



**Actia Italia Srl**  
C.so Unione Sovietica, 612/3/c  
Torino (To)  
[www.actia.com](http://www.actia.com)

*Business start*  
2000  
*Employees 2004*  
20

## CASE STUDY "A"

Prepared by Itp - Investimenti Torino Piemonte - *Giuliana Zanoletti*

### ACTIA IN THE WORLD

Actia is an international group of firms specialising in road vehicle electronics and diagnostics. As the partner of the world's leading original equipment manufacturers, it has a wealth of experience in product design, operation tests, elaboration of software, production and the assembly of finished products. It was founded in France in 1986 as a management buyout from Renix, the Renault - Bendix Electronics joint venture set up in 1978 to devise and produce electronic control modules for the automotive market, in which Actia was the special products department and concentrated on applications for commercial vehicles, such as trucks and buses. It now has 21 branches in 15 countries. Its workforce is composed of 1558 persons, including 650 in France.

### ACTIA IN PIEDMONT

Actia Italia is located in Turin and specialises in on-board electronics and diagnostics for the automotive industry. It began life in Turin with just two persons in 2000 and now has 20 direct employees and promising growth prospects.

Its commercial, administrative and technical sections are all in Turin.

Until a very short time ago, Actia Italia was essentially a business unit serving the Italian market, where the Fiat Group still constitutes 60% of its customership and fleet managers, workshops, and transport firms the other 40%. Its new strategy in Piedmont is founded on two premises: widening of its customer base to lighten the weight of Fiat, and the creation of added value through product development, so as to reduce its hitherto absolute dependence on the parent company.

Actia Italia, in fact, has invested in R & D to elaborate, together with Aixia, another group company at Aix-les-Bains, an innovative fleet management product by availing itself of the facilities of medium-sized firms in the Turin area, whereas the group has developed Smart-Tach, a new-generation digital time and speed recorder that is already in line with the new European regulations which have just come into force. An outline agreement with a leading Italian manufacturer will ensure the firm's continuity until 2014 and allow it to programme its future activities on a firm basis.

Its plans, in fact, envisage the expansion of its structure in Turin through the engagement of new staff members with both technical and commercial profiles.



## CASE STUDY "B"

Prepared by Centro Estero Camere Commercio Piemontesi - *Francesca Corsini*

Lanificio Carlo Barbera & C. was founded in 1950. Its long experience has made it a well-known name in the textiles sector and a synonym for quality, especially on account of the earnestness and dedication that lie behind the elaboration and production of its fabrics. The firm's warehouse at Pianezze Biellese, for example, has been hewn out of the living rock to ensure that its yarns are stored at a constant 18°C and an ideal relative humidity value.

The world's most famous couturiers know that the quality of Carlo Barbera fabrics is guaranteed by the extreme care devoted to their preparation.

Luciano Barbera, one of the sons of the company's founder and president, has taken elegance a step further through the creation of a personal line of men's and women's clothing made with Carlo Barbera fabrics that expresses the firm's philosophy and style.

Their total look, in fact, is an example of the "made in Italy" so much admired on the world's markets. Carlo Barbera & C. and Luciano Barbera export their products through a distribution network that was initially set up in Europe and has spread to the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea and other Asian countries over the course of ten years.

In the States, both trade marks have been received with open arms, so much so that the two companies now operate through a branch in New York.

Carlo Barbera's eyes are currently set on the emerging markets of Russia and China.

Its approach to internationalisation, however, is "exports only", since the firm is convinced that its fabrics can only be produced in Piedmont, their homeland. They express, what is more, the idea of a "craftsman's boutique" where the best wools and cashmeres are woven with such a strict regard for quality that the clothes made from them are both valuable and long-lasting, a symbol of the style, taste and soul of "made in Italy" elegance.

### A SUCCESS STORY

In 1992, Carlo Barbera & C. opened a branch in New York for the promotion, sale and distribution of its fabrics and the line of men's and women's clothing bearing the Luciano Barbera griffe.

This was the outcome of a decision reached at the end of the 1980s when the strong demand of the American market was none the less the cause of certain logistic difficulties.

Previously, in fact, sales were handled by Italian employees who went over to New York from time to time and presented the current collections to potential customers in a hotel suite.

Their distribution was (and still is) coordinated from Italy. It was clear, however, that to make headway in the US the firm must have an office on the spot to follow and promote the Barbera brand, since it is common knowledge that American buyers prefer to deal with and be assisted by a local organisation with no language and different time zone problems.

