

How to “Lift” economy

by Renato Ferretti

Aggressive competitors in the Far East, the still ongoing crisis and the increasingly demanding market would describe the scheme of many areas of production, from the western perspective of entrepreneurship and, in particular, from Italy's outlook. In fact by narrowing the field of analysis into niche areas, the conditions to be dealt with do not seem to change. Even the strengths which Italian enterprises use as leverage in the global market have remained constant and positive. An example is shown to us by Italkrane, a business from Milan established in 1962 with the aim of designing, producing and selling lifting and transport equipment of any size, capacity and type of material. “The sector in which we operate – continued Engineer Paolo Cavandoli, Chairman of Italkrane – is a market niche that has been less affected by the negative conditions the crisis has imposed. The scenario in which we operate has nevertheless undergone changes, opening up to new competitors (Indian, Chinese, Korean and others) that have gained market shares although they cannot guarantee, given their lack of experience in this industry, the high standards required. In a condition of fierce competition and elevated level of uncertainty like the present one, the most effective strategy is to mix our over 50 years of experience that makes us capable of studying specific solutions in the field of lifting equipment, with a corporate structure designed to best meet the demands by combining expertise, innovation, high quality and safety standards.”

What are your strengths?

“Versatility, flexibility and advanced technology are the elements that have allowed continued growth and undisputed success in the world markets. Initially founded to offer engineering for lifting equipment and related electromechanical components, Italkrane has gradually become, on the international level, one of the most important enterprises in the construction of lifting equipment. Bridge cranes and gantry, electric wire rope and chain hoists are our

ENGINEER PAOLO CAVANDOLI DIRECTS US TO THE DISCOVERY OF THAT MARKET NICHE REPRESENTED BY THE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION OF TRANSPORT AND LIFTING EQUIPMENT: “MARRIAGE BETWEEN EXPERIENCE AND HIGH TECH IS THE ONLY VIABLE STRATEGY”



main products. Our GO*UP wire rope hoists and small YO*YO chain hoists are now known in many countries. Constructional shapes of all kinds with load capacities of up to 320 tons for cranes and 32 tons for hoists, express our creativity and potential. In particular, Italkrane is among the leading businesses that manufacture explosion-proof machines for petrochemical plants in hazardous environments, refineries, natural gas compressor stations, fertilizer manufacturing industries and offshore platforms. The quality system that governs our activities is in compliance with ISO 9001 and has been certified by ICIM in 1995. Finally, cooperation with our customers and timely after-sales ser-

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THE LIFTING CAPACITY OF CRANES DESIGNED AND BUILT INSIDE ITALKRANE FACTORIES

vice ensures the guaranteed and steady operation of all our equipment anywhere in the world.”

How do you convey your flexibility?

“Boasting over 50 years of experience, Italkrane is capable of studying specific solutions in the field of material handling and production logistics. Our product range is able to provide the best solution for all lifting needs, from materials handling to the setting up of production plants. Our mission is to offer specific solutions for every need by offering customised lifting equipment that target the significant increase in the profitability of our customers' business activities by ensuring efficient internal logistics.”

In what markets have you found greater success?

“Our enterprise primarily operates in foreign markets and is present mainly in those geographical areas where oil and gas, petrochemical, power generation, chemical and offshore facilities are built or expanded. The markets where we have a strong presence are the Persian Gulf area (Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain), Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea), the Confederation of Russia, Nigeria and throughout North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Algeria).”

How did 2015 end for your business?

“Taking into account the deep financial crisis, the decline in oil prices and the obvious negative effects that the global recession has had on investment, we can be satisfied with the increase of our revenue in 2015 by about 10% over the previous year, in total contrast with the market trend. We expect to maintain the same level of revenue for 2016.”

What are the main characteristics that distinguish your product from others on the market?

“Italkrane customises its products

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In any industrial activity, research and development are crucial tools for success. "But certainly – explained Engineer Paolo Cavandoli, Chairman of Italkrane, – one must not imagine research applied to our sector like that of the automotive industry, where almost every year, technological and totally innovative solutions are presented. Bringing about a "strategy of continuous innovation" requires a working environment rich in stimuli for all employees. In the light of this, innovation can become an "operating method," able to put into use new proposals after appropriate evaluation. Therefore, corporate policies and a cultural environment are needed to encourage all the staff members to perform a dual function: carrying out the assigned tasks and engaging diligently in the improvement and innovation of processes and activities they are involved in. A precondition to encouraging and guiding this "innovative strategy" is management that first and foremost must prove it is prepared to change and be able to handle the inevitable "resistance" that more or less the corporate structure will manifest. The goal of adequate management is to make the employee an active subject of development by favouring the creation of a business environment that is fluid, dynamic and favourable to change."



according to the specific requirements of our customers. Many customised lifting equipment use standard Italkrane products in creative ways, while in some cases it is necessary to design new elements in such a way that will meet particular and specific technical requirements. Each custom crane is designed to give customers the best solution for every lifting requirement. To ensure the safety and reliability of each custom lifting device, Italkrane uses proven technology solutions and fully tested components. Our customers are increasingly demanding machines that can operate in extreme environmental conditions (low temperatures and aggressive environments such as offshore plants) and are able to provide higher and higher certification levels."

In what sectors are explosion-proof lifting equipment used?

"Italkrane offers a wide range of cranes, hoists and components for critical or dangerous areas. The technology of explosion-proof lifting equipment is used in a number of industries like the chemical and petrochemical industry, energy production, and food and pharmaceutical products. With its highly reliable and customisable solutions, Italkrane is among the world's market leaders. All strategic elements, such as wire rope and chain hoists, moving mechanisms, head carriages and crane control systems are designed and manufactured to ensure very high levels of safety required in hazardous en-

vironments, such as those that are typical of chemical and petrochemical plants, refineries, gas power plants, waste water treatment plants and paint plants. Currently, in addition to a wide range of products and solutions for every need, our enterprise offers several services like consultancy and design that help us find optimal solutions together with the customer. Aside from meeting the European ATEX

directive, our products comply with the IECEx certification scheme since 2012. This represents a significant commercial opportunity, as the most important countries of the world adheres to it like the USA, Australia, the UK, Germany, France, Italy, China, India, Korea, Brazil, etc., eliminating the need to duplicate certificates and evidence provided by the acceding countries, and encouraging the commercialisation of our machines with great benefit to international customers."

What kind of technical and technological innovations can we expect for the near future regarding your sector?

"The handling and lifting sector is considered saturated, but to stay competitive and expand our market share, we need to give constant attention to technological innovation. Thanks to the direct experimentation of new technologies, we are able to offer advanced solutions. In particular, we expect an increasingly greater use of electronic devices (the "brain" of machinery) for command purposes, thus improving the performance of the machine as well as control, and increasing its safety." •

**Cutting-edge technology
for lifting equipment**



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