

WBT:

CONSTANT GROWTH, STEP-BY-STEP, CREATING TRULY CUSTOMIZED PRODUCTS



Glass Machinery Plants & Accessories recently spoke to two of the key people of WBT to find out about the recent important moves and developments that this company has been carrying out till today. Growth is first and foremost, of course, but, as we were told, this same growth must follow not only market needs and demands, but also the same needs of the company itself.



WBT was founded by people with significant experience in their field – that of wire mesh belts, silent chains and shear blades for the hollow glass sector. During our recent visit to the company premises near Lecco, northern Italy, we spoke to Giuseppe Figini, General Manager, and Mauro Ruggieri, Commercial Director, who gave us some background information about the company and its founding, along with important news about how the company is continuing to grow.

Ruggieri: The company was founded in 2011 and in 2014, Figini – actually one of the ‘old generation’ of Fond Metalli – acquired WBT with two partners and began the production right away. Figini, in fact, started working in this sector more than 30 years ago in the workshop, making his way over the years to become Head of the Sales Department for Italy. He therefore has all the skills needed to manage the company from sales to production. I (Ruggieri) on the other hand, joined Fond

Metalli in 2007, for international sales and technical support.

Figini: We can see that even if WBT is a relatively young company, both management and staff have a great deal of experience in this sector. In fact, in 2014, WBT started to hire personnel coming from Fond Metalli, who had decided not to follow the company to Padua (where the company transferred its activities in 2012 from Lecco).

We have also hired new and young personnel, who work side

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by side with the more experienced staff, for a generational changeover taking place step by step.

Our work has therefore paid off and growth has been even faster than we expected. For this reason, in May last year, with about 15 people working for the company, we started to need extra space. We moved here, the original premises of Fond Metalli, in an area of more than 4,000 square meters. This step, originally scheduled for 2020, has therefore been anticipated by three years. Today the company workforce is made up of more than 30 people.

GMP&A: Can you give us an idea of the sectors where WBT works, and what kind of products you make for these sectors?

Ruggieri: The industrial sectors where we work range from bakery (200-300°C) to metal thermal treatment (over 1000°C). We also produce belts for washing machines and belts for architectural purposes, but the glass industry sector has always been and still remains our main sector.

The experience in these different fields implies the use of different materials suitable for different applications. The subsequent skills developed from these types of processing enables us to identify different solutions for different sectors.

GMP&A: What is the most important support you are giving to the companies you work with in these fields?

Ruggieri: We work with both main equipment manufacturers and with end users such as glassworks,





as well as supporting them to identify the best solutions for their needs.

GMP&A: What are the percentages of your presence in the different sectors where you work?

Figini: We can say that our production is about 50% for the glass sector, 30% for food industry, 15% for thermal treatment (also metals) and the remaining percentage for other different sectors. Almost all sectors are closely connected to heat treatment.

GMP&A: What is the turnover over the years?

Figini: Starting in 2014, when the company was acquired (and became a pure production firm), we had a turnover of EUR 500,000.00.

The following year – 2015 – our turnover had tripled, reaching around EUR 1,500,000.00

This year, before the summer holidays, our turnover had reached the expected budget for 2018 of EUR 4,000,000.00, and now we expect to close the year reaching EUR 5,000,000.00. We can say that purely out of choice with regards to timing and not for commercial or quality reasons, we have decided – over these first four years of the company – to work step-by-step with markets and companies, growing with these markets, both industrially and commercially, and consolidating over time.

GMP&A: How much more can you and do you want to grow?

Figini: My ideal company would be a company near

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customers' needs. Turnover is a secondary priority, one that we believe depends on customer satisfaction.

In the next few years, with the current structure, we are confident that we will become an important figure in this sector of metal conveyor belts.

Ruggieri: We can say that we are talking about a company that has been in the sector for about 50 years.

Figini: And if we are speaking about growth we can go back to our work in the architectural sector – which is another possibility of growth for our products.

As mentioned before, in the glass industry, WBT is not only active in wire mesh belts, but we can also provide silent chains and gob shear blades, where the orders are increasing day by day.

We are proud to say that our customers never feel alone. When client have a problem, we are near them to solve their problem together.

This is the only way to create truly customized products. ■



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