

Talking with Italy's ALBA Elettronica

Dan: Sandro, thanks for taking the time to talk to me today.

Sandro: My pleasure Dan, thanks for doing this.

Dan: First, can you tell us something about the company, its history, and what technologies you produce?

Sandro: Today, ALBA PCB Group comprises four highly specialized companies with production and technical/engineering centers in Europe and Asia. We are a privately-owned company established in 1989. Our headquarters and the Italian PCB manufacturing facility are based in Mogliano Veneto, approx. 20km from Venice.

ALBA Group offers industry-leading interconnect solutions, including Rigid and Rigid-Flex PCBs for a broad range of applications and for a variety of markets. We are able to support the full product life cycle from quick-turn prototypes to mass production providing our customers the most complete and technologically advanced global supply of printed circuit boards and value-added services.

Organization and a strong level of synergy among the operating companies allow the group to be a global partner to meet the growing needs of the PCB market.

Dan: What special technology PCBs do you produce?

Sandro: ALBA PCB group invested heavily in the Mogliano Veneto plant in recent years, especially in 2016, so we now have the capability of digital imaging throughout the entire manufacturing process. We're very focused on improving all our process capabilities and flexible automation. This allows us to redeploy resources to more value-added functions such as quality, engineering and R&D.

The technologies are of course important, but the big driver is absolute reliability, which is proven by an extensive experience in PCB manufacturing. We also have the capability to support our customers from conceptual stages of a product; this means interacting early at the engineering level and during material qualification. Our mission is to produce PCBs for demanding customers, on time with zero defects and at the lowest possible total cost. Key areas of growth include automotive products and in general all high reliability markets.

Dan: How is the PCB business in Europe today?

Sandro: The main markets served by European manufacturers as a whole are industrial, instrumentation and control, medical, military, aerospace and automotive.

In the last 10+ years, many companies closed their domestic facilities or changed their business by starting to trade PCBs, usually from the Far East.

European production over the last couple of years has been stable and nowadays the picture is more optimistic as there is a little bit stronger interest to invest in this industrial sector.

Most of PCB manufacturers in Europe today are small to medium companies, flexible enough to meet all clients' requirements, including special technologies.

Overall, 2016 was a record year for both revenue and profit for ALBA PCB Group.

We're well positioned to continue to service our existing clients and to develop our business in new market sectors. We are also investigating several different options to further expand and globalize our presence, including a long-term strategic partnership in Asia and new investments in Europe.

Dan: Let me ask you about Taiyo? How long have you guys been using Taiyo products? And why do you prefer them?

Sandro: Of course, we have been using Taiyo products for about 10 years. Taiyo products throughout all these years provided excellent stability in our production process and they are very well appreciated by our customers.

Dan: I understand that you recently worked in partnership with Taiyo on your Direct Imaging process. Can you tell us about that?

Sandro: With the introduction of DI technology in our production process we immediately asked for a dedicated solder mask with better performance at low exposure energy. We are currently working together with Taiyo in this direction. The support from Steve, Don and Jesse from Taiyo America has been great and very responsive. The results of the first tests were very encouraging so we are now testing the new version of solder mask in production.

Dan: Okay just one more question. Are there any products that you would like to see Taiyo develop in the future that could help you out?

Sandro: I know it's not a simple thing to do, but at the moment I'm only thinking of a photoimageable via hole plug without shrinkage and cracking.

Dan: Thank you Sandro. It has been a pleasure talking with you.

For more information about ALBA Electtronica go to: www.albapcb.com

If you would like to highlight your company by taking part in Dan's Six Pack contact your local Taiyo America representative.