

The past, present and future of slitting and rewinding technologies

GOEBEL IMS celebrates 170 years of machinery solutions for the converting industry and other sectors. C2 interviewed Saverio Lombardini, Group CEO at IMS TECHNOLOGIES (Calcinate, Italy) on the occasion

C2: Mr Lombardini, this year, GOEBEL IMS looks back at no less than 170 years of company history. Please take us on a trip down memory lane and share with our readers some fascinating facts about the storied past of this brand!

Saverio Lombardini: This year GOEBEL IMS turns 170 years old, an achievement that few companies in our industry can boast. Since 1851 there have been many historical changes that have inevitably changed the world and, in parallel, GOEBEL IMS has evolved and grown to become an international leader in the converting industry. Let me mention some significant historical milestones: in 1851, GOEBEL was established in Darmstadt. Subsequently

renamed the Gandenberger'sche Maschinen-Fabrik Georg GOEBEL, the company manufactured presses, pumps and weighing machines. In the same year Léon Foucault demonstrated that the earth rotates around its axis.

1856 saw the delivery of the first specialised machine for paper – Johann Georg Goebel developed, on the basis of his own patents, the first machine for the production of railway tickets. In the same year Antonio Meucci invented the telephone.

In 1883, the first slitter rewinder was launched by GOEBEL and gained worldwide recognition. The company received awards and international attention at world fairs and filed many patent applications. The slitting technology developed in Darmstadt was the

very first to allow the production of a genuinely smooth roll face – a unique technology of which GOEBEL is still a master today! GOEBEL won certificates of distinction and gold medals at world exhibitions, attracting the attention of the international market – and the company expanded. Many patent applications were filed over the next few years. At the same time, the Atlanta-based pharmacist John Pemberton registered the trademark for Coca-Cola.

In 1893, several patents were awarded for one of the company's key inventions – the GOEBEL slitting system. Use of the circular shear slitting process with the strongly wrapped bottom cutter shaft became common property once the patents had expired – and the process is still in use today.

In 1956, GOEBEL AG became Maschinenfabrik GOEBEL GmbH and now also offered centre winders, winders, and slitter rewinders for paper, board, and films. The expansion continued in the next years: in addition to printing presses, slitter rewinders for paper, board, metal and plastic films were now also manufactured.

In 1986, the company demonstrated the cost-effective production of plastic film. The construction of the MONOSLIT was a real coup for GOEBEL. Demand for this slitter rewinder was extremely high: customers were delighted with the quality of finished rolls and the cost-effectiveness in production. It remains one of the premium system still used by film manufacturers.

In 2011, GOEBEL went wider and faster and designed the world's widest slitter rewinder: the 12 000mm-wide MONOSLIT GIANT set new standards in packaging film and converting.

In 2012, a new subsidiary in China was established: Beijing GOEBEL Slitting Technologies.

In 2013, IMS Deltamatic joined forces with GOEBEL. The Italian group includes IMS – a company producing slitter rewinders, unwinders, and rewinders whose acronym stands for Industria Macchine Speciali (Special Machines Industry) – and Deltamatic, a company specialised in the production of automatic thermoforming lines for automotive interior. After the acquisition, the GOEBEL IMS brand is born.



Saverio Lombardini

In 2017, Coeclerici Group, an international leader in raw materials supply founded in 1895, acquired IMS Deltamatic Group as part of its strategic business diversification. One year later, IMS Deltamatic was renamed IMS TECHNOLOGIES.

In 2019, the Group opened IMS TECHNOLOGIES INC. in the USA to serve the converting industry in North America.

C2: Despite of all the global difficulties during the pandemic, IMS TECHNOLOGIES and its respective brands can look back at a successful year 2020 in terms of order income. What were the reasons for this result, and is the positive trend continuing in 2021?

S. Lombardini: Certainly the strength of our brands, such as GOEBEL IMS or ROTOMAC, helped us during this period: it was essential to count on brands with a high worldwide reputation.

