

Transformers

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Specialacciai's New Era: Interview with Roberto Solaroli, President and CEO



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SPECIALACCAI
STRAIGHT TO THE CORE

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Specialacciai's New Era:

Interview with Roberto Solaroli, President and CEO

Could you tell us about the history of Specialacciai and how the company has evolved since its founding?

Specialacciai was founded in 1988, which means the company has been on the market for over 30 years. We are the mother company of a larger group that employs more than 300 people. Our main focus is the production of cores for electrical transformers intended for various final applications, such as energy generation, transmission and distribution, renewable energy, transport (railway, traction and marine transformers), data centers, EV charging stations, industry and many others.

The group also consists of Transelit and Traser Italia: Transelit is a company I founded in 2002. It is located in Znojmo, Czech Republic and it is specialized in the production of 90° laminations and complete cores for Low Voltage and Traction Transformers. Traser Italia, part of our group since 2015, produces EI and UI laminations for low voltage transformers, and laminations for electric motors.

Specialacciai had historically been recognized as a strong player mainly focused on the Italian market, specializing in the production of cores for liquid-immersed distribution and cast-resin transformers.

Over the past decade we have made significant investments in capacity,

quality, and innovation. These efforts have enabled us to strengthen our partnerships with multinational companies in the transformer industry.

We have continuously improved our internal processes through close collaboration with our customers, supported by technical workshops and thorough audits.

As a result, we have successfully expanded our presence and increased our volumes across the European market. This significant growth required us to adapt on multiple fronts. To support our continued development, we had to make strategic decisions across multiple areas of the organization, marking the beginning of a new era for Specialacciai.

Why do you call this a New Era? What are you doing to develop even further?

The New Era represents our commitment to long-term growth in an ever-evolving market with strong demand for transformer core. We are investing in order to strengthen the company and making sure that the growth and development that we are experiencing do not stop here but continue in the long term. There are five areas which we are currently focusing on in terms of investment: we are working towards increasing our production capacity, strengthening our organizational structure,

Biography

Mr. Roberto Solaroli began his career in the steel trade, working across the Far East, United States, the Czech Republic, and Italy. Over time, he specialized in electrical steel, which laid the foundation for the company he would later establish.

In 1988, he founded Specialacciai in Novi Ligure, Italy. The company initially operated as a steel trading business but gradually shifted its focus to electrical steel and began producing transformer cores.

In 2002, Mr. Solaroli established Transelit in Znojmo, Czech Republic, a strategic location to serve the central and northern Europe low voltage and traction transformer market.

Between 2010 and 2015, Mr. Solaroli expanded the business through the acquisition of Confer Italia and Traser Italia, two other companies in the electrical steel sector. This period also marked the beginning of a larger investment plan in Specialacciai, which included the purchase of new machinery and the installation of the company's first robotic cutting and assembling line in 2018.

During the same period, the second generation of the Solaroli family, Tea and Tommaso, joined the company, contributing to its ongoing development and investment strategy.

Since then, the group has experienced significant growth, now employing more than 300 people and having an annual turnover of around €130 million.

The New Era represents our commitment to long-term growth in an ever-evolving market with strong demand for transformer core

continuously improving the quality of our products, further developing our IT systems and ensuring a sustainable production cycle.

Can you please tell us more about your recent investments in factories in Italy?

The investments in production capacity are of course a necessary step in expanding our business, developing new markets, and increasing our volume and revenue. These investments clearly have a major role in our New Era.

We now operate two manufacturing

facilities. The first, located in Novi Ligure in the Piedmont region, spans 15,000 m² of covered area and specializes in producing cores for oil-immersed distribution transformers and cast resin (dry-type) transformers.

Recent and planned investments in this factory are focused on further automating the production processes. A clear example of this strategy is the recent installation of new cutting lines with automatic assembling of the cores with the use of robotic arms. This kind of machine is more efficient, faster and better quality wise, compared to traditional core cutting lines used for distribution transformers.

The second factory is located in Candia Lomellina (Lombardy region), around 70 km north of Factory 1. The 10.000 m² building was bought in 2023 and was completely renovated and equipped with a new slitting line, cutting lines, assembling tables and testing equipment. This large investment was made to enter the power transformer and shunt reactor core market, which has grown impressively in recent years. The demand for power transformer cores has been rising significantly, and we foresee even further growth in the future. Thanks to this new plant, Specialacciai extended its operations to new markets and new customers, supplying completely assembled cores of up to 100 Tons and cut laminations up to 1000 mm wide.

Given the almost instant success of the new production facility, we are currently assessing the opportunity for strategic expansion, which includes the installation of additional cutting lines to significantly enhance our production capacity.







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Specialacciai is also planning to open a new factory in Tunisia. Please tell us more about the factory and the factors which made you consider this expansion?

At the moment, our main market is Europe, but we also have strong relationships with extra-European transformer manufacturers. Our intention is to open to new markets, and to get closer to our customers outside of Europe. For this reason, we made the decision to open Hinisco, a new company based in Tunisia, which will be operational starting from the beginning of 2026. The main purpose

of this new company will be to manufacture magnetic cores for extra-European markets, especially North Africa. Our plan is to bring Specialacciai's knowledge and expertise, already well known in Europe, outside of our continent, in order to support new customers and be closer to the already established ones.

