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SACMI AND RETAL – COMPRESSED KNOWLEDGE

Trusted partners enable development over and above what individual companies can do alone. With the right support, service and communication, partners across the supply chain are hugely valued and much appreciated.

For global packaging producer RETAL, finding and maintaining trusted partners is crucial to its ongoing success, with its network of suppliers able to work together with its account managers to deliver exactly what customers need, when they need it.

A recent investment in new production lines from SACMI at RETAL Baltic and a sister company is the latest development in an evolving, long-standing relationship between RETAL and the respected machinery supplier.

SACMI is an international leader in industrial plant engineering, offering a varied portfolio of machines and complete plants for industries including packaging. Headquartered in Imola, Italy, and with over 4500 employees at 80 sites worldwide, SACMI prides itself on 'putting customer satisfaction first'.

That promise is evident in the cooperation between RETAL and SACMI. As a supplier of machines for the manufacture of plastic closures, SACMI was aware of RETAL's positive reputation and portfolio of preforms, closures and films, initially supplying the company with two lines in 1999.

SACMI key account manager Riccardo Rubini explains, "At that time, RETAL was only using injection technology and SACMI installed only compression technology. There were a number of challenges in terms of performance and maintenance of lines, so it's fair to say that RETAL was not properly advised; it was a 50/50 issue. Although I wasn't part of the SACMI team that worked with RETAL then, I've been determined to rectify the issue and show how our production lines can reliably deliver exactly what the company needs in terms of closures."

Mutually-beneficial

Riccardo and his team actively reassessed the RETAL cooperation in 2014, with a concerted effort to boost their relationship and push forward with a mutually-beneficial partnership. He arranged a meeting with the RETAL management in order to explain how its compression technology could be a valuable addition to its production capacity. RETAL director of development Anton Sugoniaev says, "We are continually looking to improve and enhance our offer while maintaining a reliable, quality-focused portfolio. New machinery is a major investment, especially when it requires an element of training and/or changed processes, so it is not to be taken lightly. Meeting with SACMI was interesting because we could see how its compression technology could be integrated into our existing facilities due to the detailed presentation from the team."

Sugoniaev also shares how RETAL valued the honesty in which SACMI addressed the previous cooperation. He continues, "It was a very open meeting where we looked at what had happened before and why there were issues. We have around 60 production lines across our 17 global facilities, so we have experienced all manner of situations! By talking practically and appreciating where the advice and installation could have been better, we knew that we could realistically consider compression technology once more."



Rubini agrees that open communication was crucial in ensuring the new potential project was able to deliver. He adds, "SACMI approached the meeting and our capabilities as a technology provider to RETAL, rather than just as a supplier. Very much as a partner, transferring knowledge. We have a 40-strong laboratory dedicated to the development of caps, their performance...so we came from the knowledge side of the project, then talked about machinery."

Moving forward

It was still over 18 months later that RETAL was able to move forward with SACMI, once the plastic packaging producer had been requested to deliver a 28mm cap for one of its leading global beverage brand customers. The request was for a lighter closure for the Russian market, so RETAL asked SACMI to create a prototype according to its highly-developed designs. Sugoniaev says, "Over a number of months, we worked together to develop the prototype that would be approved by our strict customer, whose standards are famously high. Once we had their approval, we were able to agree to purchase three new compression production lines from SACMI."

Rubini shares how part of the process was the education of how best to integrate compression technology. He says, "The reputation of compression technology is that it's more difficult. Compression technology is not more complicated than injection technology, but rather it's about being able to vary the weight of closures without having to change any parts of the machinery. So with these lines, RETAL is able to reduce the closure weight from 2.1g to 1.9g with the same performance. It's only more complicated if you don't have the proper instruction!"

With these three new lines installed at the end of 2019, the new RETAL/SACMI chapter has been cemented, so much so that a further line has been bought for RETAL's Lithuanian plant. The installation and ongoing maintenance include expert training in utilising compression technology, as well as on-site parts and servicing. Sugoniaev concludes, "It's been interesting to be part of this long process, this relationship that has seen twists and turns and has now come full circle. To work with a technology partner that is open to discussing every element of our partnership has shown that success comes from working in tandem with successful partners."



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