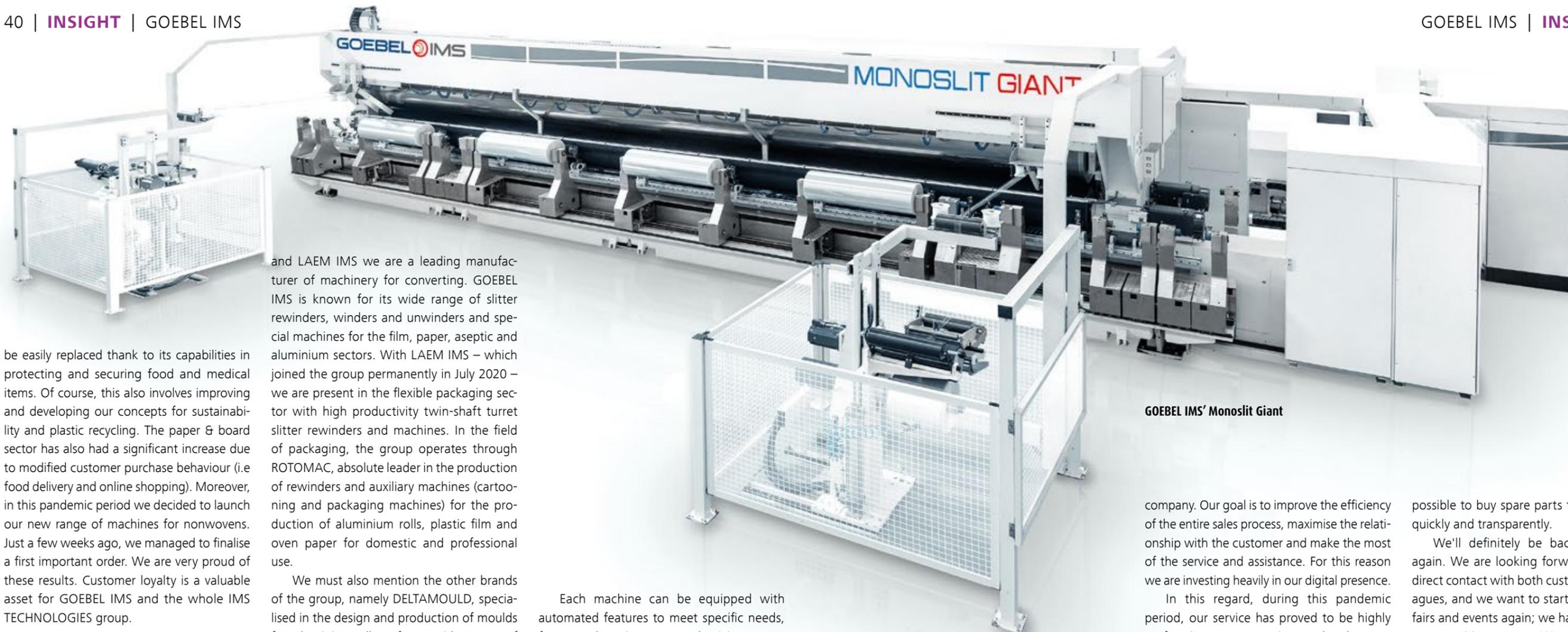
The pandemic forced us to develop new ways of working. In these months, many opportunities for contacting customers, both established and potential, such as trade fairs (which are and remain fundamental for our sector), have been lost. Despite the lack of direct market relationships, our overall 2020 orders grew by approximately 40%. In the first six months of 2021, we have already reached the 2020 order values. We are very pleased with this achievement, which also proves the capability of our sales team to adapt so quickly to a new environment. In any case, we look forward to meeting our partners and customers in person again.

C2: What are some segments that are especially in a boom phase right now?

S. Lombardini: The plastic film sector is the one that had the highest growth in 2020, driven by strong investments of our customers in Asia and the awareness that plastic cannot



GOEBEL IMS has now expanded into the nonwovens market



GOEBEL IMS' Monoslit Giant

be easily replaced thanks to its capabilities in protecting and securing food and medical items. Of course, this also involves improving and developing our concepts for sustainability and plastic recycling. The paper & board sector has also had a significant increase due to modified customer purchase behaviour (i.e. food delivery and online shopping). Moreover, in this pandemic period we decided to launch our new range of machines for nonwovens. Just a few weeks ago, we managed to finalise a first important order. We are very proud of these results. Customer loyalty is a valuable asset for GOEBEL IMS and the whole IMS TECHNOLOGIES group.

