

A global reference point in the field of textile finishing, the Vicenza-based company is looking to the future today, betting on innovation and experimentation

# Monti Antonio, the all-Italian excellence applied to heat transfer printing processes

by Italia Publishers editorial staff // editors@densitymedia.com



**T**he story of Monti Antonio is one we have dreamed of telling on these pages for a long time. It is not every day that you can visit a company known throughout the world as one of the standouts of the Italian manufacturing industry. Under the guidance of the founder Antonio, first, and then his son Vincenzo, the company has developed a specialized know-how in the construction of systems

for finishing fabrics, in particular calenders for sublimation. Thanks to the painstaking precision with which all the operations are carried out and the meticulous controls to which all the components are subjected, Monti Antonio is able to offer technologies destined to last over time (they declare "forever"). In addition, the company is known for the trust it has built up with its customers. They appreciate its ability to find – and, if necessary, build

from scratch – the solution best suited to their needs. A combination of factors has allowed Monti Antonio to consolidate its global footprint, presenting itself on the market with a varied portfolio of machines designed to adapt to the processing of many materials. The sectors in which Monti Antonio systems are used range from soft signage to technical sportswear and industrial and medical applications. With a turnover of 25 million euros and a number of machines sold

that is around 15,000 units, Monti Antonio could afford the luxury of living off its existing revenue streams. Instead, under current CEO Vincenzo Monti, the company does not intend to rest on its laurels, but to invest in process optimization and technology improvement.

|| Above left, the company's headquarters; above right, a 5.4-meter wide sublimation calender. On the opposite page, a technician completes the assembly of a cylinder.



## interview

**Vincenzo Monti**

Chief Operating Officer

Monti Antonio SpA

**“Developing new technologies and finding solutions to unresolved problems is a lot of fun. And as long as we can do it, we’re not going to stop.”**

**You come from a family of industrialists. How did this affect your approach to business management?**

My grandfather and father are the figures that inspired me, both from a human and entrepreneurial point of view. Thanks to them, I discovered the pleasure that comes from doing things to the maximum of one’s ability, without ever being satisfied. I am extremely precise because I believe that precision is a crucial factor in the development of reliable machinery that is capable of delivering high quality results and lasting over time.

**Many manufacturers tend to reject requests for customization of their standard models to avoid higher costs, production slowdowns and other variables. You are acting in a completely different way. Why is that?**

For us, customization is the starting point for carrying out research and development processes. If a customer asks us to adapt a machine because he needs to do special task, for us it

is not an obstacle but an opportunity. Our standard systems are almost all very mature. But we’re not tired of innovation yet. Developing new technologies and finding solutions to unresolved problems is a lot of fun for us. And as long as we can do it, we’re not going to stop.

**What is Monti Antonio aiming for in the near future?**

We want to continue to grow,

especially in the area of special machining and complex projects. We monitor all sectors of the textile industry, from furniture to fashion and sports, to try to understand in which direction the market will go. To change has never frightened us, to remain flexible and projected towards innovation are important values for us; on them we are building the foundations for our future.



|| The logo of the textile finishing machinery company founded in the 1930s by Vincenzo Monti, grandfather of the current CEO at Monti Antonio SpA

### From ironing machines to sublimation calenders

In the 1930s, the elder Vincenzo Monti, already owner of a foundry in Thiene, Vicenza, began to produce machinery for finishing fabrics. At the end of the '50s, his son Antonio left the family business. In 1959, he founded Officine Meccaniche A. Monti, specializing in the construction of ironing machines and steam boilers and, starting in the '70s, also presses for heat transfer printing. At the end of the '80s, the company changed its name to Monti Antonio SpA and made a first decisive turn towards the production of finishing systems for fabrics in rolls. Antonio Monti returned to a technology patented by his father Vincenzo and perfected it. This is a special oil-heat-

ed cylinder, which became the fulcrum of the company’s sublimation calenders. The first example of this innovative technology entered the market in 1991. In the '90s, the company expanded its portfolio of solutions for textile finishing and, in 1999, also introduced a line of laminating systems based on hot melt technology. At the same time, it was strengthening its presence at the international level. The beginning of the 2000s coincided with a decline in the demand for ironing machines for the knitting sector, so Monti Antonio started focusing on the construction of finishing systems for digitally printed fabrics, which began to take off in those years. In 2003, Vincenzo Monti, Antonio’s son, took over the management of the company. The handover co-







1) The four vertical lift modules installed in the company contain and make available to technicians all the small components necessary for assembly. 2) Rollers stored in the semi-finished products warehouse, before being moved to the final assembly area. 3) The area dedicated to the final assembly of large format machinery.