To meet this need on the part of such a rich market with its particular penchant for the Italian style, in 1991 the company decided to set about the establishment of a branch and eventually found a location in the Crown Building on Fifth Avenue in the centre of Manhattan. Great importance, in fact, was attached to the need to have an office in the heart of the city that could be easily reached by fashion buyers and at the same time enhance the company's image.

The branch is run by Luciano Barbera's daughter, Maide, and her husband Michal Sestak with a staff of three Americans trained during the course of a period spent in Italy at the company's wool mill and dressmaking department. The staff come over to Italy at least twice a year to discuss their results with the management and work out new strategies.



**Carlo Barbera & C. Spa**  
Frazione Pianezze  
Callabiana (Bi)  
[www.carlobarbera.it](http://www.carlobarbera.it)

*Commencement of operations*  
1950  
*Sales 2003*  
euro 12 million  
*Employees 2003*  
142  
*Exports/sales*  
45%



An outlay of some two million dollars was required to open the new branch. An easy-term loan of USD 1.5 m was granted in accordance with the provisions of Law 394. Engagement of the services of a firm of consultants specialising in the internationalisation operations of textile and clothing concerns ensured the rapid settlement of minor bureaucratic and legislative problems. The decision has certainly paid off. In 14 years the number of American and Canadian customers has grown from 30 to 100, while sales have soared from USD 3.5 to 12 million.

The firm's image has been enhanced to the point that Barbera is now present in all the most prestigious sales outlets, and its trade mark is classed among Italy's top ten by upper-bracket American consumers. Its fabrics are highly rated in the States and have secured the success of the Luciano Barbera range.

Barbera is now supplying all American manufacturers of upper-bracket men's clothing and has not much room for growth in this sector, whereas women's confections still offer many opportunities. The branch office is currently in talks with designers and buyers from Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein and other leading houses with a view to the preparation of exclusive fabrics for women's clothing.

## CASE STUDY "C"

Prepared by Itp - Investimenti Torino Piemonte - *Giuliana Zanoletti*

### PHILIPS IN THE WORLD

Royal Philips Electronics Holland is one of the world's leading manufacturers of electronic equipment and the largest in Europe, with sales amounting to euro 29 bn in 2003. It employs 165,300 persons in more than 60 countries and is listed on the New York, London, Frankfurt, Amsterdam and other principal stock exchanges. Tenth on "Fortune's" list of the top electronic companies, it operates in more than 60 sectors ranging from consumer electronics to household appliances and from security systems to semiconductors, and produces more than 2.4 billion light bulbs and 30 million TV tubes a year. In addition, 2.5 million heart examinations and operations are conducted every year using X-ray equipment embodying Philips technology. There are Philips components in 60% of all telephones. Philips Lighting lamps are used in 30% of the world's offices, 65% of its main airports, 55% of its football stadiums and 30% of its hospitals.

### PHILIPS IN PIEDMONT

Philips Lighting Alpiignano (PLA) is Philips's worldwide production and skills centre for the small enclosed and domestic lamps used in refrigerators, chimney cowl, ovens, microwave ovens, sewing machines and for general lighting and disinfection.

Active in Europe in the original equipment manufacturing (OEM) segment (household appliances, cowl and microwave ovens), the professional segment (wholesale) and the consumer segment (retail), it also exports to 60 countries.

Its skills centre at Alpiignano, near Turin, uses its experience and know-how to devise customised lighting solutions tailored to the requests of customers and designers, and tests them in a variety of situations. PLA's top ten OEM customers are Bjb, Whirlpool, Elica Group, Samsung, Bshg, Sharp, Faber, Electrolux, Vs and Turboair, and it customises products for Osram, Carrefour and others. Established in 2002, PLA is the latest chapter in a history that goes back to the firm founded in 1885 by Alessandro Cruto, a pioneer manufacturer of lamps in Italy. This was acquired by Edison in 1910 and then by Philips in 1928.

Renamed Philips Lighting Alpiignano in 1995, it has focussed on the production of tube lights for the white goods industry and its output has doubled to 70 million pieces.

