



# Caring for Consumers

With a unique understanding of its customers and their needs, N&W Global Vending is investing in its people and the innovative ideas that they develop to advance its markets.

Images by Gianni Canali

**T**he vital ability to intimately understand consumer behaviour and demands has made N&W Global Vending the market leader it is today. As a global leader in the production of automatic snack and beverage vending machines, and a major international player in the hotel, restaurant, and cafeteria industry (Horeca) and the office coffee service sector (OCS), N&W Global Vending has grown significantly over the past 14 years, anticipating and adapting to market shifts and transforming the industry.

Andrea Zocchi, President and CEO of N&W Global Vending, has been with the company since 2002 and says his past industry experience helped him overcome a number of hurdles along the way. "I have a financial background. I studied business administration and economics at the University of Ancona and then I started at PricewaterhouseCoopers as an auditor. I did that for seven years and then I joined Knoll International, the leading company for designing, building, and manufacturing high-end furniture for residential and office

customers. I was the European controller there for five years.

"I then left and joined McDonalds Italy, where I had a great experience building up the McDonalds system. In five years we managed to build it up from 20 stores to 250 stores. It was a really exciting time and I was in charge of both finance and the development of new stores.

"I then worked at NetSystem, a technological start-up that developed an innovative broadband via satellite service, before joining N&W Global Vending. I've been working here for 12 years, the first nine as chief financial officer of the company and then in 2012 I took over from the former CEO in a planned process of succession."

N&W Global Vending was formed through the merger of two leading European vending machine manufacturers, Necta and Wittenborg, in 2000, just two years before Andrea joined the company.

"It was the perfect merger between the number one and number two players in the market. Out of this, N&W Global Vending has emerged

as the clear market leader in the industry. I think the results have shown that it was the right decision. The capabilities and skills that have been put within the company have been substantial."

N&W Group has a turnover of approximately €300 million and has 1,500 employees worldwide. Production plants are located in Italy and China and operating affiliates are based in France, Belgium, Spain, Germany, UK, Denmark, Austria, Poland, Russia, Argentina, Brazil, the US, China, Australia, and Singapore.

"We have people with a range of backgrounds and skills, and that's good because the customer has evolved as well. The culture inside management has been built up over the years to become a very efficient, professional group."

These skilled, experienced employees have formed the backbone of the company as they have evolved and developed with the industry. Andrea notes, "I would say the overall development of the vending industry from 2000 to now has been significant. The general performance and the reliability of the machines that >

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manufacturers are selling to customers has grown substantially, as well as the quality of the components used, which allow the dispensing of products perfectly aligned with the most recent healthy rules. We have developed into the market leader with 40-per-cent market share, with our next competitor holding a market share of around 10 per cent.”

The combination of Necta’s expertise in the delivery of espresso and Wittenborg’s background in providing exceptional American-style coffee proved successful for N&W Global Vending as it grew over the years. In response to market demands for a wider range of products, N&W acquired SGL Group and ADE in 2007.

Both SGL Group and ADE brought specific capabilities that enhanced the N&W offer. SGL was a leader in portioned espresso coffee technology (pods and capsules) in relation to smaller



dispensing machines, and ADE, which was renamed N&W Innovative Solutions, was at the vanguard of payment systems design and production. With the rise of the cashless technology marketplace, the expertise of ADE proved vital as it placed N&W in an ideal position to capitalise on this evolving market.

“We decided to diversify into the OCS sector, with a particular focus on coffee. Accordingly, seven years ago, we acquired SGL Group, a company that was already an important player in the sector. Then, as now, we wanted to lead the way as a company; not only in our core business of vending, but

also in Horeca and OCS. We want to be recognised as a front-line supplier by operators across each of these important sectors.

