



Powersoft targets Asian expansion

by James Bose

Since opening its doors for business in 1995, Powersoft has become renowned for making super energy-efficient amplifiers. Based in Florence, Italy, the company currently develops and sells high-end, patented technologies and solutions to over 50 countries. With its global distribution network in place, the company is experiencing rapid expansion and is now ready to devote its resources to further expansion into the lucrative Asian pro audio market.

Although the company had very humble beginnings, Powersoft grew quickly thanks to the passion, hard work and determination of its founders - Carlo Lastrucci and his two sons Claudio and Luca as well as family friend Antonio Peruch. While they were studying at Florence University, Claudio and Luca Lastrucci became interested in electrical engineering and music. They began experimenting with amplification technology with Peruch, who was their classmate. After graduating with Electronics degrees, they formed Powersoft and quickly developed a strong reputation as a company with unique skills in advanced

electronics, software solutions for high-end applications and power amplification technology. The name Powersoft reflects the two main souls of the company: power and software.

Powersoft's early years were quite difficult because the digital era had not really begun and some of their ideas like Power Factor Correction (PFC) and Class D amplification were too advanced for the time but the



The Powersoft Team. (L-R) Ken Blecher, Tom Bensen, Luca Giorgi, Luca Lastrucci, Thomas Mittelmann, Claudio Lastrucci, Carlo Lastrucci and Antonio Peruch

team persevered. Today, Powersoft's range of amplifiers are recognised throughout the world for their advanced technology that significantly reduces energy consumption. Their networking capabilities, audiophile-quality sound and performance reliability are highly regarded by industry professionals. Powersoft amplifiers can be found in installation projects throughout the world like stadiums, theme parks, airports, convention centers, churches, clubs and are utilised by the world's leading tour sound companies.

According to Luca Giorgi, Powersoft's Global Sales Manager, the reason for the success of Powersoft's amplifiers can be summed up in one word - flexibility. "We believe that our amplifiers offer the most flexibility of any amplifier you can buy," he said. "When a user buys an amplifier from Powersoft, they can use it in any type of application project regardless of the mains voltage. If you have unstable voltage, the performance will not be compromised. The number of amplifiers you will require for a PA system will also be less when using our technology. Due to the size of our amplifiers, they will also offer flexibility when it comes to transportation and storage options as well."

This flexibility has contributed to a period of stellar worldwide growth for the company. "We are growing very fast," confided Giorgi. "Last year we grew by 40 percent. This year we are growing again by 35 percent with respect to worldwide sales and the growth is well-distributed so it is not due to a specific project."



Luca Giorgi, Powersoft's Global Sales Manager

In spite of these impressive results, Giorgi feels that there is even more potential for growth and the region that presents the biggest potential is Asia. "In the past we had very little exposure in Asia," Giorgi reflected. "For the last few years, Powersoft's image has grown a lot. This has changed the appeal of the brand with respect to the key players in the different countries. We experienced a big growth in China but we believe there is even more potential there. We have started putting the right network in Southeast Asia and this

will produce results for sure. We also recently changed our distribution network in Japan and Korea and appointed new distributors. We believe this will produce results as well."

Powersoft are so confident of their growth prospects in Asia that they have set very ambitious growth targets for their Asian partners. "I think we need to bring Asia to 40 percent of our turnover within two years," Giorgi said confidently, "because we believe that is possible. It is a challenging goal but we think it is feasible. Of course, under the current economic conditions, it is not easy. One unfortunate event could impact the rest of the world. However, we have been growing very fast and we are optimistic."

In order to achieve these growth targets, Giorgi believes that the right infrastructure needs to be in place and Powersoft is aggressively taking steps to reinforce its distribution network. "We need somebody nearer to the action. We already have one guy in Singapore, (Asia Pacific Sales Manager) Arthur Soh, but we need to reinforce this structure by possibly having a small logistics hub to serve the region. The next few months, we will be building the foundations of Powersoft Asia to serve our distribution network better, perhaps with a service centre with our own technicians located in Singapore or Hong Kong. We are currently evaluating this kind of thing. So, this is more or less the strategy. We are trying to establish a more direct presence, not because we want to sell directly to our customers, but because we believe that being nearer to our partners could be beneficial for them."

Although Powersoft envisions strong growth for their business in Asia, they are also currently experiencing some challenges. "The main problem we face in doing business in Asia is that some companies make cheap copies of our products," remarked Giorgi. "I'm worried about the attitude of these companies who try to present their products to the end-user like it is the same as ours. I think this is completely unfair. Obviously, the difference in pricing can persuade the end-

user that the copy is a better buy because they think that it is the same product. This is completely unacceptable."

Giorgi thinks that the problem of copying intellectual property in Asia is so pervasive that he has encountered companies from China that not only copy Powersoft's products but also copy the way Powersoft display their products. "We have a display where we place an amplifier rack with multiple amplifiers on a rotating spiral at exhibitions. Unfortunately,

we are unable to patent this display. At some shows in China, I have seen companies employ the same type of display. This is not good because the end-user might mistake their product for ours."

In order to prevent any confusion, Powersoft is taking measures against companies who copy their intellectual property as well as those who support them. "Taking legal action is useless," Giorgi opines. "Normally we try to talk directly to these companies (who copy Powersoft's products) to verify whether they will stop doing it. We have also told magazines who publish advertising from these companies that we will not support them because what they are doing is not fair. Thirdly, we have asked the European Community for protection against companies who copy our patents. Unfortunately, this is hard to enforce outside of Europe. We do not have many other tools to use."

Despite these problems, Giorgi thinks that Powersoft's range of amplifiers will continue to have wide appeal throughout Asia because of their quality, reliability and technology. Their K3 amplifier continues to be their top selling individual model and their M series of amplifiers are their best-selling range. However, the product that Giorgi thinks will have the biggest impact in the installation sector is the new Ottocanali 1204 amplifier. "We believe it will be a big success because of its characteristics," he enthused. "I don't think there is another amplifier quite like it in the market in terms of size, power consumption and flexibility. The monitoring of the load through our Armonia software is another plus for this product. Although we don't have the figures yet, we are very confident that it will be a success in the installation sector as well as an energy 'star'."



The Ottocanali 1204 amplifier

With the rising popularity of their amplifiers, the dedication of more resources towards developing their infrastructure in the Asian market, the appointment of new distributors as well as the introduction of new products, Powersoft is poised to become a dominant player in the Asian pro audio market for a long time to come.

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