**Paolo Bergamin**  
Chief Technical Officer  
Monti Antonio SpA

**“Impossible is a word we don’t like. If a customer comes up with an idea, even an extravagant one, we listen to him and do everything we can to satisfy his requests.”**



incided with a series of targeted investments aimed at optimizing the workflow and refining the portfolio of existing technologies. The introduction of new production lines and the growing demand made it necessary to expand the headquarters, completed in 2017.

### A wide range of standard products and unlimited customization possibilities

Monti Antonio’s portfolio includes a wide range of machines for heat transfer printing (presses and calenders), systems for special processes (lamination

and coating), as well as ironing machines and boilers. The catalogue contains 65 standard models, available in 120 versions. In addition to this, the company creates customized solutions, tailored to the application needs of each customer.

### A walk inside the company

Today, Monti Antonio has about 100 employees, employed in three plants that together have an area of 10,000 square meters. Some of the components necessary for the construction of electrical and mechanical systems inside Monti Antonio

technologies come from external suppliers. These are stored in a traditional warehouse or in four vertical lift modules. The key components, in particular the heated cylinder, are produced in-house. The processing involves structural work, pre-assembly and testing that are performed according to strict quality standards. The machines are assembled in three separate areas, which follow independent production logic. In the area dedicated to small format machines, the process is carried out in batches, following an MTS (make-to-stock) logic, based on sales forecasts. In the area ded-

icated to large format machines, production is only started when an order is received, following an MTO (make-to-order) logic. In the area dedicated to customised projects, the R&D team and technicians work together on innovative machines with medium to long lead times. A section of the production area is dedicated to the showroom, where customers can attend demonstrations or carry out tests to identify the technology best suited to their needs. Thanks to this extremely efficient organization, Monti Antonio has reached a production capacity of around 600 machines per year.





### interview

**Alessandro Silva**

*Sales Manager*

**Gianfranco Cappellari**

*Italy Sales Manager*

*Monti Antonio SpA*

#### How do you manage your relationship with your customers?

AS: Very often customers come to us with ideas about what kind of machinery they need. Our product portfolio is very broad, so in many cases we can find the solution that best suits their needs in a short time. If this is not the case, we pass the word on to the research and development team, which may, from time to time, propose a customisation of our existing technologies or the development of a new solution. Years and years of experience have toughened us and today we do not back down even in the face of the most extreme demands. On the contrary, it is thanks to the experience gained from the development of complex projects that we have expanded our offerings.

#### What percentage of your turnover is generated by customized projects? How do you manage them optimally?

GC: Currently, they account for 15% of the company's total turnover. Most of these machines are sold in Europe, where the search

for cutting-edge textile applications is very much in evidence. This allows us to be responsive to both development and after-sales service. In recent years, we have invested in optimizing the company's internal processes and we have organized production so that custom and standard projects follow separate and independent paths. In this way, we avoid slowing down the production process and at the same time guarantee flexibility and fast delivery times.

#### Monti Antonio technologies are present all over the world. What's the secret to winning over such a diverse clientele?

AS: We've never needed too much publicity. The goodness of our products is worth a thousand words. Our systems have achieved a level of reliability that minimizes the possibility of error. We invest in training our distributors to be able to pass on the value of our technologies and teach customers how to make the most of them.



