

75 years of excellence. Innovation, internationalisation, and focus on people since 1985: Tecnofirma's anniversary

From an interview with Alessandro, Francesco and Giovanna Goi,
Tecnofirma – Monza, Italy

Tecnofirma, whose brand appeared on the market in the early months of 1985, celebrates 75 years of experience in the field of surface treatments. Over time, this company has evolved through cutting-edge technologies, thus conquering international markets, opening offices in Europe, the USA, and China to provide local support to customers, and enhancing its human capital by promoting growth. To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the Goi family looks back at its history and presents a series of innovations and events that honour its past while strengthening its identity for the future.



TECNOFIRMA^{75°}

To trace the origins of Tecnofirma," says Alessandro Goi, its president, "we must go back to the end of 1949, when Rotofinish Italiana was founded, a company that introduced the first mass finishing machines to the market under an American license. A few years later, alongside mass deburring machines, the first cleaning plants appeared, built under the American Ranschoff license, and soon after, the first coating systems. Given their success, the company decided to change its name from Rotofinish to Tecnofinish. The driving force behind the plant engineering division was engineer Giorgio Nironi, who, for many decades, would become one of the most respected and well-known Italian experts. In 1983, Tecnofinish was acquired by the German company Metallgesellschaft, and one year later, the plant engineering division was spun off and purchased by me and Carlo Morone, respectively the general manager and president of Tecnofinish. All 30 employees of the division joined the new company, which was named Tecnofirma, signing the acceptance document after a historic train journey to Milan to reach the notary's office in Via Torino: it was February 15, 1985."

With this transition, Tecnofirma inherited Tecnofinish's acquired expertise, a close-knit and experienced team of employees, and an established order portfolio, laying the foundations for a new entrepreneurial adventure that would go on to prove highly successful. In 1990, the company moved its headquarters to the number 35 Viale Elvezia in Monza (Italy), in an iconic building designed by architect Angelo Mangiarotti.

From the left: Giovanna, Alessandro and Francesco Goi.



That was a turning point because it enabled Tecnofirma to expand its production and research capabilities. The Viale Elvezia building not only offers ample space for the design and construction of plants but is also a symbol of the company's visionary approach, which has always focused on innovative and cutting-edge technological solutions. Today, it is the operational heart of Tecnofirma, as well as a point of reference for customers and partners worldwide. Here, new technologies are developed, prototypes tested, and custom solutions fine-tuned to meet the needs of a constantly evolving market.

A long series of strategic innovations for finishing surfaces

The diversification of its plant portfolio has played a fundamental role in this company's history. Initially specialising in machines for industrial part cleaning, Tecnofirma then also expanded into coating. At the end of the 1990s, it launched some revolutionary innovations, such as a high-pressure deburring system, which was a great market success, and the prototype of a cleaning machine that used liquid carbon dioxide instead of water. "We presented that prototype at the Milan Trade Fair, with the ambitious goal of scaling the technology for domestic use to replace traditional washing machines using water," recalls Alessandro Goi. "It was a pioneering idea – probably too much so, as it was not successful on the market, unlike high-pressure deburring." As we know, research and development do not always hit the mark – sometimes they are too ahead of their time – but they certainly sow the seeds for the advancement of an industry.

In the 2000s, Tecnofirma continued on its path of innovation. Using its expertise in cleaning and coating systems, after an intense period of research that goes on today, it refines the impregnation technology for electric vehicle motors and generators. At the beginning of the new century, the company also focused on developing a UV-curing coating process applied mainly in the automotive lighting sector. "The car industry has always been our core business," notes Francesco Goi, Tecnofirma's General Manager. "In particular, we proved far-sighted with the impregnation technology, as we developed it when we sensed that the heat engine sector was entering a difficult phase and the electric engine one was gaining ground. We are still investing in it and have filed numerous international patents."

A significant milestone in Tecnofirma's history was the opening of an industrial trial, prototyping, research, and testing laboratory at its Monza headquarters, where the company can collaborate with automotive manufacturers on the development of new technologies. Today, every Tecnofirma office around the world has a testing and R&D laboratory to support local customers.

Years of internationalisation

In the 1990s, a new family generation made up of Alessandro Goi's children, Francesco and Giovanna, joined the company and gave a further boost to its development, starting an internationalisation project and transforming the family-run business into a corporate one. Tecnofirma opened branches in China in 2011, in Germany in 2021, and in the United States in 2022. "Our Chinese branch is particularly important," explains



From left to right: Carlo Morone, Giancarlo Mamone, Alessandro Goi, Alessandro Giussani, Giorgio Nironi and Danilo Malavolti.



A period photograph of Tecnofirma's technical offices in the 1980s.



The prototype of the dispensing device developed for the company anniversary.

Francesco Goi, "because it is not a mere sales office, but it also designs and produces plants locally. After 14 years, we can say that it is a very well-established firm, led by young local staff aged between 30 and 40."