Hinisco will be mostly focused on the North African market for transformer cores, a market that has significantly grown in the recent period, and that will continue to develop in the following years. The strategy of this new company will be to differentiate itself from the competition thanks to its state-of-the-art equipment: all the machines that will be present at Hinis-

co are new and include the latest generation high-speed cutting, with fully automatic logs stacking, designed to ensure the maximum possible efficiency and quality of the product.

Hinisco represents a crucial step for our new era, a big challenge but also a great opportunity to further expand and develop our brand and operations.

How important is team structure and talent development in advancing Specialacciai's New Era?

People are central to our strategy: Specialacciai has a low employee turnover, as those who join our company share our values and work approach. This mutual commitment often leads to long-term tenure, with many employees staying with us for years, thereby contributing to the growth and stability of the organization.

As the business grows and our customer base expands, it becomes essential to strengthen our team by bringing new talent into various departments across our organization. Over the past few years, we have appointed highly experienced professionals as managers of key areas, further supporting our ongoing expansion.

Another important side of the new organizational developments is the arrival of many young people. They are joining many different departments in the company to help us develop. We believe in educating the new generation in order to transmit knowledge and accelerate the development of the organization. Training young people is a crucial priority for us: we have very experienced people that have to be not only managers, but also teachers. This is the main way to grow a company.

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What do Specialacciai's operational processes look like?

Specialacciai aims to be not only a core supplier, but also to establish a partnership with the customers. When we receive the technical drawings and specifications from them, our technicians are able to determine the performance of the core in terms of losses and other magnetic properties in advance. During this process, we provide technical assistance to our customers, including the most efficient solutions in terms

of design in order to reduce costs. It is also worth mentioning that every core that is produced is tested to guarantee compliance with the customer's specifications.

As we were discussing earlier, the growth in volumes that we are currently experiencing in Specialacciai must go hand-in-hand with a strong focus on the quality of our products, and we are fully committed to this principle: Quality checks and controls are implemented in every step of the production, from the incoming inspection of the raw materials to the final inspection of



Roberto Solaroli with Tea and Tommaso Solaroli



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the finished product before shipping.

Investing in quality is undoubtedly our priority and the most effective way to differentiate ourselves from the competition: the goal is to make Specialacciai a benchmark supplier of magnetic cores.

All our companies are certified to the ISO 9001 Quality Management Standard. Specialacciai, in particular, is aiming to achieve ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 standards. These efforts demonstrate our commitment to environmental sustainability, employee well-being, and the highest standards of health and safety.

Can you tell us more about your recent investments in IT infrastructure and how they support your operational goals?

In recent years, we have made significant investments in technology. Our latest advancement in this area is the implementation of a new ERP system, developed in close collaboration with Oracle, as well as the integration of a new Manufacturing Execution System (MES).

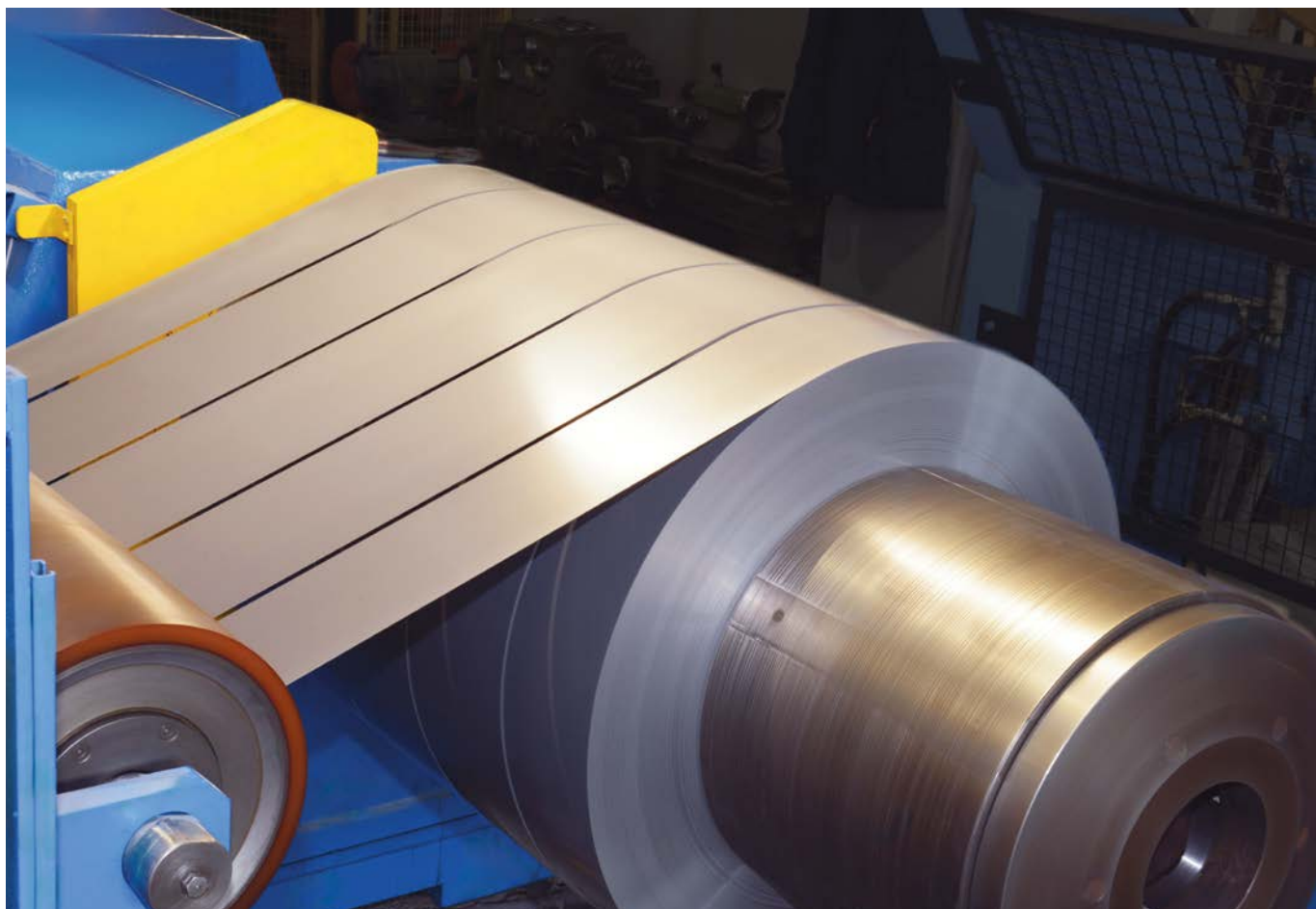
These developments are necessary due to the significant growth in terms of business development and expansion

