

THE PERINI WORLD

How to build a successful Customer Service Organization globally

Each year in December, Stockholm holds an important event dedicated to the world of post-sales, the Aftermarket Business Platform, which has this year reached its fifth edition.

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The Aftermarket Business Platform is a unique chance to exchange experiences and opinions on the important topic of post-sales activities. The event is attended by speakers coming from the most highly-rated international companies such as Caterpillar, Philips, Husqvarna, Ericsson, Hewlett Packard and Siemens. Among them, last December, also Fabio Perini S.p.A., in representation of the KPL Group companies, was invited to make its contribution. The organizers of the symposium found in Fabio Perini S.p.A. a company to be taken as example for the ability with which it has faced the transition from machine producer to commercial partner for its customers, assisting them during the entire life cycle of their machines. The event constituted the opportunity to speak about our experience and illustrate the strategy adopted by our Customer Service structure, with the speech entitled "How to build a successful Customer Service Organization globally. Strategies and considerations for a mid-size product manufacturer".

THE MAIN MESSAGE THAT EMERGED FROM THE SYMPOSIUM WAS THE NEW DIMENSION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE to be intended as the market of the future and not as a mere extension of the business as Aftermarket per se, detached from the market itself. And this is indeed an important consideration, supported by the survey conducted by VDMA, one of the main association service providers in Europe. While in the 1990s, post-sales activity (which accounted for just 15% of the industry's total turnover) was considered a sort of appendix to companies' core business, today we are witnessing a phase of growth. The same post-sales area is nowadays taking on a foundational role and becoming an integral part of the product with a value share of 27% of the total and a further growth forecast that in 2015 should attain a 40% share of the industry's total volume. A clear vision of the economic context we are currently living and of how, in the very near future, aftermarket services will become the main player in establishing long-term relations with our commercial partners. Not just sales, but a complete, reliable and competent service capable of consolidating business relationships.

IF WE LOOK AT OUR FIELD, FOR EXAMPLE, THIS VISION BROADENS AND BECOMES EVEN MORE STRATEGIC. The tissue market is relatively small but global; companies supplying converting and packaging machines are fragmented. The Fabio Perini companies have always distinguished themselves for the technology and service they supply. In the course of the years, our companies have consistently invested in expertise and in the ability to support professionals through growth strategies aimed at anticipating the market, satisfying companies' needs through appropriate services and updates.

The market is constantly evolving, and machine speed and performance alone no longer make the difference. Today, entrepreneurs are looking for more profitable assets that ensure high levels of efficiency in the course of time because, as we all know, "time is money". This market "speed" imposes that today's entrepreneurs have a greater - and certainly leaner - spirit of adaptation compared to the past in order to allow the company to thrive. For this reason, we long ago organized our Customer Service Department so as to cover all the needs of our customers and help them maintain top performance levels. Because becoming part of the family of Fabio Perini companies means growing together.

IN PARTICULAR, OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFER IS STRUCTURED IN FIVE MACRO-AREAS, the first of which concerns the sale of original spare parts. Given customers' need to have these parts delivered promptly, our logistics have been optimized through five warehouses located in Italy, Brazil, China and the USA. And to these five, a sixth, virtual

warehouse must be added, called Spares On-Line, our companies' web shop available on-line since 2004.

One of the most common requests by the market, i.e., to keep the lines abreast of the times, making continuous innovation available also on machines which are already running, led us to create our T.I.P. - Technical Improvement Program. We have worked with this program to allow converters to maintain the perfect efficiency of the anilox rolls used for printing and embossing, for instance. Thanks to the A.C.E. cleaning system, optimizing resources and reducing waste becomes immediate. Some months ago, we also introduced an innovative "high-speed imaging system", developed specifically for converting. Thanks to the T.I.P. M-001 it is possible to collect information while the converting process is in course, analyzing any problems promptly and precisely.

