

# History of Scan-Speak

Scan-Speak was founded by [Ejvind Skaaning](#) on 1. February 1970. The purpose of Scan-Speak was to manufacture drivers for Scandyna A-25 and [Dynaco A-25](#) because the original supplier, [Seas](#), with manufacturing located in Videbæk, Denmark, came into a disagreement with Scandyna about the supply of drivers.

Prior to the founding of Scan-Speak, Skaaning had founded QSR. It is with QSR that Skaaning gets in contact with Peter Hasselriis, the driving force behind [Scandyna](#). The loudspeakers made for Scandyna were manufactured by SSC, maybe short for Scandinavian Speaker Company (?), which later became Scan-Speak.

During a period from 1971 and until November 1972, the activities of Peter Hasselriis were moved away from Scan-Speak and Scan-Speak is released from Scandyna.

It is also through Scandyna that Ejvind Skaaning gets in contact with [Ragnar Lian](#) and [Mogens Hvass](#), a Norwegian and a Dane, both from SEAS, who have a significant influence on the Scan-Speak drivers during the early years. (TRUE? - or is it through cooperation with Seas in Videbæk?)

It is in some places said that Ragnar Lian and Mogens Hvass were working at Seas and had been the engineers behind the Seas drivers employed in the Dynaco / Scandyna A-25. As such, it could be true that these engineers were hired by Skaaning to develop similar (or better) drivers and build on the success of the Dynaco A-25. Eventually larger models are introduced, like Dynaco A-30 and up.

The team of Skaaning, Lian and Hvass develops a new line of products in the period of 1971 - 74. The first product was the D2008 tweeters, whereas the D3806 had already been designed to fit the Dynaco / Scandyna A-25 speaker.

In 1972 there are 40 employees.

At the beginning of 1973 Scan-Speak buys a lot in Skanderborg (Hørning?) and planned to move there within 3 years or so. The cause is a prognosis of 245 million DKK revenue and 1100 employees at around 1980. During 1973 the company expands to about 150 employees and the revenue was around 25 million DKK. The lot costs 750.000 DKK. (What happened to this lot?)

It is during 1973 that Ragnar Lian invents and patents the Symmetric Drive (SD) motor, which consists of placement of copper caps on the polar part in order to minimize the currents of Foucault (eddy currents). The idea of copper caps was already known previously, as Ragnar Lian sketches in his AES paper with a Philips driver. The new and patentable part is that the copper is located and dimensioned so that the inductance-variation of the driver coil position becomes symmetric around the rest position of the coil.

In 1973 Oskar Otto Wrønding is hired into a position as a production quality engineer. According to Wrønding there are now 200 employees.

Late 1973 Skaaning goes into negotiations with David Hafler about financial backup, and in March 1974 the stocks are expanded with money from the former manager of Dynaco, David Hafler. This made him into the primary owner of Scan-Speak, just as it was the case for Ortofon. At this point David Hafler is no longer associated with Dynaco (he sold it to Tyco in 1969).

At some point in the early 70'ties, Scan-Speak expanded with a second factory in the city of Skanderborg. This factory burnt down when there was a fire in the facilities. Due to the magnesium baskets, the local fire brigade didn't do any good when they started pouring water on the fire, supplying the magnesium fire with more oxygen. As soon as Ragnar Lian had been informed about the fire, he went there and tried to prevent the fire brigade from using water - "do not use water" he would repeat - but as they entered the premises he was just brushed aside.

In May 1975, the stocks are taken over by Fonofilm Industri A/S, which is the parent company for the Ortofon companies, also owned by Hafler and Chanin.

Ortofon starts to sell finished speakers with the Ortofon brand.

Ejvind Skaaning pulls out financially in 1974, but continues as laboratory manager. Technically, he is without influence.

Although the production was running well, and with a good margin, it seems that the change to Ortofon did draw a lot of money out of Scan-Speak. The company went into bankruptcy. This left many people baffled. How could a thriving company suddenly die like this? The papers showed significant increase in the cost of development, although no one knew of any changes in the staff or other development expenses. Liquidation papers show that 1,6 million DKK was removed from the company just days before it filed for bankruptcy.

According to personal sources, the liquidation by Ortofon meant that Scan-Speak was spread all over the place. Some parts went to Vejle, etc.

Up until this point, the development has been managed by Ejvind Skaaning, and among the staff were Ragnar Lian and Mogens Hvass.