"After the Covid pandemic, we feel it is even more important to be close to customers in our target markets," emphasises Marketing & Communication Manager Giovanna Goi, "to provide pre- and post-sales assistance quickly and efficiently through local teams of technicians. Before the pandemic, we had not felt this need as much because we had never been faced with the impossibility or extreme difficulty of travelling. Today, Tecnofirma is wherever its customers are."

"The next step we are taking with our international offices is to set up a laboratory in each one, in order to supply systems but also provide assistance throughout the process definition phase," adds Francesco. "In these labs, our customers can carry out tests and samples. The latter is becoming a strategic necessity when it comes to innovative technologies, and we want to offer this chance to our customers wherever they are, without them having to come to Italy."

Focussing on the USA

"Opening a branch in the United States is proving to be a farsighted choice, to offset the objective decline of the European market over the past year," says Francesco Goi. "Even in America, uncertainty about the future of the automotive world is slowing down new investments, but nevertheless, some important new programmes are being launched. To be credible, the market requires a solid local presence. In the metalworking and automation sectors, both Italian and German products are highly valued and often competitive. At least in these sectors, Europe can boast recognised technological excellence. Although the car industry – our core business, as already mentioned – is based in and around Detroit, we chose to open Tecnofirma USA in Charlotte, North Carolina. It is a state rich in

new settlements of international companies and, in some ways, it reminds us of our Brianza (an area near Milan): mild and often sunny climate, and a peaceful environment where one can live safely," - adds Giovanna Goi. "This has made it easier for our staff to move and adapt to their new life and work environment. When we open offices abroad, we know that the support of people from our country will be important because Italian professionalism is often difficult to find elsewhere. That is why we look for safe and pleasant environments to help our staff settle in."

A company made up of people

Such a focus on the well-being and professional growth of its employees speaks volumes about Tecnofirma's commitment to people. "We have a high level of employee loyalty with minimal turnover among both senior and junior staff members. Most of our employees pursue their entire career within Tecnofirma. This is true for both Italy and China – we will see if it is also the case in our other foreign offices," indicates Alessandro Goi. "We are aware that our company has a certain appeal for employees, such as to retain them for a long time, many until retirement. As an entrepreneur, taking care of my staff members, making them feel at ease, and remunerating them adequately have always been key objectives for me. My office door is always open, and anyone can come in to ask questions or have a chat."

"At Tecnofirma, our collaborators bring an added value: we do not build standard machines, and we are always evolving, growing, transforming, and researching. What we ask from everyone is to bring that extra something to the company that each individual, depending on their background and characteristics, can contribute to their work," adds Francesco. "We have not built up employee loyalty through special social policies, although they are clearly available. The reason why people stay here is that they have the opportunity to express themselves and grow in a stimulating environment where everyone contributes to the company's success."

"I would also like to point out that the average age of our employees has progressively decreased compared to 20 years ago through a natural process," Giovanna says. "We aim to give more and more space to young people, aware of the fact that they have the energy necessary to conceive new products and open and cultivate new markets. They have an incomparable driving force when they are motivated."

Sustainability: an approach shared with customers

"Sustainability is in the DNA of our technological evolution," says Giovanna Goi. "Our main target market, electric mobility, is geared towards sustainability. We are also committed to reducing our consumption rates with an internal sustainability programme that has

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The Tecnofirma lab in the historic headquarters of Monza.

entailed installing solar panels, replacing all lighting systems, eliminating plastics, and reducing our general consumption and impact. "Among the goals still to be achieved is the sustainability report, although we have already been working on this front for years, driven primarily by automotive sector clients, who have long encouraged us to reflect on the issue."

The 75th anniversary celebrations

"The best way to celebrate our 75th anniversary is, once again, through product innovation," states Alessandro Goi. "In our lab, we have developed a prototype for the dispensing (or potting) process, an alternative to impregnation for the electrical sector that also encompasses other industrial segments. We can define it as an evolution of impregnation." From a corporate perspective, Tecnofirma will commemorate this significant anniversary with a series of events throughout the year, as well as various communication-related projects, beginning with the introduction of a specially designed logo. "This logo, which will complement our image until the end of 2025, underlines the importance of looking back at the past as an integral part of our present and future identity, emphasising our solidity and renewing our thanks to all those who have worked for and with our company over the last 75 years," Giovanna Goi concludes.

"To convey the importance of the contribution that every person makes and has made to Tecnofirma, we are also going to decorate a hallway's walls with plaques bearing the signatures of all the people who have worked at Tecnofirma since 1985, creating a sort of 'Walk of Fame' collecting signatures from old work documents." This seems the best way to summarise the history of a company whose original slogan, 'Tecnofirma, tecnologia firmata', plays with the Italian word firmata, meaning both 'branded' and... 'signed'. ▶