

# Italy favours the traditional and authentic approach

A pioneering manufacturer of automated systems and technologies in raw materials, Cepi is in the unique position of adapting its business to meet emerging trends in the Italian healthy confectionery market

Cepi designs, manufactures and installs turn-key systems for the storage, conveying and metering of raw materials, as well as fully integrated automation and technologies to complete all production processes. This mental the company has a unique insight into the industry from an Italian perspective.

Cepi say the biggest trend they are seeing is towards healthy products, driven by consumer demand of increased benefits to their health. This includes bio food with related concerns about cultivation and storage, and nutraceutical/functional foods which add active components to provide added benefits as well as nutritional, such as reducing the risk of diseases and increasing energy, mental clarity, fitness, anti-aging, etc. This is an opportunity for all those who manufacture confectionery products ranging from snacks to chocolates, as consumers increasingly search for

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convenience as well as added health benefits from their on-the-go products.

Alongside this, Cepi says interest in products perceived as traditional or authentic is also very high – products from the past are associated with a simpler taste and fragrance and employing natural ingredients and a less processed recipe. Italian food manufacturers have always followed high standards of flavour and ingredients but strong cultural movements, for example - Slow Food, an organisation that promotes local food and traditional cooking, originally founded by

Carlo Petrini in Italy, has grown over the past twenty years and have created an even greater desire to recover traditional foods and food making processes.

The Italian government adopted the National Industry 4.0 Plan in 2017, which plans to promote the digitisation of the manufacturing sector, which gives incentives on the purchase of machinery, hardware, software, green economy, research and development, training amongst other, has been a huge push to investments and innovation in all sectors including food manufacture. This has translated into bigger investments in innovation on part of food manufacturers, incentivising the purchase of installations such as those from Cepi.



There is an ever-increasing awareness on quality control and worker safety and ethically produced food in general including considerations towards the impact of manufacturing on the environment.

### Putting the trends into practice

The movement towards functional and healthy food translates to a focus on precise and reliable automation and traceability processes. Cepi has decades long experience in developing and specialised automation systems inclusive of touch panel for the management of production and software providing full traceability and warehouse management.

The accurate handling of micro ingredients is crucial to the production of functional food. Trimix is the company's solution for the dosing storage and metering of micro ingredients. It is modular and flexible, available in various configurations and able to build a wide range of challenging materials. It comes equipped with various technology to ensure hygiene in the station and surrounding environment, and undergoes constant innovation driven by the demand from manufacturers for speed and volume as well as the highest levels of repeatability and precision.

All of Cepi's storage solutions (indoor and outdoor, metal and fabric, for micro, medium and macro ingredients) are hygienic and easy-to-clean, manufactured with suitable materials and designed to prevent cross contamination. They also provide the installations with automatic self-cleaning sifting systems, with recently increased capacity.

Cepi says it always factors the preservation of flavour and of ingredient properties in the development of its technologies, from storage solutions to fermentation systems to processes as flour cooling and fat cold metering. Work in Cepi centres flexibility and individualised care of the project, with a deep involvement with the customer and the development a close relationship that prioritises listening and understanding their resources and goals. Their technologies evolve to match the demands from the manufacturer side with high levels of range and flexibility, a quality that has easily transferred to the production of healthier and more authentically flavoured food. Increased ethical awareness including that



around worker safety is a need easily met as Cepi says it has been long aligned with such values and they are foundational to their work. Their equipment is ATEX compliant since 1997 and all manufacture operations are part of a channelled system. They say all of their processes have been certified to Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series OHSAS 18001, which is the international standard for occupational health and safety.

### Building and developing the business

Cepi are in the process of building a new facility that will double their productive area, following the company's impressive growth in the past decade. Productive area is doubled with optimised production flow, automatic warehouse, dedicated area for the construction of outdoor stainless-steel silos, dedicated loading area and test room with metrological room.

With a steady and growing presence in the Asian market and a technological investment in the development of targeted solutions, Cepi have established offices in Malaysia to coordinate activities in the region.

Innovations have spanned from storage solutions (with a new antistatic fabric silo providing fluidisation and FIFO management of ingredients), improvements in micro ingredients dosing enhancing volume and speed and the range of complex ingredients the station can handle, increasing the flour cooling power of their solutions and the development of premix and blending systems. Alongside these specific technologies, Cepi say they continue to focus on the safety and hygiene in all stations and conveyance, on reducing consumptions and preserving food properties.

The company also provides highly specialised training both in their facilities and locally within the community. Training concerns the operation, automation and maintenance of equipment and utilities and is delivered by a highly qualified crew of technicians, engineers and developers who has been working with Cepi for years and has a vast experience with the company's installations.

It can last up to three days and includes:

- Pre-emptive mechanical and electrical maintenance
- Troubleshooting
- HMI (human machine interface) training

- Hygiene and cleaning of equipment
- Simulation of the installation automation and traceability processes
- Personalised video tutorials
- Local training of operators during launch

Cepi's work is centred on flexibility, research, and the ability to provide a specialised product to each customer. They build around 300 customised installations every year, focusing on the specificity and diversity of each installation and adapting or developing technologies according to their needs. This approach results in constant research and innovation leading to unparalleled technological range. Similarly, every project is built around the development of close relationship with the customer through an ongoing conversation that involves all aspects of the project – from analysis, to engineering and control, manufacture, installation and service.

### Looking ahead

Cepi predict the current trend towards healthy products and the issue of sustainability will only continue to shape the market in the future. It will be crucial in the coming years for the industry to be flexible as these needs are explored to the fullest, creating new products and demanding new manufacturing technologies, communication and distribution channels.

The meeting of creativity and tradition makes for a very inventive field. The major current drive to innovation comes from combining the pleasure of eating with the health benefits gained from it. In terms of manufacturing, this demands technologies that can improve the management of the raw materials and avoid intrusive processing. Other challenges are the conciliation between tradition and economic concerns, the need to reduce energy consumption and the support of sustainability efforts in general. As innovation drives their work, they are very eager to match each market development with new solutions.

Cepi maintains the importance of trying to remain as environmentally friendly as possible as they look not only to develop as a business but to work together to provide the best working conditions for its workers and the community. This includes taking the following steps in the business:



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- Employment of high-efficiency motors such as IE3 motors to save energy.
- Custom made installations are designed to optimise energy consumption with an individual analysis of energetic impact.
- Technologies are designed to save energy consumption and consumptions of raw materials.
- The new facilities are being built to minimise environmental impact, with a 420 kw/h solar plant which will make the facility entirely powered and heated by renewable energy, radiant floor heating and total heat recovery system with micro filtering against thin powders in the air to safeguard worker's safety.

Having a presence in the industry is an important way of keeping ahead of necessary developments, as well as making yourself known to potential customers about what Cepi can bring to their projects. Cepi says it considers personal connection irreplaceable and they can be found in around 15 exhibitions throughout the year. Interpack is the major European event for this year, and they are currently preparing their space and events to provide a warm welcome there, with a comprehensive discussion of their visitors' projects and a virtual experience of their installations. Cepi will be showcasing many of its technologies including a dosing station, sugar mill, fluidised fabric silo and dump stations and will be presenting their latest innovations in storing, metering and in technologies such as flour cooling.