have younger employees joining us. And our company operates in a fast-changing market. We can't just rely on years of personal experience and knowledge anymore—everyone has to be in the know.

New routines speed things up

Johansen hasn't calculated the savings down to the last krone.

In this area, our goal isn't about money. It's about becoming even better at meeting our customers' needs. That means having a clearer overview of our own work—something we've now achieved. We're saving time both by streamlining routines and boosting security. Since introducing the new system, we've only needed a few tweaks.

- The whole process was simple and straightforward. We didn't even have to send employees for training. All eight members of our admin team got the hang of it right away and adapted to the new workflow. One big advantage is how quickly we can now follow up during a project. Construction projects require a huge amount of documentation. Plans change, drawings get updated in meetings, and clear communication with the client is essential. We need to respond quickly and always be able to trace back any data if issues come up. In these situations, time is money—so it's a real asset to have a system that delivers fast answers.

Meeting the Price Challenge

Sales campaigns are easier too, since we can now store offer templates in the system. Every quote sent out is automatically prepared for follow-up.

- This is a highly competitive industry, with foreign players and constant price pressure. The more smoothly and efficiently we manage customer interactions, the easier it is to keep profits up. We just don't have the time or budget for unnecessary paperwork, says Tor Steinar Johansen.

About Riis Glass and Metall

Riis Glass and Metall in Trondheim employs 30 people and has an annual turnover of around 40 million kroner. The company was acquired by Pilkington Norge AS in 1996, then bought back by the Riis Group in 2009. The parent company is celebrating its 140th anniversary this year.

Objectives of the Therefore Solution

Canon's Therefore solution was implemented to transform and automate several document management processes at Riis Glass and Metall. Easy storage and retrieval are key features of the product. The project's aim was to reduce dependence on individual employees, making it quicker and simpler for staff to locate the right documents.

“It was incredibly simple and straightforward to implement. We didn’t even need to send our employees to any training. All eight people in our administration got it right away and adapted their work to the new way of thinking.”

Tor Steinar Johansen
Managing Director at Riis Glass and Metal