What happened is that Ortofon is taken over by Harman. Niels Jespersen is export manager for Ortofon. A guy named Hans Hvede is responsible for the Scan-Speak section of Ortofon. Harman decides that it is not OK to have Scan-Speak in the business and asked for it to die, simply because Harman already had other speaker brands, like Altec Lansing/JBL. This is unconfirmed - because I cannot find any information confirming that Harman had anything to do with David Hafler.

In the November issue of High Fidelity 1976, there's a story about Reese Audio, which did not manufacture products for its own brand name. Jørgen Reese had been in the business for more than 25 years, manufacturing and supplying products to e.g. Expert (a chain of shops), as well as handling imports and exports. The article mentions (page 33) transducers from the now liquidated Scan-Speak factory.

During this period, Ejvind Skaaning founded [Dynaudio](#) and his staff continued in this company.

In the January issue of "Populær Elektronik + High Fidelity" 1977, Erik Toft speaks up and tells his version of the story with Ortofon in an article named Krydsild (eng.: Crossfire), including notes about Scan-Speak. It is said that it seems Scan-Speak will reestablish itself, and it is asked whether Ortofon will be the distributor of the Scan-Speak products. The answer is no, Ortofon has its own products, Pioneer and Altec Lansing. While Scan-Speak is separated from the company, Ortofon is split into two companies, one is Ortofon Manufacturing and the other is a trading company given the name Adcom. It is also mentioned that the Americans have had 100% of the stocks since 1974. The owner of Adcom is Mr. N. E. Chanin, while it is indirectly said that the other owner (Hafler) takes over the manufacturing division together with Harman-Kardon.

It is possible that we can carefully conclude (guess) that internal conflict between Hafler and Chanin is part of the reason why these Danish companies went through such trouble.

In the February issue of High Fidelity 1977, there's a story in the news section "audionyt" that Dantax has purchased Scan-Speak, or at least what was left of it. The production in Hørning will not be started, but production equipment, patents and rights to Scan-Speak have been purchased. This includes the name brands Scan-Sonic and Scan-Sound.

Today Scan-Sonic is a brand name used by Dantax for some lifestyle audio products. Bent Hovendahl, former owner of Eltax and the Tangent brand (now owned by French conglomerate), was involved. As of 2011, Hasselriis is no longer involved in Scandyna. Hovendahl is now running Scandyna with financial backup from Halberg Kapital. To the best of my knowledge, there is no relationship between Dantax and Scandyna.

The news snippet says that Scan-Speak is to be moved to the Dantax locations in Pandrup in northern Jutland. It is planned that the production equipment will be up and running sometime in 1977, according to sales manager Laslo Vinze, who prior to 1. October 1976 was working for Ortofon.

Dantax has 45 employees and a turnover of about 20 million DKK, which means that the inclusion of Scan-Speak will be a very large expansion of the capacity. Dantax was owned by John Jensen.

According to my sources, Ragnar Lian did not meet up with Dantax, but maybe he did some consulting work for Dantax. Based on AES preprint no. 1207, presented at the 56.

Convention 1-4 march 1977, it seems that Ragnar Lian was affiliated with Bang & Olufsen (see acknowledgements). A coworker currently in sales at Scan-Speak, worked for Bang & Olufsen at the same time that Ragnar Lian worked there.

According to Oskar Wrønding, he is the person who re-established Scan-Speak in Pandrup, with a new factory finished in 1978. He became the head of product design, development and production, later promoted to technical manager, during the years 1977 - 1983. Hereafter he breaks out and establishes Hiquphon, which produces tweeters that are inspired by the Scan-Speak D2008/D2010.

According to Steen Sloth, who worked as manager for Scan-Speak in the Dantax era from 1984 and until 1991, different managers from Dantax managed the sales and administration, while Oskar Wrønding managed production. Steen Sloth had a past in SEAS/Vifa (Denmark) prior to arriving at Scan-Speak.

1978: Flow Resistance, an acoustic "valve" deadening internal resonances, is launched. Dynaudio proposed a copy under the name of Variovent a little later. This is a component based on the principles of Krister Amneus with aperiodic damping.

There was nearly no development of products from 1978 until 1984, the exception being the now famous 18W paper cone woofer.

Oskar Wrønding quit in 1983.

