



Fifty Years of Innovation in the Cutting Room



Mirella Sardini, President (right), with her son, Luigi Rillosi, and her father, Luciano Sardini, founder of IMA, shown on the video screen

In 2027, IMA SpA will celebrate half a century of business. This anniversary coincides with a new phase of development for the company, a leader in the technological evolution of the cutting room and the transition from predominantly mechanical production to digital, automated, and interconnected systems.

Founded in 1977, with its production facility in Palazzolo sull'Oglio, IMA has consolidated an international presence in the development of customized and technologically advanced solutions for cutting, spreading, and handling fabric rolls, all the way to complete digital management of the cutting room. This journey reflects the transformations of the entire fashion industry, which is now required to manage smaller batches, rapid production cycles, greater customization, and increasingly precise control of materials, consumption, and costs. In this context, the company has progressively expanded its role, combining machine design with the integration of software, data, and processes.

From mechanics to a connected Cutting Room

IMA's growth is closely linked to the development of technologies for fabric spreading and cutting. Among the most significant developments are the introduction of digital electronics with the creation of the world's first fully digital spreading machine and, subsequently, the connection of the various phases of the cutting room through integrated solutions like Syncro Cutting Room. "Over the past fifty years, we have gone from being a company specialized in mechanics applied to the Clothing

Industry to being a technological partner capable of designing and integrating entire production processes."

This transformation has also changed the relationship with manufacturers and brands. The individual machine is no longer considered an isolated element, but rather part of a production infrastructure in which automation, software, and flow control must operate in a coordinated manner. "Today, we no longer simply talk about machines, but about interconnected ecosystems in which software, automation, data management, and process control work in a fully integrated manner."

IMA therefore positions itself as a technological partner for companies seeking to improve cutting room efficiency, production flexibility, and waste reduction.

The next chapter begins with data

The fiftieth anniversary will not be merely a celebratory occasion. The company sees it as the start of a new cycle, oriented toward more connected and sustainable manufacturing. The priorities identified include increasing the level of automation, leveraging plant-generated data, and supporting companies engaged in digital transformation. Information collected in real time can be used to monitor production performance, identify inefficiencies, and improve the speed of operational decisions. "The strategic priorities for the coming years will be three: increasing process automation, leveraging data as a production resource, and supporting customers on their digital transformation journey."

This strategy is accompanied by strengthening our presence beyond our borders, without abandoning the industrial and design heritage built in Italy. "We will continue to invest in internationalization, while maintaining our strong roots in Made in Italy, which has always been one of our core distinctive values."

Fragmented Production and Intelligent Systems

Today, research and development activities are driven by the needs of a market characterized by more frequent collections, limited runs, and constant changes in production schedules. This fragmentation requires systems capable of adapting rapidly, maintaining precision and operational continuity. IMA is working on more advanced integration between machines, software, and operators, as well as on the application of machine learning and data analytics to industrial processes. "We are exploring the potential of machine learning and advanced data analytics to make systems increasingly intelligent, capable of learning from production processes, optimizing performance, reducing errors, and supporting increasingly rapid and effective operational decisions."

Beyond gathering information, the goal is to transform it into useful insights for adjusting processes and improving the performance of the entire cutting room.



Headquarters in Palazzolo sull'Oglio, Italy

Another key area concerns the interaction between personnel and technology. With the increase in digital functions, ease of use becomes crucial to making innovation truly accessible to operators. "Another area we pay close attention to is the human-machine interface, ensuring that technologies are increasingly intuitive, accessible, and easy to use."

Flexibility in Europe, productivity for large volumes

The demands placed on technology manufacturers are not uniform across markets. In Europe, there's a growing need to produce small batches and manage frequent model, material, or order changes. In other production areas, however, processing large volumes while maximizing capacity and productivity remains a priority. To accommodate both configurations, solutions must be scalable and adaptable, without compromising product quality and cost control. "Customers aren't just looking for higher-performance machines, but systems capable of communicating with each other, gathering real-time information, and supporting operational decisions." The ability to connect different equipment allows for process control in a unified manner and faster modification of production parameters. It is in this direction that automation is becoming increasingly data-driven. "IMA's task is to offer technologies that can adapt to both needs, always ensuring high quality standards and precise control of production costs."

Efficiency and sustainability converge

Reducing environmental impact is no longer a separate objective from industrial performance. In the cutting room, better use of fabrics and energy means limiting waste, containing costs, and making production more competitive. "Sustainability can no longer be considered a goal separate from efficiency: optimizing the consumption of raw materials, reducing waste, and improving the use of energy resources means being both more sustainable and more competitive." Automation and digitalization can help simplify operations, reduce errors, and improve the use of resources. "Artificial intelligence, if applied pragmatically to industrial processes, will also represent one of the main drivers of innovation in the

coming years."

LOOKING TO 2027

Looking to the near future, IMA intends to enhance the reliability, construction quality, and customer proximity that have characterized its history, while simultaneously strengthening its position as an integrator of technologies, data, and services. "After fifty years, our goal remains the same as ever: helping customers to produce better, optimizing resources and reducing waste, without losing the value of the skills, tradition, and manufacturing culture that make our sector unique," says President Mirella Sardini. This continuity is

encapsulated by the company's slogan, #SpreadingTrust, which combines technological innovation with the building of lasting relationships with the market. "Technologies change, markets evolve, and challenges transform, but the desire to look beyond and continue to be one step ahead remains unchanged."

THE DIGITAL HEART OF THE CUTTING ROOM

After pioneering digital technology with the creation of the first spreader with fully digital electronics, IMA's transformation from a machine builder to a process integrator finds one of its most significant expressions in the Syncro Cutting Room. The system we are developing to coordinate and control the entire cutting room. It's not simply a matter of connecting individual pieces of equipment, but rather creating a unified production environment that includes design and CAD, fabric loading systems, spreaders, labelers, tables, feeders, and automatic cutting machines. The platform, accessible online from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, would allow real-time monitoring of the line status, even remotely through dashboards that an increasing number of customers are requesting. Machine data is collected and processed through a cloud infrastructure or even offline on a dedicated server based on the customer's request, providing a comprehensive view of production progress and enabling intervention in the event of anomalies or user-defined events. The system can manage information generated by a single line or multiple production departments, enabling centralized control even for organizations spanning multiple plants. Its distinctive feature is the ability to transform operational data into production management tools. Performance analysis would allow us to understand the overall functioning of the line, identify any inefficiencies, and better coordinate machines and workflows. In a cutting room increasingly challenged with small batches, frequent production changes, and cost control, the connection between the various phases thus becomes a lever for increasing flexibility, traceability, and rapid decision-making.

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