in both new and existing markets. With increasing volumes and customers, and more stringent customer requirements, we identified the need for greater traceability of products and processes, with the objective of being more reliable to our customers.

We offer a product, the transformer core, built in compliance with the highest quality and technical standards. The goal now is to also offer a service, and these investments in IT infrastructure are aimed at this, providing more traceability, and improving customer service and technical support.

The decision to invest in new ERP and MES systems was made after a thorough review of internal processes and a risk analysis. The broader vision of these investments is to digitalize operations, reduce paper usage, and manage information in a more centralized manner.

Another aspect of these investments is cybersecurity, which is considered



a top priority by the management and IT team. We are working toward obtaining ISO 27001 certification for security and data protection.

How do you incorporate sustainability in your production cycle?

Sustainability means a lot to our family. I'm not referring just to sustainability in our processes, but also in the welfare of our employees. We are developing our factory as a better place to work and live in harmony between human resources and advanced technological machinery in order to bring our product to an eco-friendly world. We are already engaged with a utility that provides us with 100% green electricity, reducing CO₂ emissions and ensuring a greener, more efficient, and resilient energy transition.

As part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability and responsible energy use, we are proud to pres-

By producing electricity from a renewable source, we avoid releasing around 560 tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere annually

ent our nearly 1 MW (1,000 kW) photovoltaic system. This installation plays a key role in reducing our environmental impact and supporting the transition to renewable energy.

This green energy directly powers our operations, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and stabilizing long-term energy costs. By producing electricity from a renewable source, we avoid releasing around 560 tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere annually. This project highlights our concrete actions toward a low-carbon future. The installation of this photovoltaic system is more than just an investment in technology, it's a strategic step in aligning our industrial activities with environmental responsibility.

The installation of solar panels in our facilities marks first step toward long-term energy independence, with the goal of achieving zero emissions in both scope 1 and scope 2. In addition, we collaborate with our suppliers to purchase eco-sustainable products and work in synergy with steel mills to research and develop new materials with low efficiency losses, addressing scope 3 emissions as well.

This holistic approach is key to building a more sustainable, efficient, and responsible future for our company and the environment. We believe that sustainable growth is possible when innovation, efficiency, and ecological awareness go hand in hand.

Nothing I have mentioned above would have been possible — nor will it be possible in the future — without the outstanding support and contributions of our people, especially those who began the journey with us in the early days.

What can we expect from the future of Specialacciai?

As the transformer market continues to evolve and expand, we want to express our firm commitment to innovation, quality, and sustainable growth and development: how we evolved and navigated the difficul-

ties of the industry in the last years is a demonstration of this commitment, but the journey is far from over.

Looking ahead, Specialacciai's investments in production capacity, quality, organizational structure, IT and sustainability are set to drive further development and improve

our competitiveness as a manufacturer of magnetic cores. The establishment of a new production plant dedicated to power transformer cores, the installation of new automatic cutting and assembling lines, and the foundation of Hinisco in Tunisia mark a significant step towards further expansion in already existing and new markets.

We can say that through investment, organization, and technical improvements, we have successfully built the foundation to grow further, in terms of revenue, volumes, and most importantly, customer satisfaction. With strengthened operations and a clear strategic direction, we are ready to step into the New Era and expand our capabilities and global presence.



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