"The customer? The center of our universe"

Cavanna takes service to a whole new level with the platform C-Connect. Remote support, e-commerce, and big data analytics are just a few of its features. We discussed it all with Antonio Marangon, service division manager at the Piedmont-based packaging group.

by Federica Bartesaghi

In such a dynamic market as the packaging one, a high-quality service system has become a distinctive and competitive feature for the companies of the sector. Cavanna Packaging Group, the flowpack specialist headquartered in Prato Sesia, in the province of Novara, with production sites in Italy, the US, and Brasil, is well aware of it. As a matter of fact, last May, during Ipack-Ima in Milan, the business introduced its new digital platform C-Connect, which is the result of years of work and research, and it embraces Cavanna's whole universe. Antonio Marangon, service division manager at Cavanna, told us all the ins and outs of such a far-reaching project.

When did you first come up with the idea?

We had the idea at the end of 2018, yet the e-commerce feature linked to our management system dates back to 2014, when we started the complete digitization of the records for the spare parts. We premiered this service at Interpack 2014 and it became available for our customers starting from the following year.

What happened then in 2018?

I took part in a course on servitization organized by Ambrosetti, in Milan, which for me was actually eye-opening. That's when we first got the idea of gathering all the services that Cavanna could provide in the same place. So, in 2019, we embarked on the project. I followed the service part, and my colleague, engineer Lorenzo Fontana, tackled the data connection segment, while the software department took care of the machinery connection and the PLC for on-field monitoring. The project involved the whole company, indeed.

What did you do in practical terms?

We started connecting the machines and collecting data on field. As a matter of fact, relying on big data to intensify the customer support service and manufacture ever-performing solutions is essential. We automated the management of all the assistance requests and we created a front-end and back-end service, apart from the e-commerce obviously. In a nutshell, we set up a project, which, figuratively, was represented by a slide with the customers at the center, and around them all the digital services. Before C-Connect, the platform that we introduced at Ipack-Ima, we launched these digital solutions as stand-alone, hence they were not interconnected. The platform connected them all.

Let's focus on the single features of the platform.

First of all, the customer accesses an interactive home page where the latest opened applications are visible and the possibility to navigate the different sections is available. There is a customizable news area that enables to discover the latest events in Cavanna's universe. This also provides our marketing division with the opportunity to present potential novelties or content in the form of brief news. And just like on social media, the customer can like a post or leave a short comment. This is what we define as the 'marketing area' of the platform.

And what about the machines' connection?

This feature can be accessed from the OI monitoring area, where it is possible to view the data related to all the connected machines and thus the effectiveness level, the performance and quality of a system. Other information available regards working hours, the number of the packs produced, the ones thrown away and so forth. In other words, the customer can see how the production line is performing and which are the issues. There is indeed a list of alarms, which provide time and number of occurrences: essential warnings in order to keep the production's effectiveness under control, and intervene, if necessary, well before the customer has even had the time to pick up the phone.

That's because your technicians are connected in real-time, right?

Yes, but not only that. 'Behind the scenes' of the platform we also provide preventive support. The customer, indeed, has the possibility to create his own maintenance pack thanks to purposely-designed kits which take account of the working hours on a specific group or component. Once the set time runs out, the customer can receive an alert, which warns him that the time has come for maintenance. A machine-human dialogue with the aim of always assuring the best effectiveness levels. Moreover, there is the records part, which also represents a small, yet crucial revolution.

How?

Cavanna has always provided all the documents concerning a system, but with time passing by and because of the succession of the production managers, it might be difficult to get a hold of such papers when needed. And, in the occurrence of a machine downtime, this translates into a heavy economic loss. Now the platform gathers all the documents in the same place, and they are all updated to the latest release, ready to use and easily detectable. However, the platform's most relevant feature might be customer service: a remote-assistance system, which is highly convenient for the customers that sign a contract. But such a service is also available to all our customers on-demand, when necessary.

When did you start providing remote support?

At the end of 2019, right before the pandemic outbreak. I must say that it has enabled us to work more and better than we would have done without it, considering the travel restrictions and the need for managing tests even at a distance. Covid-19 has not caught us off guard. Now this feature is connected to the Cavanna Support app, which enables the customer to manage everything from a tablet, computer or mobile directly standing in front of the machine. It also integrates services such as a multilingual chat and the possibility to upload and send images, videos, documents and any other file without space limits directly on the platform. It is all saved on the cloud and always available.

A true revolution for the customer, but also for your technicians...

Absolutely. The change was first of all ours, because it encouraged everyone to think differently. Before that we thought that a problem could be solved only by going on field and this entailed the time and cost of the trip, perhaps even on the other side of the world. An out-of-pocket expense for the customer which, meanwhile, was also facing a machine failure, meaning a lack of productivity. Now the same issue can be solved, instead of in a few days, in just a few hours through remote support.

How many customers have already joined the platform?

Now we have more or less 30 active support requests, but we also already work for all our customers with this platform.

Is there a quick return on investment for those who sign a contract?

Yes, definitely, especially in the case of a machine halt.

Have you received positive feedback from the users?

We activated some back-end tools which enable us to understand how we perform. As a matter of fact, right after every intervention we send a brief survey to see if the issue has been satisfactorily solved, and this provides us with an immediate feedback, as well as significant inputs on how and what we can do better.

Have you already planned future developments of the platform?

We aim at increasing even more the digitization level through the application of QR codes on the machines, and perhaps already during the next Interpack, in May 2023, we will showcase this new evolution. We also want to boost our 24/7 support service across the world, in order to provide a quicker and widespread assistance. In a nutshell, we want to guide the customers inside Cavanna's ecosystem and make sure that they feel so at home that they will never leave (ed: he laughs).

Antonio Marangon

"Il cliente? È al centro del nostro mondo"

Cavanna porta la componente di servizio a un nuovo livello con la piattaforma C-Connect. Assistenza da remoto, e-commerce e analisi dei big data sono solo alcune delle sue funzionalità. Ne abbiamo parlato con Antonio Marangon, service division manager per il gruppo piemontese del confezionamento.

CUOMO