Ragnar Lian surveyed the technical issues, working on a freelance basis. It seems that Ragnar Lian had his heart with Scan-Speak and provided his expertise to Scan-Speak whenever needed.

End of 1984, Steen Sloth was hired as managing director. He came from Vifa and stayed with Scan-Speak until 1991.

In the August issue of the Danish magazine "Hi Fi & elektronik" 1985 a Scan-Speak SD25 system is tested. It still uses the 1. order crossover technology and acoustic valve technology, as applied 15 years earlier. The drivers are the Scan-Speak D2008 (from 1971, as designed by Ragnar Lian), the 13M midrange and the 10" (25 cm) woofer. The drivers are time aligned, and this has (at least) as much focus as linear frequency response (the frequency response is fairly non-linear).

1985: D2010, an improved version of D2008, is born.

1987: Launching of membrane loudspeakers in semi-transparent Polypropylene (co-polymer, with milky appearance), 18W and 21W.

Scan-Speak continued to exist in Pandrup for more than a decade, until a fire in the factory in 1987. This totally destroyed the entire production. The source of this information is the Danish magazine "High Fidelity" April 1990. It is said (source: Oskar Wrønding) that the fire was caused by a former employee.

Management in Scan-Speak became part owners together with John Jensen from Dantax.

New machinery was purchased and a suitable location was found in Åbybro in northern Jutland, Denmark. After 2 months some speaker models were delivered to customers and after 5 months, all existing products were again in stock, now from the premises in Aabybro, 5 km from Pandrup, Northern Jutland.

1988: launching of membrane loudspeakers in Kevlar ®, on the models 13M, 18W and 21W. Later followed by customized versions for some USA-based high-end manufacturers.

Scan-Speak was purchased by Vifa in 1989. Steen Sloth continues as manager. Production was managed by Kim Hedehus and development is handled by both Kim Hedehus and Ragnar Lian, who continues to work for Scan-Speak on a freelance basis. Production setup, documentation and administration were gradually transformed into the way they were done at Vifa.

The article mentions the new D2905/9000, a 1" dome tweeter, which had been missing in the Scan-Speak program for many years, probably because Ejvind Skaaning took the 1" dome design to Dynaudio, where the famous Dynaudio D28 was one of the earlier designs that carried Dynaudio towards its success.

The article also mentions the 13M, 18W and 21W speakers with Kevlar cones.

Scan-Speak is a registered trademark. The initial trademark is a LOGO, registered with the Danish patent authorities 3rd April 1970. The history of the trademark explains that Dantax Radioindustri A/S, Bransagervej 15, 9490 Pandrup was the owner until 11. February 1991.

After this, Aktieselskabet Videbæk Højtalerfabrik was the registered owner until 17. January 2005.

In the Danish newspaper "Berlingske Tidende" 20. March 1991 there is a short notice that 12 employees have been abandoned from Scan-Speak in Åbybro in an internal quest about bonus payment. This will cost each employee between 15.000 and 20.000 DKK - equal to 2 weeks of payment + 5 weeks of employee insurance (dagpenge). The manager (at either Scan-Speak and/or Vifa) will not answer the question whether the production will stop and/or whether the company will move its location to the parent company, Vifa, in Videbæk.

According to Steen Sloth - as the conflict with the employees could not be settled and the production had been stopped for 5 weeks, the management saw no other solution than to move the production to Videbæk, where Vifa staff took over the production. Just a few weeks later, production of Scan-Speak drivers left the Vifa factory. Kim Hedehus was 3 months at Vifa premises to assist in transferring the production. Steen Sloth had 6 months in Vifa with the transfer.

Torben Søndergaard starts at Scan-Speak in 1991, 6 months after it was moved from Northern Jutland to Brogårdsvej in Videbæk, just a few blocks from VIFA.

Ragnar Lian, who unfortunately did not receive justified recognition from Magnus Nesdam, also helped with the production adjustments and start-up of the new D29 series of tweeters. I guess Nesdam was not appreciative of Lian because he originally came from SEAS in Videbæk to Scan-Speak to work with Ejvind Skaaning. Torben Søndergaard begged that Ragnar Lian came back, to help with the setup. This way Ragnar Lian again took care of Scan-Speak and the company was dependent on his involvement to keep up the production.

Bjarne Kahr was transferred from Vifa to Scan-Speak and he was one of the first employees at the new facilities. Tommy Jensen Bay (later at B&O) also helped to get the production up and running.

