



With branches in the Lombardy and Veneto regions, the Italian large-scale distribution service company accelerates its business diversification plan, investing in Elitron's robust production systems: Kombo SD, Kombo T and Spark

FIVE new Elitron systems for Sismaitalia, for all their smart display and packaging production

Unusual for a visual communication company, the name Sismaitalia inextricably combines the well-known brand "Sisma" and an unusual homeland pride, unveiling their ambition to go beyond print. Founded in 1989 by Oscar Stucchi under the name Biesse, for over a decade the company remained focused on large-scale mailbox advertising distribution. The first phase of transformation, which introduced the Sisma brand, and opened up their large format digital printing services, dates back to the late nineties, and continued into the early 2000s with the introduction of some legendary machines, such as the Scitex TurboJET.

This technology turned out to be the forerunner for increasingly advanced and productive systems for outdoor billposting. In 2010, Biesse acquired the business branch of the Verona-based advertising agency Emmeitalia, increasing its customer base and laying the foundations for an increase in volumes and turnover. Federica Tisato, former Marketing Director of Emmeitalia, also joined the new organization, taking on the role of Managing Director. In 2015 the company changed its name to Sismaitalia and was the first European site to instal the HP Latex 3500. In 2017 the Massivit 1800 large format 3D printer arrived (the first in Italy), along with MBA's water-based inkjet technologies, and a 5-meter Fujifilm Acuity Ultra.

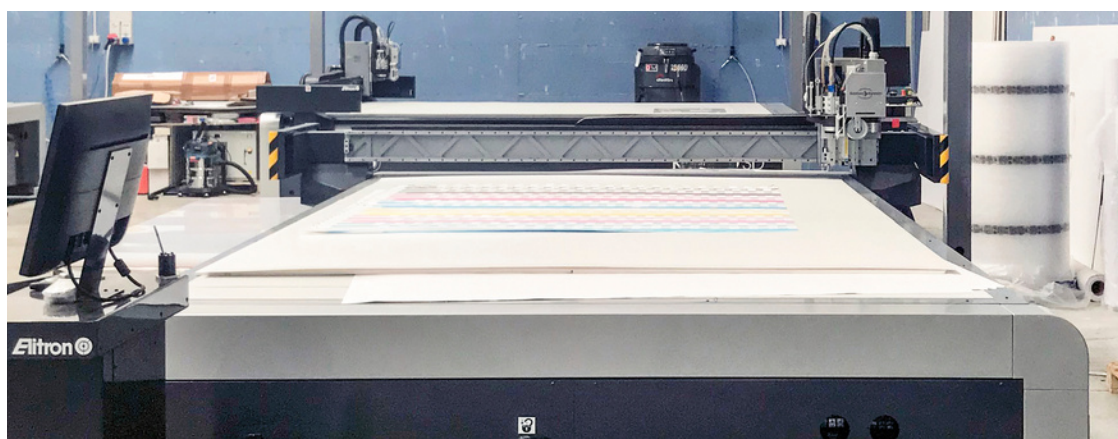
The partnership between Tisato and Stucchi, now President of the Board of Directors, gives Sismaitalia an original and diversified style and business model, which in recent weeks has given way to an important investment in Elitron's digital cutting systems.

The year of Covid-19 opens up new business scenarios

If for many it is destined to remain an annus horribilis, for Sismaitalia 2020 saw an unexpected revolution in terms of technology and business, generated by a mix of luck, stuteness, and vision. The first stimulus was provided by the Covid-19 epidemic, which urged Sismaitalia to create a dedicated face shield, designed for healthcare professionals and categories of workers who require to move freely with adequate protection in place.

SismaMask, as the product is known, uses Massivit 3D printing technology to make the mask arch which is attached directly to the users forehead. The polymer used is both resistant and elastic and a sweat-proof rubber strip is applied for both comfort and practicality. The interchangeable screens in PETG - transparent anti-reflective, anti-fog and anti-scratch material - are instead shaped using the digital cutting system.

«We are by nature innovators, always on the lookout for something that others do not do, and the lockdown period was particularly fruitful from the point of view of new ideas», explains Tisato. «The idea of the face shield was mine, and it was engineered in collaboration with Massivit. Thereafter it was made available to all other global users of Israeli 3D technology. The SismaMasks are selling well, and I know that other European colleagues have quickly benefited too».



Kombo SD+ 31.20



The second intuition, with greater continuity and impact on the production and technological fronts, concerns the launch of a new paper converting business unit.

«From billboards to direct printing, from flyers to events, diversity of products and services is in our DNA», says Stucchi. «The desire to enrich the purchasing experience of our customers, and the awareness that something was missing in the paper converting industry, pushed us in this direction».

Four strategic sectors

The slowed pace of the pandemic offered Sismaitalia's management the opportunity to develop ideas and strategies that were already partially sketched out with the big names in large-scale distribution, and with whom their relationship stretches back over decades. The result is a fourfold value project. The first area of intervention concerns the evolution of the promotional island, which becomes a multi-material and sensorial exhibition space, combining cardboard products with 3D printing applications. The second area concerns cardboard displays, with the introduction of new materials and design patterns. The third area concerns the creation of high-performance packaging in medium / high quantities, an area little explored by digital. The latest project is focused on the launch of a multi-material rapid prototyping service. To quickly acquire the necessary skills, Sismaitalia started a dedicated HR recruiting drive for designers and product managers, to develop these individual business units.