“In the intervening years, we’ve drawn closer to achieving our aim. N&W is now firmly established in the Horeca market, having made a substantial investment in developing a comprehensive range of ‘super automatic’ machines, and then supporting the marketplace thanks to a dedicated, worldwide customer-service network. We want to keep our market leadership and retain our mission. We want to continue to be the leading producer of coffee and food dispensers worldwide by delivering a consistent consumer experience. We are caring for our customers, our people, and the environment because we believe that these are the keys to our success.”

This focus on the customer permeates everything N&W Global Vending does and Andrea believes



social media. There will be a lot of technology coming into our new machines and we want to convince our customers that this is the future. We want to generate more and more consumption out of our machines.”

Innovation has always been an integral part of N&W Global Vending’s DNA. Each year the group invests heavily in research and development programs. With more than 100 employees in the company’s R&D team, it’s clear that N&W is dedicated to developing new technologies that will shape the future of the vending-machine industry. As a result of this ambitious approach, the group has a portfolio of more than 550 patents which represent the height of innovation.

This commitment to continuous improvement and innovation has seen N&W Global Vending leading the industry and creating consumer trends. Andrea believes that customer expectations are created and stimulated by the introduction of new models that offer new purchasing opportunities. With the group anticipating and shaping consumer demands and behaviours in the vending market, N&W recognises the important role it plays in consumers’ everyday lives.

This will be top of mind for Andrea and his team as they continue to develop N&W Global Vending’s offer and portfolio. With the retail market—both in traditional retail spaces and in the office—becoming more streamlined and competitive, N&W Global Vending will consistently develop and deliver cutting-edge products and machines to consumers around the globe. •

that it’s this single-minded attitude to business which has ensured the group’s consistent success. Andrea states that every decision taken by the group is designed to surpass the expectations of customers. In the group’s day-to-day operations, customer relations play a pivotal role, far surpassing the traditional functions of technical and commercial support.

As a result of this intense understanding of its customers, N&W Global Vending is uniquely qualified to predict and anticipate customers’ requirements—an essential ability in a constantly evolving marketplace. Andrea firmly believes that the group is ready and willing to take advantage of the opportunities inherent in change. He even admits that the company’s success in this area is really the reason behind its predominant presence in its chosen market sectors.

N&W Global Vending’s passionate people understand the importance of interacting with their customers and recognising their needs. Andrea says he and his team drive this customer focus and understanding throughout the group and embed it into their culture and values.

“In the past couple of years, we have launched a program to encourage engagement and motivation because we want our people to be part of our strategy. We always want them to be informed about what’s happening

in the company, so we do a lot of communication between management and our employees. We want to hear what they have to say and whether they have any recommendations for the business.

“We always try to keep our people up-to-date about what’s going on with the business. I personally visit manufacturing sites twice a year in order to meet our people and deliver a speech informing them about what we’re doing well and what we’re not.

“We also do ‘Lunch with the Boss’, where I invite 10 or so employees to lunch to sit down and talk to them. It’s once a month and it really gives people the chance to open up and talk to me about their concerns and ideas. We work in a competitive marketplace so it’s very important that we know who we are, why we’re the leader, and why we should be really proud to be working for N&W Global Vending.”

As the group looks to the future, Andrea and his team will continue to lead the industry with innovative initiatives and transforming technological developments. “In two to three years we want all our machines to be equipped with screens, instead of the traditional keypad, and we want them to be much more user-friendly.”

“You can also deliver content to consumers through these screens. They can browse internet and

Since 1960, ODE has designed and manufactured a complete range of solenoid valves for machinery and equipment manufacturers including specialty coffee and vending machines, providing customised solutions according to our founding principles based on high quality, adaptability, product reliability, and excellent after sales service.

The experience gained in more than 50 years of manufacturing has helped us to reach new goals and has led us to develop new products that will meet the majority of industry sectors. ODE is present in all major countries worldwide.

Today we are able to provide customised products according to the needs of our customers. The recent partnership with Defond has allowed ODE to invest in specialist human resources and technology to continue to manufacture our products in Italy.



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