PLA now employs 130 persons and its sales totalled euro 20 m in 2003. Its 2004-2007 plan for domestic appliances and industry has already produced significant results, including rationalisation of the production area and the start-up of a new lamp packaging line that will greatly enhance its competitiveness, since it handles a wide range of tube lights and uses an electronic system to measure their consumption and thus maintain a high standard of quality. A new method for running the production lines is securing improvements in terms of time, efficiency and involvement by manning the same line with the same persons. In keeping with the Philips philosophy, PLA sets great store on its human resources, provides training and encourages meetings with working groups from other countries. Employees share in its net income, as agreed with the unions, and thus gain an economic benefit if its set objectives are attained. Heavy capital outlays are also devoted to new lines and new equipment as well as training.

# PHILIPS

**Philips Lighting Alpiignano Srl**  
Strada Statale 24, km 12.6  
Alpiignano (To)  
[www.philips.com](http://www.philips.com)

*Commencement of operations*  
2002  
*Sales 2003*  
euro 20 million  
*Employees 2004*  
130





**Prima Industrie Spa**  
Via Antonelli, 32  
Collegno (To)  
[www.primaindustrie.com](http://www.primaindustrie.com)

*Commencement of operations*  
1977  
*Sales 2003*  
euro 62.583 million  
*Employees 2003*  
224  
*Export/sales*  
69%



## CASE STUDY "D"

Prepared by Centro Estero Camere Commercio Piemontesi - *Francesca Corsini*

Prima Industrie is a world leader in one of the sectors with the highest rate in recent years: laser machinery. The flexibility, quality and productivity of this new means of production are constantly widening its range of industrial applications. Prima Industrie designs, produces and markets high-power laser machines for cutting, welding and the surface treatment of 2D and 3D components. Founded to operate in the field of engineering and research, in the 1980s the company introduced a successful series of products for measuring and welding robots. At the start of the 1990s it began the continuous perfection of its operations that has since enabled it to operate and grow in the laser machinery sector.

Its first laser application was introduced in 1979 in the form of a 3D robot for the machining of large, deep-drawn workpieces. It soon became the world leader in this segment and consolidated its position through the introduction of new products, from the Optimo and the Rapido, of which there are hundreds now on the job worldwide, to the Domino (1999).

In 1992, it decided to apply the know-how it had acquired in the 3D segment in the much wider 2D sector. Platino, a highly innovative 2D machine, made its debut in 1996 and dozens are now made every year.

Prima Industrie today is the parent company in a group totalling about 450 employees, that also comprises Prima Electronics Spa (NC machines, servo-drives and special products), and Prima North America Inc. (CO2 and Nd YAG laser systems and sources), and chalked up an average 15% per annum increase in its mean consolidated turnover since 1998 to reach euro 95 m in 2003.

As a consequence of the type of products it offers, Prima Industrie has always exported.

To the rest of Europe at first and then further afield. The great increase in its structure and presence on the international stage was launched in 1999 and backed by substantial investments.

Today two-thirds of its products are exported, mainly to other European countries and North America, through branches and distributors in the US, France, Germany, the UK, Spain, Switzerland and Sweden, and through agents and service centres in another 30 countries, both in Europe and elsewhere.

The firm's internationalisation mainly takes the form of conventional exports in the case of its 3D machines. The 2D sector, however, is more competitive and different tactics are required.

Total or partial local production, in fact, is a must when operating outside Europe, especially on distant or competitive marketplaces, such as those of Asia. Here, in fact, Prima Industrie has placed itself in an excellent position through the creation of three joint ventures: two in China, first Shenyang Prima Ltd for production and marketing of the Platino, then Shanghai Unity Prima Laser Machinery Co. Ltd for production and marketing of the Domino, and one in Japan - Snk Prima Ltd - for the manufacture and sale of high-range products.

Prima Industrie also intends to focus on Asia in the future, both in China, through the further consolidation of its position, and in Japan, Korea and the ASEAN countries, where its presence is no more than marginal.

## A SUCCESS STORY

China has long displayed the highest growth rate in the laser machinery sector. Prima Industrie began to sell there in 1994 and today its machines constitute more than half of the country's total.

While it soon became the leader in the 3D segment, its presence in the 2D segment at the end of 2003 was still marginal, despite the formation of a joint venture at the beginning of the year.

Fewer than 10 units, in fact, were sold on a market were 150 change hands.

During the course of 2003, Prima Industrie established its second joint venture with a view to gaining a higher standing in the 2D sector. A year was needed to deal with all the preliminaries prior to the signing of the agreement in the autumn, followed by another eight months for completion of the bureaucratic procedures needed to bring the new company on stream.

