



Moulds: we treat them well

HISTORICALLY POSITIONED AMONG THE LEADERS IN ITALY IN THE SECTOR OF VACUUM HEAT TREATMENTS THE BRIANZA ENTERPRISE TAG RANKS ALSO AMONG THE MAIN PARTNERS OF THE CONSORTIUM OF BRESCIA MOULD AND DIE MAKERS ASTA.NET, THANKS TO WHICH THE CEO OF THE COMPANY ANTONINO SILIPIGNI IS REALIZING HIS DREAM OF AN EFFECTIVE AGGREGATION.

The latest among the certifications that decorate the walls of Tag headquarters at Cremella (Lecco) has been conferred by Nadcap, the programme of global cooperation among companies that pursues the constant improvement of technologies and processes in the aerospace sector. The re-accreditation at issue concerns F.P.I. processes on non-destructive tests and immediately after follows the one on special processes in heat treatments. Both witness the attention that the company, established in 1988 and operating also in ionic nitriding,

in subcooling and in the vacuum brazing, traditionally pays to quality and innovation. These are essential requisites to operate in highly challenging sectors like aerospace, the biomedical and energy, without obviously forgetting the unfailing automotive segment. «Tag brand», told *Stampi* the chief executive officer (CEO) Antonino Silipigni, «is renown on a world scale among all primary players such as General Motor and Ford that specifically include the use of our services in their supply specifications. Besides, we are certified by the main steelworks in Europe». The car future, however, as already

anticipated in not suspicious times by the Management of Mercedes Group, «will still speak German» and the Consortium of Brescia mould and die makers Asta.Net (see box), of which Tag is primary partner, was established also with the target of supplying the Germany's panorama at best. «I have always been a supporter of aggregations», said Silipigni, «and I strived to promote the overcoming of the individualist logics that characterize a vast part of the Italian entrepreneurship in name of the sharing of resources and competences. This experiment is successful and in 2015 it has already succeeded in generating

turnovers that equal the entire 2014-year's because it boosts the dialogue among the chain players thanks to the forefront commitment of a group of managers».

The chain and its links

The vision that Tag and its managing director provide of the machining and especially of the die life cycle is a chain whose links are formed by design, steel supplies, by machining and treatments, finally by the fruition. «The chain however cannot resist», added Silipigni, «without the constant dialogue among the various parties. Nevertheless, an apparently so simple concept finds it hard to diffuse and the fragile relationship among designers, for instance, and treatment makers results in defects that damage the product quality». They miss, in other words, that philosophy of sharing of ideas and final goals that is instead necessary, as well as winning, in a world where to rival with globalized competitors «we need adequate culture and structure». Because «the system crisis where we have been floundering for years», it is Silipigni's opinion, «has completely changed the economy. Besides, the so-called recovery is not generalized but instead patchily spread also inside



the same field. The demand exists, but the way of managing it has radically changed. Tag's organization is suitable for allowing it to compete everywhere. In the die sector, undoubtedly, but also in aerospace as well as in energy». Concerning the automotive market again, Silipigni had already expressed his reflections in the course of another interview to a review of this same Group, highlighting the growing importance of methodologies like the *hot forming*

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to satisfy manufacturers' need of weight reduction: «With this forming system», Antonino Silipigni had pointed out on that occasion, «sheet metals are formed after undergoing a high temperature heating and, together with the forming phase, they are rapidly cooled in the same forming die to obtain some high-strength mechanical properties; while to make the weight reduction more incisive, today we massively turn to the use of light alloys».

The sustainable lightness

Because the course is nowadays traced and the *chief executive officer* of Tag has reconfirmed it to Stampi, too: «The streamlining of the vehicle tonnage», said Silipigni, «is achieved

Unity of intents, sharing of results

Asta.Net is a consortium that is going to turn into a consortium company formed by 20 Brescia mould and die makers focused on the service to foundries and to the automotive industry, especially in Germany, which aggregate a turnover worth over 50 million Euros and 350 collaborators and engineers. Able to achieve a turnover that in the first months of this year equalled the one of the entire 2014, the year in which the Consortium entered the market after an establishment phase started

in 2012, it aims at a business of at least 10 million Euros in the next three-four years. It can boast an array of outstanding partners among which, together with Tag, stand out the transalpine specialist in special steels Aubert & Duval and the Slovenian steelworks Metal Ravne. The initiative is ambitious and is aimed at «developing the Italian genius» overcoming the barriers that in the past had hindered experiments of similar relevance: «If, as it seems, it will be successful»,

commented the general manager of the consortium, Andrea Cerutti, «it is due to its higher involvement ability and to its capability of providing not only a single link of the chain but the chain in its entirety. We want to be perceived by customers as a single and integrated entity, not as a group of enterprises and for this reason we will become a consortium company: competitors are already on alert». While, referring to one of the characteristic traits of the Italian entrepreneurial

identity, the CEO of Tag Antonino Silipigni had affirmed that «small can be still synonymous of fine, provided that there is a coherent structure», Andrea Cerutti had defined Asta.Net as «a bet». A bet that has anyway all the papers in order to be successful: «The evolution accomplished between 2014 and 2015», said Cerutti, «makes us undoubtedly confident. Besides, our will of drawing the best from the Italian genius is not rhetoric: Italians know how to give value to their intuitions».



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Said the general manager of the consortium, Andrea Cerutti.

through the use of alternative materials, like magnesium and high-strength alloys, with the target of minimizing thickness without losing safety and performances. Dies and die-cast aluminium components, with growing sizes, are already getting a footing and developments will not stop. We can see it in the creation of dies for hatchbacks and structural components. Italian mould and die makers rank first in the world by skilfulness and know-how and will be able to maintain their competitive performance in whatever market ambit. For industry, in general, sizes are one of the

challenges to win. This is true for treatments, too: and Tag is therefore investing in research». Furthermore: «Event if it originates from the need of reducing weights», stated Silipigni, «the change exerts impacts also on steels for tools precisely used to implement production dies of each single piece. Just for this reason, steelworks have started manufacturing steel types that couple the features of resistance to wear with a high thermal conductivity. Concerning casting dies for materials like aluminium and magnesium, a different problem to be solved is now represented by the sizes of sow blocks, which cause more and more serious hindrances to producers because they are in constant increment». Besides, Silipigni believes that good ideas are a preliminary

condition for the success but they are not sufficient alone. It is in fact necessary to catch the right time to industrialize them and to rely on an effective strategy. Cooperation can be the decisive X factor from this point of view, too: «It is not difficult to introduce new concepts», he said, «whereas it is much more complicated to change old ones. The dialogue, of which we have already underlined the essential importance, is useful because a big-size die costs several dozen thousand Euros. The message to be conveyed to mould and die makers is that the manufactured good is not only theirs; but fruit of the action of a variety of brains and arms; it is fruit of the abilities offered by each link of the chain».

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