According to Torben Søndergaard, nobody knew much of anything for the first 6 months, even how some of the drivers looked, or what had been manufactured to certain customers (customers would return samples from their stock to give information about what they expected).

Torben Søndergaard was general manager for Scan-Speak for the first 10 years under Vifa ownership, until 2001.

Lars Goller is hired as R&D Manager for Scan-Speak. He holds this position (later incl. Vifa R&D Management, when the two companies merge in regard to administration) until 2005.

1992: Scan-Speak next (second) generation Symmetric Drive, SD-1, is launched. Patented by inventor Lars Goller. It consists of 3 rings of copper placed in specific positions in the magnet system.

1995: The era of the "Revelator" product line is launched with the D2905/9900 tweeter. It uses a known tweeter with 28 mm dome and voice coil, mounted with a wave-guide faceplate. The tweeter is regarded then as the best tweeter available on ground.

The manager at Vifa, Tonni Birk Sørensen, started at Vifa, February 1997.

Ulrik Schmidt was hired as acoustical R&D engineer in 1997 and continues with Scan-Speak until 2006. Frank Nielsen was hired 1997 as mechanical engineer / project manager and continues with Scan-Speak until 2006.

During summer 1998, the Scan-Speak factory is moved from Brogårdsvej in Videbæk to new facilities built as an extension to the Vifa factory (or was this later, in 2000?). At this time, Scan-Speak and Vifa are still kept separate. Some production employees are hired from Vifa to Scan-Speak (when?).

In the Danish weekly newspaper "Ingeniøren" (eng.: The engineer) 18. September 1998, Scan-Speak is mentioned with 22 employees and a 1997 turnover of 15 million DKK. Other companies are also mentioned, among them Vifa-Speak and Pandrup loudspeaker industry (Dantax) with a turnover of 40 million DKK.

For details about ownership, etc. - see the history of Vifa (owner of Scan-Speak).

In 2008 Tymphany provides backup for Scan-Speak to develop the Illuminator line. The magnet system is patented. Products become available to the market in 2009. The world economy suddenly disrupts the banking sector (and investment capital Value Point) September-October 2008.

2008: Scan-Speak remains in Videbæk, while Peerless and Vifa (and Tymphany) are sold to a group of managers situated in China.

Scan-Speak is put up for sale, to be extracted from Tymphany Denmark. Several potential buyers show up, including SEAS in December 2008 (although it seems SEAS was not really interested, but the opportunity to look around and get some insight into a competitor's business was too much of a temptation to leave behind).

2009: The management was not successful in selling Scan-Speak. In 2009 Tymphany Denmark A/S is acquired by Ed Boyd.

By 1. April 2009, Scan-Speak is acquired by manager Jan A. Nielsen and 4 investors, among them most importantly Niels Jespersen, but also including Jack Grigg (responsible for Harman "Infinity" brand in Germany), Hans Hvede and a friend of Jack Grigg, Markus Beyerkirch. Hans Hvede is a former Ortofon employee (previously responsible for Scan-Speak management within Ortofon), who had a career within Harman, now living in America.

During spring 2009, Scan-Speak launch the Discovery line. This line is inspired by VIFA products, yet updated and modified to be a bit different and ready for another decade on the market. This line launches Scan-Speak into a lower-cost range, compared to the previous ranges of Classic, Revelator and Illuminator, which broadens the market potential and customer basis.

Neville Thiele visits the Scan-Speak facilities, December 2009.

In 2010 Scan-Speak launches the D3004/664000 Beryllium tweeter. It quickly becomes famous as one of the world's best tweeters and outsells other Scan-Speak products (in revenue).

Several key employees invest in Scan-Speak.

In 2012, Scan-Speak is marketed in Japan with the STEREO magazine. Two drivers of the 10F type are sold with the magazine. This is by far the largest marketing investment in the history of Scan-Speak.

In 2013, Scan-Speak launch a 2" fullrange driver. The product is first marketed with the Japanese STEREO magazine. Later a different version is announced for sale worldwide.

Scan-Speak is awarded as a "Gazelle" company. This is an award given by the Danish newspaper Børsen for companies in rapid growth.

It's difficult to keep up with the history here on these pages, where we first of all try to look back, but on 1. April 2014, Scan-Speak is sold 100% to Eastech, Eastern Asia Technology (HK) Limited (KYET).