A new location called Shanghai Unity Prima has been set up in Shanghai with Chinese managers and engineers already present and active in China with a previous company, along with its other capital members. Prima Industrie has provided funds and its own technology, whereas the Chinese have brought in the assets of the previous company. Thanks to this new expansion, Prima Industrie is now able to cover almost 50% of the 2D market.

Attainment of this objective, however, was by no means a routine operation. Quite apart from the influence of geography, communication with the Chinese, in fact, was hampered by both linguistic and cultural difficulties that were eventually surmounted thanks to the experience Prima Industrie had gradually acquired over the previous ten years. Establishment of a joint venture through conveyance of the assets of the previous Chinese company also turned out to be a much longer and more complicated matter than had been foreseen. International joint ventures, in fact, must comply with world market directives and the Chinese company was not yet accustomed to working with strict and precise rules governing a company's accounting and management. Training and assistance were thus necessary to secure acceptance and observance of the international regulations.

The success of the initiative, at all events, was just around the corner. In the first seven months of 2004, Shanghai Unity Prima sold 58 2D machines, while Prima Industrie sold 11 (both 3D and 2D). Since the Chinese market is expected to trade about 170 machines of both types by the end of the year, these figures show that the leadership thus sought has indeed been attained.



## CASE STUDY "E"

Prepared by Centro Estero Camere Commercio Piemontesi - *Francesca Corsini*



**Sicme Motori Spa**  
Strada del Francese, 126-130  
Torino  
www.sicmemotori.com

*Commencement of operations*  
1967  
*Sales 2003*  
euro 15.079 million  
*Employees 2003*  
98  
*Exports/sales*  
48%

Sicme Motori Spa is a leading European supplier of motors for modern industrial drives. For 35 years it has been engaged in the designing and construction of 0.5 to 2500 kW electric motors. In 1996, this standard range was joined by a series of up to 1000 kW industrial square-wave a.c. motors powered by vectorial inverters, and in 2002 by an innovative series of synchronous motors and generators with permanent magnets. New products are being devised, some in conjunction with the Turin Polytechnic, to offer the market ever more modern and efficient electric motors for industry and lifts, and generators for use on wind farms.

Sicme Motori is run in accordance with the principles of lean production and learning organisation and integrated IT systems are widely employed.

The progress of its orders is monitored by means of laser bar-code readers that record all the machining and assembly stages of the production process.

Passwords are also used to enable customers to access the IT system and follow the progress of their orders. Most customers are manufacturers of production plants for the metalworking, plastics, rubber, hoisting, mining, papermaking and printing industries, as well as lifts and energy generators. At the start of the 1970s, Sicme Motori turned its attention to foreign markets and embarked on a programme to increase its sales in some European countries. During the course of the ensuing 30 years, it has both consolidated and extended its internationalisation through the creation of sales units in the main industrialised countries and joint ventures, some devoted to manufacturing, in three emerging nations (Russia, China and India).

Its current trading organisation, indeed, is virtually worldwide since it comprises France, Spain, Britain, Austria, Germany, Russia, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Taiwan, China, USA, South Korea, India and Australia.

Fifty per cent of Sicme's turnover comes from direct exports, while its total export trade is of the order of 85-90%. From 15% to 20% is directed to Asia (United Arab Emirates, India, Kuwait, Malaysia, the Philippines, China, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Indonesia).

### A SUCCESS STORY

On 25 March 2004, Sicme Motori signed an agreement in Turin with the Yonjun Corporation, Seoul, for the distribution of its products in Korea. As a consequence of this agreement, Yonjun, which mainly produces electric motors for railways, has increased its range of products for local marketing. Sicme has consolidated its presence in a country that was already importing its products, which will also be endowed with a substantial added value owing to the inclusion of a local after-sales service in the agreement.

South Korea has been selected by Sicme Motori as an industrialised country with the potential for development of industrial products and wind farm generators.

Its industrial concerns, in fact, have a strong demand for quality products and a great interest in the acquisition of imported motors, even if they are more expensive than those made locally.

As in all international initiatives, the main obstacles encountered in the elaboration of this project concerned reciprocal understanding and differences in the way in which the problems that arise are approached, especially in such geographically and culturally dissimilar nations.