C2: Can you talk a bit about the structure of the company group? How do GOEBEL IMS, LAEM IMS and the other brands such as ROTOMAC split up the different markets among them, and what competences can be found in Italy, and which ones in Germany?

S. Lombardini: IMS TECHNOLOGIES is a diversified Group with several business units. In Italy we have three locations: headquarters and production plant in Calcinato (Bergamo) and two other production plants in Seriate (Bergamo) and Casale Monferrato (Alessandria). We also have sales & service facilities in the USA and China and an office in Darmstadt, Germany, where we have an engineering division and a sales & service division.

IMS TECHNOLOGIES was born out of the union of specialised companies, whose synergy has made us an international reference in the design and implementation of high-tech solutions for different fields such as converting, packaging, automotive and other industrial sectors.

Thanks to the different brands belonging to the group we can reach customers worldwide. With the brands GOEBEL IMS

and LAEM IMS we are a leading manufacturer of machinery for converting. GOEBEL IMS is known for its wide range of slitter rewinders, winders and unwinders and special machines for the film, paper, aseptic and aluminium sectors. With LAEM IMS – which joined the group permanently in July 2020 – we are present in the flexible packaging sector with high productivity twin-shaft turret slitter rewinders and machines. In the field of packaging, the group operates through ROTOMAC, absolute leader in the production of rewinders and auxiliary machines (cartooning and packaging machines) for the production of aluminium rolls, plastic film and oven paper for domestic and professional use.

We must also mention the other brands of the group, namely DELTAMOULD, specialised in the design and production of moulds for aluminium alloys for a wide range of industries and finally DELTAMATIC and KASPER, which offer thermoforming lines for car interiors and CNC horizontal and vertical turning and boring systems in the automotive sector.

C2: Recently, the company group expanded into the nonwovens segment. What is your strategy for this market, and which technologies can you offer already?

S. Lombardini: After a careful study phase and being aware of our strengths thanks to our undisputed know-how in the field of slitting, un- and rewinding different materials, which was developed in over one and a half centuries of activities, we decided to take the first steps in the nonwoven market. We are now able to propose a new GOEBEL IMS branded product portfolio for this highly competitive and challenging growth sector.

The offer for nonwovens includes:

- » - End-of-line rewinders
- » - Off-line slitter rewinders
- » - Unwinders

Each machine can be equipped with automated features to meet specific needs, for example to increase productivity, ensure maximum quality, enable easy product changes, minimise downtime or meet the most stringent safety requirements.

C2: In Industry 4.0, one main focus of IMS TECHNOLOGIES was on the so-called MAIA. What is the meaning of this acronym, and can you talk about the concept in more detail?

S. Lombardini: MAIA – MACHINES ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE APPLICATION – is the application that IMS TECHNOLOGIES provides for the implementation of Industry 4.0 paradigms. An easy to use, intuitive, useful and functional tool to simplify and optimise the management of the entire production cycle. By installing sensors and intelligent devices on the machines and automatically sending information to the MAIA platform via an edge device, important data on the operation of the machines and the production processes connected to it are acquired and analysed. The customer can therefore monitor and guide production, identify malfunctions, carry out maintenance operations, order spare parts in a short time and prevent possible failures: all this also remotely, anywhere and at any time.

C2: What are your plans for the near future, especially when we move beyond this pandemic phase?

S. Lombardini: We are aiming at changing the perspective of our industry from a “product centric” to a “service and marketing oriented”

company. Our goal is to improve the efficiency of the entire sales process, maximise the relationship with the customer and make the most of the service and assistance. For this reason we are investing heavily in our digital presence.

In this regard, during this pandemic period, our service has proved to be highly performing, remote assistance has become a “must” and our technicians have always proved to be up to the customer's requirements. Today, more than ever, we consider it an important competitive factor.

We are working on further digital services for our customers, including a dedicated portal and a new web shop, where it will be

possible to buy spare parts for our products quickly and transparently.

We'll definitely be back on the road again. We are looking forward to resuming direct contact with both customers and colleagues, and we want to start attending trade fairs and events again; we have missed these opportunities to meet. We will also continue with digital activities, with virtual events and webinars, which we used extensively during the pandemic and will remain an important – but not exclusive – tool for improving the relationships with our stakeholders. ■

Image sources: IMS TECHNOLOGIES