



The role of sustainability in Growermetal's approach

Like most sectors the fastener industry has been called on to face environmental issues, such as embracing low impact and sustainable manufacturing models. This call has contributed to more responsible companies, as well as opened up a new way of innovation and development. The Greenmetal project is one of Growermetal's answers to this continuously evolving picture.



A number of constant changes have impacted the fastener market over recent years, a large part of which are related to the reliability of their projects, both from the fastening performance and the environmental point of view.

Founded in 1950 by Virginio Cattaneo in the North of Italy, washer manufacturer Growermetal SpA has been called on to face the evolution of the international and global scenario, whilst confronting the increasing demand for a sustainable and circular production model.

With an overall production of more than 4,500 standard safety washers and 2,500 special parts according to customers' drawings, the Italian company covers the needs of many sectors, from automotive to railway, from industrial machines to aerospace.

Improvement is crucial to build trust with customers, which is why the pressure on sustainability must be taken into account to build a strategy based on energy conservation, emission abatement and circular development.

For Growermetal bringing a constant change inside the production process of its safety washers line is not only a matter of norms, but a strategic choice to boost a positive impact and a sustainable growth. Among the near-term and long-term objectives of the company, many aspects concern the commitment to reduce the ecological footprint of the business.

In order to align with the 2015 EU Green Deal for Carbon Neutrality, Growermetal is working to reduce CO₂ emissions and achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2050. On the one hand, the company is optimising its environmental profile through targeted interventions and structured actions. On the other hand, the integration of renewable energies and the responsible exploitation of resources has



contributed to reducing consumption, as well as increasing efficiency at all production stages.

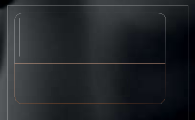
Among the many actions aimed at encouraging and enhancing the circular economy, there are also the use of natural resources, the rational disposal of waste materials and the recovery of energy and resources.

Policy for quality and environment

In order to define actions, activities and targets related to the quality of its process and commitment towards the environment, Growermetal established a 'Policy for Quality and Environment'. This document describes the goals and commitments of the company, taking into account the needs and expectations of all involved parties. It also contains a guideline through which Growermetal's management aims to perform a strategy based on a number of main targets:

- + The achievement of a shared and continuous success.
- + The full satisfaction of customers and stakeholders.
- + The improvement of products, services and processes quality.
- + The maintenance of a safe workplace.
- + An ethical approach to business management.
- + The full respect of the environment.

Among the solutions promoted to achieve these goals there is the implementing of a series of actions, such as the adherence to the internal ethic code in the activities conduct; a clear assignment of responsibilities and tasks; the >>



» constant supervision and effective prevention of non-conformities; the full compliance with binding regulations; the constant training and involvement of the human resources; and many others.

In this journey the whole team is encouraged to take active part in the initiative of Growermetal. “The quality and the environmental management system requires each of us to be prepared to participate,” comments Paolo Cattaneo, CEO of Growermetal. “As an international company we must be aware of the impact of our actions on product and process compliance, but also on the environment. We are expected to act responsibly as quality, efficiency, safety and a sustainable business model are today essential elements to generate mutual trust.”

Creating a sustainable supply chain: The Greenmetal Project

In order to reach ambitious environmental goals the company has created the Greenmetal Project, a system that, as underlined by Paolo Cattaneo: “Aligns the environmental conduct of Growermetal to four main points: The selection of suppliers, the choice of raw materials, the process development and the optimisation of resources.”

In regards to suppliers, the company pays great attention in selecting its partners, focusing on the need to reduce the negative impact of the production and guarantee the full compliance to the Italian and international standards and norms related to environmental protection.

This responsibility extends to the second aspect involved in the programme; the selection of advanced and low impact materials for the production of its safety washers, railway washers and blanked parts. From this point of view the transition to hydrogen and the relationship with the raw materials supply chain allows the manufacturer to significantly reduce its ecological footprint, by investing in innovative materials such as low-impact steel.

The third focus of Growermetal regards the process and its organisation. Here, a large part of the efforts and investments have been addressed in equipping the company’s in-house departments and the R&D laboratory with innovative technologies and machinery. “The optimisation of the resources used in the production process has been crucial in order to minimise pollution and improve the environmental performance of our company. Such a result has brought us even closer to one of our objectives: To improve Growermetal’s energy management system,” continues Paolo.

Finally, the responsible organisation of every aspect of the manufacturing system also involves choices related to the management and collection of resources. In particular, Growermetal counts on an industrial water recycling system that allows the full recovery of every liter of water used in production, while the use of renewable resources and the safe disposal and reduction of chemicals are another expression of its commitment to sustainability.

The attention given to the environment is not new for the Italian fastener company. Since 2006 Growermetal has been certified UNI EN ISO 14001 for the Environmental Management System (EMS). A certification that underlines the effort in creating responsible organisational structure, procedures, and programmes, aimed at monitoring and keeping an effective environmental policy.

Since April 2010 the installation of a photovoltaic plant on the roof of the Growermetal headquarters has also allowed the Italian washer manufacturer to produce part of its electric energy on its own. With 94 kWp of power and 101,400 kWh produced per year, the solar panels have contributed to a significant reduction of emissions, saving 70.5 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

Actions and objectives for an environmentally friendly company

When talking about the future, investments towards sustainability are combined with informational and educational resources, in order



to raise the awareness of all the employees and make the team even more involved in the creation of a virtuous system.

“Daily choices and actions are essential to make our company more and more eco-friendly,” comments Raffaele Motta, Growermetal’s HSE manager. Awareness-raising activities addressed to all the employees range from simple daily actions, such as the installation of drinking water distributors, to internal training and initiatives.

“Defining shared goals with our team and partners is the base to create and support long-term development. Our staff plays an active role in making our reality more ecological. We are very proud in seeing a positive response in the different departments,” comments Raffaele.

These targets are combined with other key interventions, which put energy saving, resources recovery, waste reduction and responsible management at the centre. This includes heat recovery from heat treatment processes; lower electricity consumption combining LED lighting systems with the installation of high efficiency electric motors and the automatic machine switch off in case of inactivity; the recycling and reuse of oil and water from production process; and the industrial rainwater harvesting system. When combined these aspects create a remarkable reduction of industrial waste production, plastic waste and chemical consumption.

Growermetal’s code of ethics

Nowadays delivering a sustainable business model means also to guarantee the full compliance with human rights, which helps brands with increasing the mutual trust and perceived value for employees, stakeholders and customers. Through Growermetal’s internal code of ethics, the company expresses the desire to protect the rights of the people and workers involved in the whole supply chain.

Creating a balance between the economic, social and environmental aspects is at the centre of such a model. Growermetal does so by adopting a transparent approach, supporting employees health and safety, creating opportunities of training and increasing the company’s welfare. Personal wellbeing is promoted through a schedule and a workload in-line with an ideal work-life balance, but also by creating a safe and healthy physical workplace.

“We encourage dialogue as we want to create a collaborative environment, where training, education and awareness play a crucial role in the professional growth of employees,” states Paolo. “It’s no coincidence that our payoff is ‘Around ideas’. A sentence that expresses our commitment to create innovation through intuition, passion, study and knowledge. People are the ones who bring ideas to life, so they deserve the best tools and conditions to shape great projects and live in a gratifying workplace.” +

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