Specific finishing solutions for every material and application

Once the strategy was in place, Sismaitalia initiated discussions with the main printing, converting and workflow management suppliers. A process that narrowed the list of potential suppliers to only a few brands. On the printing front, the company chose to go with HP, purchasing an HP Scitex 11000, for direct printing onto corrugated cardboard. In the field of die-cutting, it was immediately clear that a highly diversified business model would require the use of countless different materials, sometimes even unknown or unreleased. Firstly cardboard, in all of its variants, but also plastics, foams, single or coupled, in a variety of different formats, thicknesses and densities. Having completed a cycle of technical analysis and demonstrations, Sismaitalia concluded that it would have to implement several cutting and milling stations, each with specific characteristics, workflows, software applications and tools. In this delicate phase, the company approached the Italian manufacturer, Elitron.



Federica Tisato
Managing Director
at Sismaitalia

Design becomes a new, and unexpected criteria for technology choice

The first tests carried out at the Elitron headquarters created an unexpected situation for both the Sismaitalia and Elitron teams. This meeting of minds triggered a joint design thinking process, involving not only both teams but also the raw material and adhesive suppliers directly. «Spontaneously we created a project team working towards a common goal, sharing

information and respectfully collaborating, enthusiastic at the idea of acquiring know-how and new skills», tells Tisato. «As we ran the tests, Elitron supported us in choosing the right systems, configurations, and tools, without ever slipping into commercial discussions and preconceived ideas. It got to the point that, from three machines initially hypothesized, we actually ended up buying five».

For corrugated, cardboard packaging and display die-cutting Sismaitalia purchased three Elitron **Kombo SD 31.20** 3.100x2.000 mm, equipped with a multi-tool cutting head, creasing and milling modules, conveyor belt tabletop and the Seeker System for automatic recognition of printed images on the tabletop. The three units are already in production at the Cernusco Lombardone production site, north of Milan.

To process special supports, the company opted for an Elitron **Kombo T 16.20** format 1.600x1.200 mm, a fixed cutting system capable of cutting foam materials up to 120 mm thick, equipped with a pneumatic oscillating cutting module, milling spindle, pen module and video projection system to position the shapes on the material, ready for cutting. Lastly, for rapid prototyping operations of any type of material, the compact cutting system Elitron **Spark 19.16** format 1.900x1.600 mm was chosen. This system had a conveyor belt and multi-tool cutting head, it is also equipped with fixed and oscillating cutting module, creasing, milling and camera.



Kombo T 16.20



Integrated workflows and increased automation

In addition to this impressive fleet of equipment, over the last decade Sismaitalia has undertaken an alignment plan in line with Industry 4.0, together with its partner Orchestra. Both production sites, which use Cloud applications and resources, have adopted workflows based on Enfocus PitStop and Switch. Similarly, both the new HP Scitex 11000 (installed in Cernusco Lombardone) and the HP Latex 3500, MBA Fast On Paper and Fujifilm Acuity Ultra systems (installed in Bussolegno) use Caldera printing software. The whole organization then uses the Arianna Printing management software of Interlem GP Omega to manage the administrative, commercial and planning processes, as well as for logistics and warehouse stocks.

With a corrugated board printer such as the HP Scitex 11000, capable of producing up to 650 m² / hr and equipped with automated material loading and unloading units, the choice to purchase multiple standalone cutting machines may seem short-sighted. This decision, on the other hand, stems from a clear vision and the desire to preserve maximum flexibility and interoperability. « A fully automated system like the Kombo TAV is a daydream, but it will certainly enter our workflow in the future», explains Stucchi. «In this initial phase, however, we wanted to create great firepower, but without stiffening. The next step, as soon as the volumes of rigid materials start to increase, will in fact be to automate the loading of the three Kombo SDs with Elitron's Heleva loading system.»



Kombo SD+ Cutting Head

Towards an all-Italian industrial project (or almost)

Sismaitalia's decision to invest in Elitron goes beyond performance and essential technological fundamentals. « We clearly saw a strong identity in the ownership and strategic management of Elitron, and a business approach similar to ours», tells Stucchi «Elitron quickly understood our technical and commercial process, our approach to markets and the customers we want to approach». A reciprocate and value model that Sismaitalia has always applied to the relationship with all its suppliers.

This is demonstrated by the anti-Covid project developed with Massivit, the technological development path undertaken with MBA and MS for the printing of water-based billboards, and the recently established collaboration with an Italian plastics manufacturer.

«Researching and developing unique solutions and working as a team are values that the Italian industry has forgotten, increasing the distance between entrepreneurs and losing competitiveness», says Tisato.

«Today, to quickly finalize a complex project, you need to be multidisciplinary, and the union of strengths and skills is the only way forward».

While open to contamination and technologies from global partners and suppliers, Sismaitalia makes "Italianness" a reason of pride. An added value-based exclusivity combining the best qualities and talents this beautiful country has to offer. Firstly, the ability to relate to customers and transfer a feeling of pleasure, beauty, and positivity, whilst at the same time understanding the obstacles customers face.

«If you can understand the needs and difficulties facing customers, if you can make them think, if you can offer them not only the best possible product, but also psychological and moral support, you cannot commercially fail», concludes Tisato. «Italy is home to enormous creativity and skills, which we ourselves struggle to understand. For this reason, discussing and dealing with our national counterparts, now including Elitron, has become a corporate and personal priority». From this perspective, in June 2020 Sismaitalia launched an advertising campaign in the main national economic newspapers called "Made in Italy against Covid-19".



Kombo SD+ Cutting Head V-Cut