

The Perfect Mix

As a global masterbatch leader, Ampacet is investing in innovation and expansion to secure a bright future for its global operations.

Images courtesy of Ampacet

Since 1937, Ampacet's masterbatch technology has enhanced the value of a broad range of plastic products, giving them the right look and function. Ampacet's masterbatches are used in almost every polymer plastic process and application.

With more than 1,850 employees and a global masterbatch capacity of more than 400,000 tons, Ampacet has 24 Masterbatch production sites including colour-matching capabilities and four major R&D centres worldwide for quality management, technical service, analytical testing, and innovative development.

Giuseppe Giusto, Managing Director, Europe, Middle East, Africa (EMEA), sat down with *The CEO Magazine* to discuss how he has seen Ampacet Europe grow over the past two decades and the investments and decisions that have been made to get Ampacet to the leading global position it is in today.

The CEO Magazine: How would you describe your journey with Ampacet?

Giuseppe: After having finalised my high school degree in industrial chemistry and having spent some time in the Air Force Academy as an officer cadet pilot, my career within the plastics industry began.

Ampacet had been present in the EU since 1986 with their investment in the Messancy, Belgium, plant, and when my journey with Ampacet started in 1989, the company was keen to start developing the masterbatch business in Italy for which they hired me as regional manager. This was really at the beginning when Ampacet started creating their sales and technical network within Europe.

For five years I was in charge of the development of the distribution activities for this market, as well as building the sales organisation and increasing the company's customer portfolio. With the increase in sales and Ampacet's growth within Europe, we were ready, in 1995, to open an official Ampacet Europe branch in Italy with the main office based in Milan.

At the same time, we continued looking into the investment of a company located in the north of Italy, which was producing plastic compounds. This moved me from pure sales and technical activities to, step by step, the management of the operation which widened my knowledge with the day-to-day running and development of this plant which today has become Ampacet's second most important plant in Europe.

In 2006, Ampacet asked me to move to Luxembourg for the position of General Manager of Ampacet Europe, taking on the total responsibility of the European,

Middle East, and African operations. Ampacet further expanded our production network making additional acquisitions in the United Kingdom and Poland, making it a total of five European plants: two Italian plants, one plant in the UK, one plant in Poland, and one in Belgium.

In 2007, I proposed and completed the only joint venture for Ampacet, building a new plant for colour masterbatch in Tver, Russia, with the partnership of our local distributor MASTERBATCH SV, which to date has been very successful.

In 2013, I proposed and completed the construction of our new European headquarters in Luxembourg, which not only included the new state-of-the-art production plant but also the new Ideation Centre and the new R&D laboratory. This was a big investment that has helped consolidate Ampacet's leadership within Europe. We now have a total of seven production plants in EMEA and we are actually looking to further invest and expand our production capacity in Africa and the Middle East.

By the end of the year we will also open our new distribution hub in Luxembourg—more than 25,000 square metres in the heart of Europe—reinforcing our service capabilities. This is a very exciting project for Ampacet; distribution is an essential part of any trading company. It is the physical link between a business and its >



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customer. Consistency, reliability, and quality are crucial.

Through these different stages, what would you say have been some of the greatest challenges that you have faced?

Masterbatch is a tough, tricky product. It is not a finished product and it is not a raw material. We are selling a service. Our service evolves with the market trends so we need to be proactive and to anticipate and follow all of these factors if we want to remain competitive.

The aggressive strategy that has been implemented has been very challenging to Ampacet given the situation of the economic conditions, but we wanted to remain close to our strategic markets and we wanted to support the growth of our customers and satisfy their needs to the best of our ability. We believe in and are committed to the continued growth and success of the EMEA market.

No Ampacet employee has been made redundant during this difficult period and none of our plants have been closed down, unlike some of our competitors. We have been in a situation where we were stronger and where we were able to react efficiently, proactively and professionally when the market situation improved, due to our continuing investments.

Some people believe that if you only work for one company during a long period of time then you don't get enough diverse experience. For me, it has really been the opposite. I have had many challenges and many diverse tasks to manage and my mission is not yet over. Ampacet is always looking for ways to improve and enhance our capabilities. Every year there will always be something new—an acquisition, an investment, a new market to develop, and more.

Ampacet is growing worldwide so even the way you interact with your colleagues and partners is evolving. I have always been

challenged and this for me is a very important factor.

What are the key values or principles that define Ampacet as an organisation?

Development and success within a company will not be achieved if you don't recognise, protect, and underline the value of your people. In that respect, I believe that I work for a very special company. Ampacet is a multinational company but it is a family-run company. The values of our company are the values of a family. These include respect for our people and developing our people to the best of their ability.

Ampacet wants its employees to feel good when they come to work and to enjoy working for Ampacet. Three years ago Ampacet began implementing the program 'A great place to work'. Great workplaces are built through the day-to-day relationships that employees experience. The key factor in common in these relationships is trust—trust the people they work for; have pride in what they do; and enjoy the people they work with. Trust is the defining principle of great workplaces—created through management's credibility, the respect with which employees feel they are treated, and the extent to which employees expect to be treated fairly.

All Ampacet managers have the opportunity to learn and develop emotional intelligence skills and have received training in the program, 'A great place to work'. They have also received personalised coaching on how to improve their management skills working on creating teams that are high-performing and work well together given the ethics of 'A great place to work', which today, I can confirm that Ampacet really is!

Finally, what does the future hold for Ampacet?

My mission is not yet accomplished and Ampacet's future is looking very bright. Ampacet will continue



to develop products and processes that contribute to more efficient use of energy, water, and raw materials, advocating the economical use of non-renewable resources following the strict international standards of ISO 14001.

We will operate in a culture encouraging the highest ethical behaviour impacting employees, customers, suppliers, the community, and our planet. In the past two years, Ampacet's installations have significantly improved, reducing its ecological footprint by the installation of a heat recovery system on the production lines, enabling the heating of the halls and offices and installation of solar hot-water panels. Ampacet has improved its energy efficiency by 12 per cent and is aiming to further reduce its consumption by 6 per cent before 2020. Today, 71 per cent of our European plants' electricity consumption is green energy.

We have come through a very difficult period with a very positive outcome. Ampacet will continue to expand our market geographically, investing more and more energy in the emerging markets which we believe is the key to our future success. Over the next five years, we want to establish in the emerging markets the same network that we have established in our traditional European regions during the past 25 years. •

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- Giuseppe Giusto

"With more than 30 years of experience as Ampacet's key supplier, we deliver win-win solutions, and we value the partnership and collaboration in innovation. Both companies take sustainability seriously and together we create solutions that reduce the environmental footprint." - Heike Van De Kerkhof, Business Director EMEA, DuPont Titanium Technologies