On this important, but difficult market, Sicme's readiness to adapt to local habits enabled it to



conclude the contract and agree the common objectives during a period of only eight months, during which it went out twice to Korea to meet with the technical and commercial structure that suited its needs.

The Yonjun Corporation was singled out in conjunction with Antenna Piemonte in Korea (a Piedmont Region agency run by Centro Estero Camere Commercio Piemontesi), which selected possible partners in November 2003, identified the one most appropriate for Sicme, and then went on to accompany the latter during the stages that led to the conclusion of the agreement. Sicme also called upon the services of Turin's Unione Industriale in connection with the legal and contractual aspects of the project.

The technical and commercial staffs of the two companies are now in constant collaboration. They have jointly visited local customers, arranged technical and commercial training visits for the local personnel and begun the procedures for certifying Sicme Motori as a supplier.

The satisfactory results already achieved are the prelude to a promising future.

The firm's presence in Korea is expected to evolve still further in the next two or three years through the establishment of a facility for the local manufacture of its products instead of exporting them from Italy at costs and with time schedules not compatible with the needs of the market.





**ThyssenKrupp**  
**Tailored Blanks Srl**  
Via Druento, 40  
San Gillio (To)  
[www.thyssenkrupptailoredblanks.it](http://www.thyssenkrupptailoredblanks.it)

*Commencement of operations*  
2001  
*Employees 2004*  
44



## CASE STUDY "F"

Prepared by Itp - Investimenti Torino Piemonte - *Giuliana Zanoletti*

### THE GERMAN THYSSENKRUPP GROUP

ThyssenKrupp Tailored Blanks is a member of the German ThyssenKrupp Group and a 100% ThyssenKrupp Italia subsidiary.

The Group itself has about 700 affiliates and 191,000 employees worldwide.

### THYSSENKRUPP IN PIEDMONT

ThyssenKrupp's main activity in its San Gillio factory in the Province of Turin is the laser welding of what are known as "tailored blanks", in other words quality sheet metal pieces of different thicknesses and sizes welded together, mainly for use in the automotive industry.

Many advantages stem from the employment of these blanks for cars: greater safety, less weight, reduction of the number of pieces, tighter tolerances, better corrosion resistance, lower costs and easy recovery of materials for recycling.

ThyssenKrupp Tailored Blanks' principal customer is the Fiat Group, though it also supplies other European automakers, such as PSA, Renault, Mercedes and Mazda, which have recently been joined by Volkswagen, Maserati and Porsche. ThyssenKrupp decided to locate in Piedmont because the region as a whole and the province of Turin in particular is a strategic area for pressing operations and offers a high degree of specialisation.

ThyssenKrupp Tailored Blanks started up in 2001 and has since obtained excellent results and exceeded its objectives, so much so that it has opened a new factory to serve Fiat Auto at Potenza in the Basilicata Region (southern Italy) and enlarged the one in the north, which has also been the first in the ThyssenKrupp Group to develop tubes for the laser as opposed to the seam welding of suspensions.

The company is well installed in its area and does a lot of business with local firms. Its original workforce was composed of 15 persons. Today there are 44 employees on the payroll (plus 6 temporary workers), while another 20 are employed at the Potenza plant serving Fiat Auto.

San Gillio's management is planning to increase the company market share in Germany, Spain and France. It has also set its sights on a challenging goal, namely introduction of the use of non-linear tailored blanks and laser-welded tubes on the suspensions of Fiat Group vehicles.



Itp (Investimenti Torino Piemonte) is the first agency in Italy to have been set up to attract foreign investments in accordance with the European model: light structure, no bureaucracy, rapid action, targeted contacts with foreign enterprises who may be interested, communication and business information for investors (labour market, tax provisions, incentives and easy-term funding).

This innovative model is proving effective. More than 70 firms established themselves in Piedmont in the years 1998-2004 and about 4000 new jobs were created.



Centro Estero Camere Commercio Piemontesi is a non-profit-making agency founded in 1976 to encourage, assist and promote internationalisation of Piedmont's and the Aosta Valley's economic systems. Elaborated according to local requirements and in conjunction with its members, this activity comprises economic and study missions, reception of foreign delegations, the search for partners, participation in international events, workshops and foreign trade training courses. The Centre also offers enterprises the services of a team of experts who provide free verbal assistance for the practical solution of the difficulties that may arise in foreign trade negotiations.