A THIRD FUNDAMENTAL AREA OF OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE ORGANIZATION IS TECHNICAL SERVICE. Our worldwide customers want quick intervention in the event of problems on their machines. To be as close to them as possible, in January 2011 we created a team of 67 technicians solely dedicated to aftermarket assistance, working from Lucca, Bologna, Green Bay, Shanghai, Joinville, Miami, Fuji and Seoul.

Well aware of how important this aspect is for converters, our companies continue to invest in remote assistance tools. And so from January of this year, the Expert On-Line service was added to our existing Spares On-Line structure. Expert On-Line is a remote assistance service through which customers of the Fabio Perini companies can dial a number and speak with a technician 24 hours a day. Thanks to this service, it is possible to detect and solve problems in remote without waiting for the arrival of a technician on site. This entails great savings for customers.

ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE IS SURELY TRAINING. For companies, personnel training represents

an incalculable value that helps to remain competitive and efficient. For over a decade now, our Training Centre has continued to develop ad hoc courses held by a group of qualified Trainers capable of favoring the exchange of experience between theory and practice. A further step ahead in this direction is embodied by our e-Training, an instrument we developed that allows keeping all those working on the converting lines informed and updated through interactive tests and traceability of the operations performed.

THE FIFTH AREA OF OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE ORGANIZATION IS CALLED B.E.S.T. PRODUCT SERVICE, AND STANDS FOR BRANDING, EMBOSSING, SAMPLES AND TRIALS, the services that we offer so that customers can quickly pass from the elaboration of an idea to the supermarket shelves in a totally confidential and secure way.

Conscious of the fact that innovation is essential in the realm of embossing, for years we have been putting two extremely versatile pilot lines at the disposal of our customers, perfect for trying out new engraving ideas. Recently, we have also further enhanced the prototyping service of the rolls we produce, making a new laser instrument available to our customers and completely renewing the two lines, turning them into two veritable B.E.S.T. laboratories. Two labs in addition to the analysis software thanks to which our specialists can immediately detect roll vibration and wear so as to zero the gap between sample and scale production.

Furthermore, to make the introduction of new patterns on the market easier and faster and to help our partners be increasingly innovative and versatile, we have launched the Re-Store service. Through this service, we are able to give new life to old, unused rolls with reduced times and costs. The old rolls can be brought back to their initial conditions and re-engraved, all with the Perini warranty. In brief, these are the five areas of our companies' Customer Service offer that aid us in answering the demands coming from our customers

HOWEVER, TREASURING WHAT WILSON MIZNER ONCE TOLD US, "A GOOD LISTENER IS NOT ONLY POPULAR EVERYWHERE, BUT AFTER A WHILE HE GETS TO KNOW SOMETHING", we want to pursue the road of continuous and long-lasting mutual exchange with our customers. Through a communication path established with companies that in the course of the years have chosen Fabio Perini technology, we have learned how reliability and prompt, continued assistance are the instruments to ensure and maintain a leadership position. With this spirit we are moving in this direction, using our experience and putting it at the disposal of the industry through services directed at improving the quality of the work of converters. For this reason, we are collecting feedback aimed at improving Spares On-Line, making it more effective and user-friendly, connecting it, if needed, to our partners' ERP systems as already experimented in some cases. Also, in the course of the coming months, we intend conducting several surveys with our partners to better and more fully understand what the market expects. A market that is continuously evolving. An evolution that demands extreme flexibility and adaptation speed. •

B.E.S.T stands for Branding, Embossing, Samples and Trials.

Branding is the process for creating a brand through market analysis, development of business communication models and customized promotional techniques.

Embossing comes in once the market drivers have been identified. The next step is the study and development of a new patent and the production of the roll. Customers here are accompanied in choosing the most appropriate décor that helps reach their objectives.

Samples are applied mostly in case of new products and give the possibility to produce trial samples of new embossing patterns to launch a new product and therefore assess its market impact.

For Trials, Fabio Perini puts its renewed technical lab at the disposal of customers both during the design study phase as well as during the industrialization process of the product in order to explore different variants, putting that special finishing touch on every product chosen.

1. VDMA - (Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau - German Engineering Federation) is one of the key association service providers in Europe and offers the largest engineering industry network in Europe.