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## Posten and Handelsbanken enter electronic billing partnership

Posten and Handelsbanken today announced a strategic agreement for electronic presentation and payment of bills via Sweden's largest online banks. Both companies view the partnership as a significant step in the long-range building and development of this new electronic social structure, an area in which Sweden is one of the leading nations.

The deal enables Posten's business customers to present bills electronically to the majority of Sweden's 3.5 million online banking consumers, and gives Posten access to an electronic bill-payment solution for private customers via its e-mailbox service, ePostboxen. Handelsbanken gains a partner whose extensive network in corporate Sweden provides the opportunity to make these services rapidly available to a wider target segment.

Today, bilateral agreements between Sweden's largest banks allow electronic bills to be routed to each other's online customers. The partnership with Handelsbanken will now also provide Posten's business customers with the possibility of sending bills electronically to on-line banks that have signed the bilateral agreements.

Online banking customers will be able to receive bills electronically from Posten, and users of Posten's new e-mailbox service, ePostboxen, will be able to pay their bills via their online bank.

- The public and private sector is showing a great deal of interest in our eSkicka, or eSend service, which enables them to offer their customers a secure electronic delivery channel. We handle all types of mail and we can deliver it either physically or electronically. This strategic partnership is important to electronic bill delivery, as we can now give our customers access to a good bill-payment solution via their online bank, says Anders Thoursie, head of services at Posten.

- Our aim with this partnership is to make it easier for both companies and private individuals to achieve ever-improving levels of flexibility and efficiency in electronic bill payment. This initiative constitutes a major behavioral change, considering that the presentation and payment of bills hasn't changed for decades. The process of change is on track, but we must be patient, as we were with the development of

the online banks, says Tibor Havas, Head of Payments and Cash Management, Stockholm Regional Bank, Svenska Handelsbanken.

#### **More players in a growing market**

Modern electronic services have been developed by Posten alongside Handelsbanken and other banks. In addition to Posten's eSkicka (eSend), eBlankett (eForm), and ePostboxen (eMailbox) services, there are two competing (now connected) electronic billing systems on the market: e-giro and e-faktura. Today, the e-giro service is a joint effort by Handelsbanken, SEB, Skandiabanken, and Östgöta Enskilda Bank, while Föreningssparbanken and Nordea offer e-faktura. More online banks are expected join this partnership in the future, further expanding opportunities for a growing electronic billing market.

#### **Complementary services**

Based on its established partnership within the bank consortia e-giro and e-faktura, Handelsbanken is offering an electronic bill-payment solution via Sweden's online banks. Posten's eSkicka (eSend) service, on the other hand, offers companies an easy-to-use solution enabling them to coordinate the physical and electronic distribution of all outgoing mail. Posten's new service, ePostboxen, also complements the services of online banks by offering private customers a secure way to receive, reply to, administrate, and file electronically routed mail from companies and government agencies.

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