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Flying high with cool wings

Italy's dDieci SpA is one of the fastest growing producers of telescopic handlers. The company's commitment to R&D has seen a rapid broadening of its product lines fostering growth in sales that has seen revenues more than quadruple since 2000. C&A recently interviewed the firm's owner and chief executive **Ciro Correggi**.

C&A: *Can you begin by briefly outlining the history of your company.*

Ciro Correggi: Certainly. The company was founded more than 40 years ago in 1962 by the three Dieci brothers, in the small town of Montecchio Emilia just north of Modena, under the name F.lli dDieci SpA. Montecchio remains our home. The first products were small concrete mixers, access equipment and pre-fabricated houses. Then in 1986 the company developed its first telescopic handler. This was well received by the market and led to an increased focus on this new product line. However, during the '90's a very serious downturn in Italy caused by the corruption scandal involving a number of large contractors, made life very difficult for Dieci and other Italian construction equipment makers; growth stalled.

C&A: *When did you become involved in Dieci?*

CC: In September 1997, Francesco Manghi and I bought the company which had sales of about €6 million. We renamed the business dDieci S.r.l. and one of the first things we did was to eliminate the prefabricated housing business and focus on developing telescopic handlers. We made a big commitment to R&D and within two years we developed our first 360-degree rotating handler which we named the Pegasus.

C&A: *How has the business developed since then?*

dDieci expect to produce over 1,400 telehandlers this year



*dDieci owner & chief executive **Ciro Correggi***

CC: By the year 2000 sales had tripled to about €15 million and this year we will achieve a new record of about €65 million. In 2004 we made approximately 1,000 machines but this year our production has increased by 40 percent, to over 1,400 units. Of this 1,200 are telescopic handlers and 200 are truck-mounted concrete mixers and dumper trucks.

C&A: *Could you summarize your current product line?*

CC: We manufacture about 100 different models. Including a line of 10 all wheel drive dumper trucks of up to seven cubic metres. Then we have a line of small all-wheel drive and steer, self-loading truck-mounted concrete mixers. We also make special machines for tunneling, rock drilling, mining and other unusual jobs. The link is that they are all small wheel-mounted machines.

Telescopic Handlers are by far our most important product line, representing 85 percent of revenues. The line comprises six different series with a total of 33 models from 2.6 to seven tonnes lifting capacity and with maximum lift heights ranging from six to 25-metres. Next year we will introduce four new models.

We offer different series of Telehandler for construction, industrial and agricultural applications. All available with a choice of over 40 attachments including fork carriages; large personnel platforms; crane jibs with and without

hoists; excavating and loading shovels; grabs and grapples for everything from logs and rocks to fertiliser; as well as clamps and tongs etc. In addition we offer hydraulic articulating jibs for personnel, including under-bridge inspection work. We also develop special attachments to suit customers' needs.

C&A: *How important are the 360-degree models to Dieci?*

CC: Demand for our 'Pegasus' series continues to grow. Last year we sold about 200 and expect this to take an ever-larger share of our output. We now have seven different models with lifting heights ranging from 13 to 24.5-metres and lifting capacities ranging from three to 4.5-tonnes.

C&A: *To what do you attribute the growing popularity of these 360 degree models?*

CC: Increasingly, we see them replacing telescopic cranes on job sites. They offer greater rental earning and utilisation potential because of the flexibility provided by the quick-change between forks, personnel platforms, crane hooks, etc. They can work either like a crane - lifting and placing materials from a stationary position - or operate like a conventional handler picking and carrying loads.

Importantly, these units are equipped as standard with hydraulic outriggers at both ends, allowing the machine's tyres to be lifted clear of the ground for greater stability than fixed handlers and therefore greater lifting heights and capacities. For example, our largest 'non-swing' machine, the 'Icarus' 40.17 is a four tonne capacity machine with a maximum lifting height of 16.9 metres. In comparison our largest 360 model, the 'Pegasus' 40.25 offers four tonnes capacity and 24.5 metres lift height (4.5 t on the 45.21). These units can work at up to 18.4 metres radius - over 40% more than the 12.7 metres maximum on our fixed models.

C&A: *Do you see demand for even larger 360 degree handlers?*

CC: Certainly. 30-metres height seems quite likely.

C&A: *What proportion of our production is exported?*

CC: We export about 75 percent. Our main markets are in Western Europe but we also sell in North Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Australia where we've already sold about 250 handlers. We have also recently entered the U.S. market in partnership with Xtreme Manufacturing, of Las Vegas, as our master distributor. They have already placed a good number of units in California, Utah, the Carolinas and Nevada.



Dieci will move into this new plant in 2006

C&A: *What are your growth plans?*

CC: We are fast out-growing our existing factory. Today we employ about 140 people and although our factory covers some 22,000 square metres under roof, it has grown through various extensions and is not efficiently laid-out. We are building a brand new 28,000 square metre factory on a 100,000 square metre site, about a kilometre from the existing facility. This will be fully operational next year. Our plan is to double our revenues by 2010 and we believe that the new factory will accommodate this.



The dDieci Pegasus, 360° telehandler