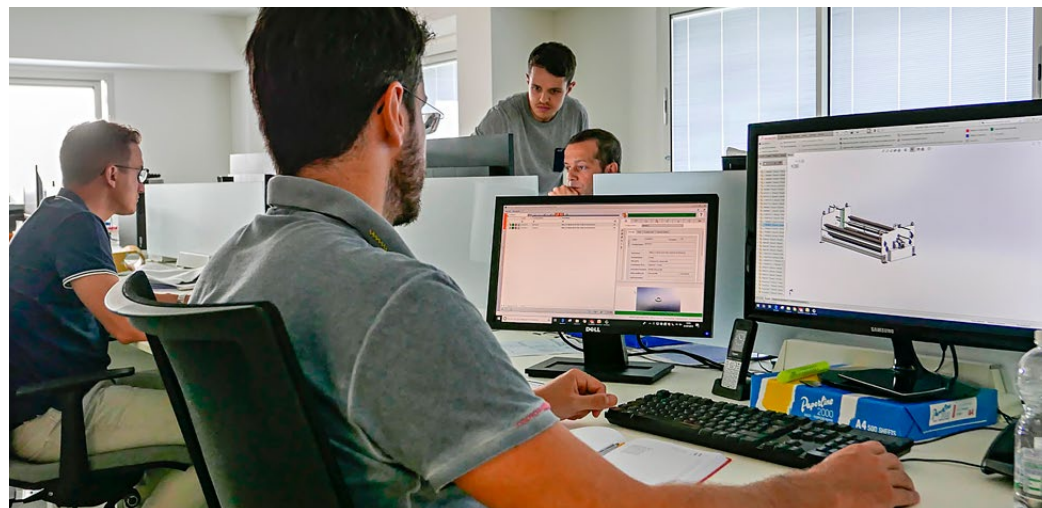
#### Everything revolves around the cylinder

The heated steel cylinder is the heart of all the sublimation machines produced by Monti Antonio. This device is responsible for triggering the process that allows the sublimation inks to bond to the fabric. In order to ensure the perfect success of the process, the heat must be evenly distributed over the entire external surface of the cylinder and the temperature must remain constant over time. Oil, a series of resistances that serve to heat it, and a system of constant recirculation of the fluid (preventing its sedimentation) are inserted into the device. The heating

process of the cylinder takes place in complete absence of pressure and air, to ensure absolute control over all the variables involved. The cylinder temperature, set via touchscreen and regulated by an electronic board, has

a very low margin of tolerance, which serves to ensure color uniformity and perfect penetration of the inks. It remains the same for all cylinders, regardless of their size, which can vary in terms of width (from 300 to

5,400 mm) and diameter (from 200 to 1,500 mm). If necessary, the outer surface of the cylinders can be customised to make them compatible with processes other than heat transfer printing, such as lamination or coating.



|| Engineers working within the design office of the research and development department





**Denis Bonato**  
Service Dept. Manager  
Monti Antonio SpA

**“Our technicians not only train our customers on the operation of our machines, but also on the applications that they can make.”**

### Innovation starts with confrontation with customers

Within the research and development department, a group of specialized engineers and experts is responsible for perfecting existing technologies and

developing new ones. It is precisely in the design of new machinery, starting from the users' instances, that the team proves its great experience and aptitude for problem-solving.

The choice to realize complex and personalized projects is undoubtedly courageous during this period of maximum adherence to Industry 4.0, which requires the simplification of workflows. For Monti Antonio, however, these projects represent an inexhaustible source of experience that contributes gradually to enriching its already vast range of expertise.

### Accompanying the customer throughout the life cycle of a product

The trust that Monti Antonio has earned over the decades is also the result of its commitment to offering a high level of after-sales service. The company includes 12 technicians: 8 permanent employees in the pro-

duction department and 4 “itinerants”. The latter travel to reach customers who need assistance, and also work with those who want to receive training at their own facility. “Our technicians not only train our customers on the operation of our machines, but also on the applications that they can make,” explains Denis Bonato, Service Dept. Manager of Monti Antonio. “To ensure global service, we personally train our dealers' technical staff so that they can quickly intervene on the machines, with the same precision and effectiveness as the technicians we have here at the headquarters.”

### A success “in progress” that goes beyond national borders

Proactivity, innovation, global presence and continuous improvement of processes have led Monti Antonio to record-setting financial performance in both the Italian and European in-

dustrial landscapes. This is confirmed by the awards received in recent years.

In 2016, the company was included in the “1000 Companies to Inspire Europe”, a report prepared by the London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG). With this ranking, the LSEG intends to celebrate the European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that are driving the continent's economic development, growing steadily and creating new jobs.

In March 2018, Monti Antonio was also included in “500 Champion”, a study conducted by ItalyPost. The report identifies the Italian SMEs that, between 2010 and 2016, recorded exceptional performances, both in terms of growth and profitability.

These certificates of merit are an incentive for Monti Antonio to evolve, without distorting itself. And above all, without losing the enthusiasm that seems to resist the passage of time and generations. ■



|| 1) In the carpentry department, operators carry out the first operations on the raw cylinders. 2) Once ready for final assembly, each cylinder is tested in a dedicated area. 3) A technician assembles a large format calender. 4) Ready-made calendars are packed and shipped worldwide by the company's logistics department.