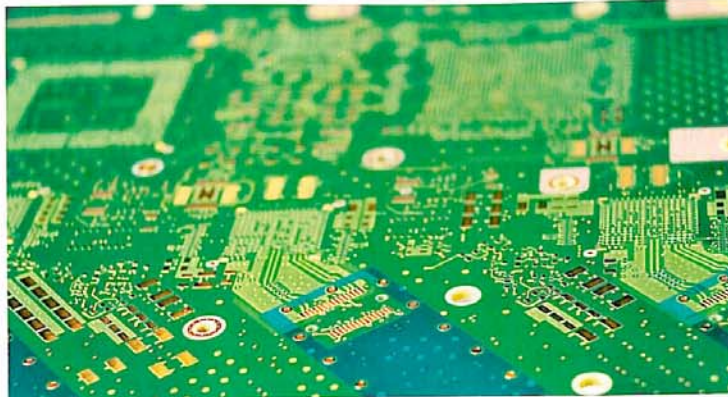




Attilio Scalmati, CEO of the SOMACIS Group, is head of the network of electronic component companies, among them SOMACIS pcb industries, dedicated to the production of PCBs, and Tastitalia, focused on the production of membrane keyboards and touch screens



Printed circuit boards form the heart of all electronic products



Pushing the limits of technology

Printed circuit boards (PCBs) have formed the basis for electronic equipment since the 1950s. Continuous technological improvement means that today's boards can be populated with more components, positioned much closer together. The miniaturisation trend observed in electronics has enormously increased the performance of the apparatus whilst at the same time reducing its size and weight. One of the leading producers of high tech, high spec PCBs is SOMACIS pcb industries, the group with headquarters in Castelfidardo in Italy.

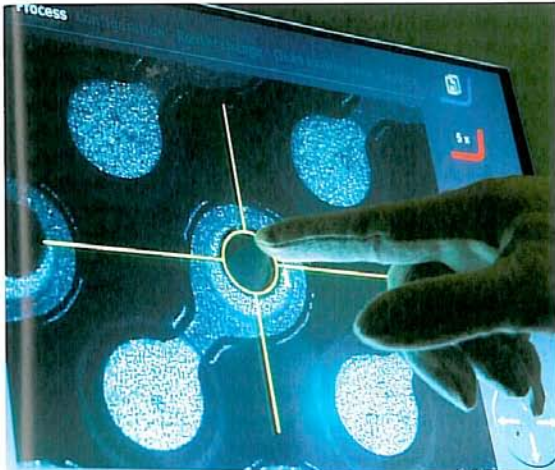
SOMACIS pcb industries is dedicated to the production and sale of printed circuit boards for the electronics sector. Attilio Scalmati, one of the original founders of the company formed in 1972, is still firmly in charge of the company. After more than 30 years of continuous technological and production-related evolution combined with the entrepreneurial flair of its founder, SOMACIS has taken its place as a leading expert in its field. Its product range reflects its versatility and its technological excellence and showcases its expertise in the manufacturing of high tech boards as well as

standard technology products. "Right from the beginning, when only monolayer PCBs were the norm, we had already started putting double layer PCBs to the test. A more complex product was, even then, our vocation. We have come a long way in terms of technology since then. Today we can produce boards with up to 36 layers with SBU technology, paths and isolation from 25 μm and a maximum total thickness of 4.2 mm," says Mr. Scalmati. "We were almost immediately ready to start production of multilayers. Today the size of everyday objects has shrunk so much, just

think of the size of an average mobile phone or MP3 player; we have reached the limits of practical ergonomics."

The pace of advancement continues unabated, and specifications that previously represented the limits of what was possible now make up the standard product range. A standard printed circuit board contains up to 20 individual circuits per square millimetre. SOMACIS offers a ratio of 25 paths per millimetre. "Our success is founded on research and development activities that keep us ahead of our competitors and allow us to deliver tailored solutions to our

customers at a competitive price," says Mr. Scalmati. "Our product policy seeks to take the needs of our customers into account from the start by offering them the most cutting edge solutions that really push the current limits of technology." Through its co-design and co-engineering service, SOMACIS ensures that its expertise is available to customers at the often critical engineering stage of the project during which the feasibility, manufacturing process and ultimate cost for mass production are determined. While SOMACIS excels at the upper end of the market thanks to its high



Continuous research and development into new technologies are helping push the boundaries of what is possible



Membrane keyboard produced by Tasitalia

level of technical know-how, it is also able to provide a competitive service in the mid and lower end of the market. Thanks to its broad product range, the company is also able to serve customers from all sectors of the electronics industry including the telecommunications, avionics, automotive, information technology, medical, military and consumer markets. As the success of its customers depends to no small extent on the quality and reliability of the printed circuit boards at the heart of their products, SOMACIS puts all of its efforts into assuring quality standards. Thanks to the implementation of ISO-certified quality management systems at all of its production sites,

the percentage of boards rejected at the final control is less than 5%. As SOMACIS's product range and customer base have expanded, so too have its means of production and geographic reach. In addition to the main production site at its headquarters in Castelfidardo, the company also has another production site in Manfredonia, Italy, as well as in Dongguan, China. "The Chinese site is as large as our main works in Italy and just as innovative," says Mr. Scalmati. "It has to be innovative because there are hundreds of other PCB factories in the Chinese market against whom we have to compete. Thanks to our high tech machinery and qualified workforce, the factory

is seen as one of the most advanced in the sector." The Chinese plant came on line in 2007 and represents an important strategic move in ensuring that SOMACIS continues to be able to compete on an increasingly globalised stage. Although 55% of turnover continues to be generated in Europe, ignoring the importance of the growing markets in Asia would be fatal for any company involved in the high tech arena.

There does, however, continue to be a divide in the focus between European and Chinese production. "The Chinese plant serves to supply the market for mass produced goods," says Mr. Scalmati. "We needed to be in China with our own production

plant because that's where our clients were going." Special solutions, particularly for the high tech end of the market, continue to be developed and produced in Italy. The company maintains close ties with the research departments of many of the countries' leading universities to ensure it maintains its technological lead. The company's strategy for the future is based on increasing the level of service it offers to clients, particularly in high tech areas such as medical equipment and air and space technology. The limits of what is technically possible have yet to be reached and even when they are, SOMACIS is sure to be pushing them still further. ■

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