



HOW GROWERMETAL AIMS TO CREATE VALUE FOR CUSTOMERS

A long history alone is not enough to guarantee success. That's why washer manufacturer **Growermetal** is constantly focused on delivering a wide range of parts, investing in cutting-edge technologies and strategic internal production.

The story of Growermetal began in the north of Italy in 1950, when the founder Virginio Cattaneo established the first settlement of the company in the area of Lecco. During the '60s the company moved to its current site in Calco where it lived the first stage of its expansion, paving the way to growth that saw one of its most fortunate phases at the beginning of the new millennium. Counting on its established history and long experience in washer manufacturing, today Growermetal is a reliable partner for some of the most demanding industries of the world, addressing European and international leaders in the automotive, aerospace, railway, power generation, electromechanics, construction and many other sectors.

"We are proud of our well-known reputation in the fastener industry," says Paolo Cattaneo, Growermetal CEO. "We are also well aware that a long heritage is something yet not enough to guarantee the creation of added value and bring a competitive advantage for our customers. To achieve these goals, we combine several strategic investments and a flexible service, aimed at improving the quality of our washers, creating the certified solutions according to the application needs and making them available to customers, wherever and whenever they need them."

Among the factors contributing to the progression of the business, Growermetal's structured portfolio is essential. Offering a range of 4,500 standard washers and more than 2,500 customised projects according to customers' drawings, Growermetal is able to answer the needs of different markets. Together with the different types of washers, which include external and internal teathed washers, safety washers, flat

washers, conical elastic washers, spring washers, spherical washers, electric terminal washers and many others, the company produces also sealing push-in caps, metallic parts with EPDM inserts and special blanked and bended parts.

That variety is combined with a series of special treatments ranging from surface treatments to zinc flake coating and mechanical zinc plating, in order to make the performance of every piece long-lasting and reliable. "Our completely in-house production is with no doubt one of our most relevant strengths, as it gives us the opportunity to provide a number of coatings and heat treatments directly in our headquarters," says Cattaneo. "Every department is linked together in a production chain that includes quality controls, research laboratories and a fully automatic warehouse, with the benefit of higher levels of efficiency, versatility and a constant control of the parts."

PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

In facing future challenges, the commitment to the innovation of Growermetal is essential and there are several strategies in action, involving internal investments, product development, innovative projects and partnerships, as the recently entrance of Growermetal in the Lombardia Aerospace Cluster.

One of the main results of this approach was Growermetal's entry into the Joint Research Center MATT - Metal And Transformation Technologies: a project born from the partnership between the Politecnico di Milano and other companies and based on the concept of open innovation, with the objective of developing researches through shared knowledge and tools.



Growermetal's production capabilities include a vast range of different types of washers, as well as sealing push-in caps, metallic parts with EPDM inserts and special blanked and bended parts

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Growermetal is expanding its project work and partnerships, including its recent entrance to the Lombardia Aerospace Cluster

The evolution of the company's approach is exhibited by the range of products launched by Growermetal in recent years. In addition to the production of standard washers, which still constitute the most important part of its portfolio, the in-house research and development laboratory has contributed to the creation of exclusive projects, such as the flagship products Grower TenKeep and Grower SpheraTech. Products that express a tendency towards expansion, at service of the more and more demanding needs of the industries.

Furthermore, the digitalisation process represents a new opportunity for the brand, with the implementation of cutting-edge systems for data processing and the integration of digital technologies inside the products. An example of this tendency is the new Grower Detecto, a concept design launched in 2023 and characterised by an embedded smart sensor that allows live detection of bolt loosening.

Talking about the process, the necessity to improve the control of the various stages of production has led to the adoption of technologies aimed at the recording of process data. A system that allows Growermetal to monitor and improve the manufacturing stages, tracking each activity within the departments and preventing problems or non-conformities.

"Traceability is a key requirement to improve the performance

of our washers and refine their management, maintaining the highest productivity standards," says Cattaneo. "This is particularly true in demanding applications such as the automotive industry, where effectiveness and safety are crucial. The integration of software for data collection helps us in achieving new levels of efficiency at every stage, from production to storage and transportation. In this way, we are able to ensure the supply of high-performing and safe washers, enabling customers to get the best out of their business."

These technologies also contributed in making the process more sustainable, both from the economical and environmental point of view, as underlined by Growermetal's HSE manager Raffaele Motta: "When it comes to sustainability, the digitalization process opens up new opportunities that ranges from a more efficient production model to a remarkable reduction of resource and energy consumption. As a company focused on innovation, we can't help ourselves but embrace the challenges linked to the use of these technologies, becoming more transparent, efficient and responsible. The results we are having are encouraging and will guide the next steps of our sustainable evolution."

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R&D investments have seen the firm launch new products like Grower TenKeep and Grower SpheraTech

