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Plant Manager for ST Powder Coatings



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Montecchio Maggiore, Italy

ST Powder Coatings Uses Wonderware Software Solution to Connect ERP and Plant Systems and Fill Thousands of Customized Orders Every Day

Montecchio Maggiore (VIC), Italy — ST Powder Coatings, a producer of high-end, intricately customized thermosetting powder coatings, has used Wonderware software since its inception in 2005. ST Powder Coatings' products are based completely on ecological components and can be found on motorcycles, car accessories, outdoor fixtures, agricultural machinery and household appliances. Providing colors that meet its customers' specific requirements -- and using the best and most effective technology to do so -- is key to the company's business model.

The company has used Wonderware software since before its first day in operation. In fact, the Wonderware Production and Performance Management system was up and running before construction of its headquarters and plant was complete.

Advanced Technology for Precise Production Processes

ST Powder Coatings opted for a Wonderware Software Solution because it would enable the company to ramp up and begin fulfilling orders within 4 months. It could do so because of how well the Wonderware software integrates information between the plant and business systems, and because the software would enable them to keep production efficiency and product quality consistently high.

Managing Director of ST Powder Coatings, Marco Zadra, remarked, "I wanted a relationship with Wonderware because I wanted the most technologically sophisticated industrial software in our new, highly modern plant."

The company's system integrator, AUTOWARE, also played a large role in the selection of Wonderware software. Luigi De Bernardini, General Manager of AUTOWARE, commented, "As an ArchestrA Certified System Integrator in the Wonderware Solution Provider Program, I know the advantages of Wonderware software and wanted to pass that on to this customer -- especially this customer that is focused on being on the leading edge of technological advancement."

Zero-to-High-Performance Manufacturing in 4 Months

The requirement to get the plant up and running as quickly as possible also played a role in AUTOWARE's decision to go with Wonderware. "The project started in

January 2005, and we needed to start shipping product in April of 2005; so we needed a very short development time. And this was a must for the project. We knew that, using Wonderware, we would be much more likely to achieve the very short development time," said Bernardini. "Using Wonderware software has been part of our best practices for many years."

ST Powder Coatings' system includes the Wonderware Industrial Application Server, IndustrialSQL Server historian, ActiveFactory trending and analysis software, InTouch View clients, and SCADAAlarm alert management software.



This worker uses Wonderware software to monitor the production process."

According to Bernardini, the Industrial Application Server's object-based approach to software development was integral to building the system at such an accelerated rate. "The Industrial Application Server, since it's object-based software, gives you the ability to develop software for objects that you can replicate many times. So you can start building an object and then deploy it many times and, at the same time, continue developing, adding and deploying features. So it's very, very useful in a complex project."

The development approach enabled by the Industrial Application Server's underlying Archedra industrial automation and information software architecture saved AUTOWARE's and ST Powder Coatings' software engineers an incredible amount of time. "We saved 30-to-35 percent in development time using Industrial Application Server as compared to using another product," said Bernardini.

Thousands of Product Variations Every Day

As for ST Powder Coatings' plant manager, Massimiliano Nicoli, "I wanted to use Wonderware software because I knew it would provide the best tools for satisfying our customers' unique requirements as quickly as possible, which really gives our company a competitive edge."

A highly experienced engineer before he became a plant manager, Nicoli understood the advantages of plant-to-ERP integration right away. "It's a dream to have software that speaks to the ERP system as well as to all of the hardware and software in the plant," Nicoli lauded. "This is the biggest advantage of using Wonderware software."

Bernardini concurred. "One of my favorite aspects of the Wonderware software is its ability to integrate the plant information with the ERP system."

The integration of information between the business system and the plant is key to ST Powder Coatings' ability to accurately fill its customers unique and variant orders.

Nicoli remarked, "ERP-to-Wonderware system integration helps us fulfill our customers' unique requirements. There are thousands of different color variations that we provide for our customers every day. We can enter the parameters into the business system and then use that data to create the recipes on the plant floor."

The software also assists ST Powder Coatings quickly identify the source of product variations when a color does not turn out precisely how the customer expected. "If a color is not exactly right, we can determine the source of the problem within a matter of a few hours. Without the Wonderware software, it would take us a few days," said Nicoli.



These are the actual powder coatings that ST Powder Coatings produces.

Using the Wonderware Production and Performance Management Solution also improves production over time.

"As our business grows and our experience increases, we make fewer mistakes because the software gives us the data we need to make corrections. Therefore, in the long term, we save money," commented Zadra.

The results of his approach are outstanding. "Using Wonderware software, we've increased our productivity by 30 percent," Nicoli estimates.

The AUTOWARE system integrator is key to this process, providing on-going support to ST Powder Coatings and even keeping a system integrator on-site to assist with improving performance in real time. The integrated nature of the Wonderware software helps the AUTOWARE and ST Powder Coatings personnel avoid duplication of effort.

A Variety of Benefits

Each person who interacts with the Wonderware software at ST Powder Coatings enjoys different features, depending on their responsibilities. Managing director Marco Zadra is pleased that the Wonderware Production and Performance Management Software Solution enabled his company to ramp up so quickly. He also likes that they can remain consistently competitive by quickly delivering the highest-quality thermosetting powders based on complex customer requirements. Plant manager Massimiliano Nicoli is happy that the software's integration attributes enable him to focus on his core competency: getting the most out of the factory.

General Manager of the AUTOWARE system integration firm, Luigi De Bernardini, enjoys working with the software itself, the time he saves working with the object-oriented technology, and the software's analytical and reporting capabilities. He also enjoys his company's strong relationship with Wonderware, which gives him the services and support he needs to provide outstanding system integration solutions to his customers.

"Wonderware is a very good partner for services, consulting and even for people. We are able to have a very, very good relationship with Wonderware -- both in a technical way, and a human way. So, for us, it is a real partnership," Bernardini concludes.



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