



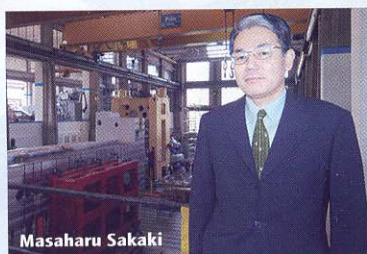
**ISMR SAYS:**

As a result of its acquisition of Rovetta/Manzoni, AIDA expects major synergistic effects in a number of areas

Face to face

# Creating the r

ISMR talks exclusively to Masaharu Sakaki, president of AIDA Srl, on AIDA's recent purchase of Rovetta/Manzoni



**ISMR:** The acquisition of Manzoni and Rovetta business by AIDA will complete AIDA's medium to long term management strategy of establishing production, service and sales bases at the four poles – Japan, America, Asia and now Europe. What other synergies do you see between these brands and AIDA?

**Masaharu Sakaki:** As a result of the acquisition, the potential exists for synergies in a number of key areas – largely sales, manufacturing, engineering and purchasing. In sales, AIDA has developed a presence in Asia and North America and built a strong customer base. Europe is a crucial market for AIDA. The ability to access Manzoni and Rovetta's customers – companies with a long track record – is a critical component of AIDA's global objectives. Manzoni and Rovetta have estab-

lished a strong presence in the European market. Shared access to this customer base, in combination with AIDA's existing customer base in Asia and North America, will have a major impact on the mutual expansion of product sales.

In **manufacturing**, trends for worldwide demands point to major regional differences. AIDA's acquisition is a strategic response to these changes in demand, and supports the effective use of our four global press manufacturing facilities. The market demand for larger presses is increasing, but there is a high cost for importing these presses. With press manufacturing



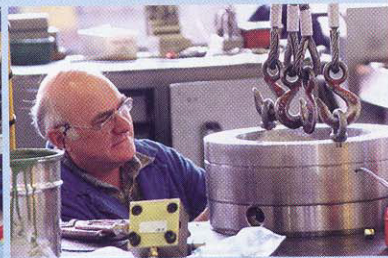
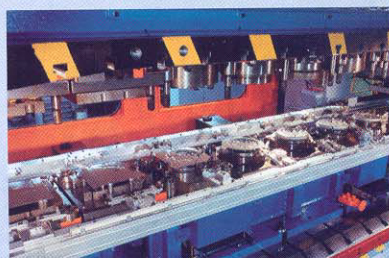
AIDA booth at EuroBLECH 2004

facilities now established in critical locations around the world, AIDA can help to reduce those costs. AIDA Srl will manufacture about 10 presses from 800 to 3000 ton capacity for AIDA Engineering in 2005. The order was placed in

Japan to export from Europe to Canada, the United States, China, India and the Czech Republic.

In the area of **engineering**, an important opportunity exists for AIDA, Manzoni and Rovetta to

Rovetta's manufacturing facility in Italy



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Face to face

# ight synergies



merge a wide range of experience in the areas of technology and design. This ability to consult together as a team will create an environment for advancement that will be beneficial to all product lines.

In **purchasing**, AIDA has built a large global purchasing network. A manufacturing facility in Europe allows AIDA to purchase materials locally and distribute them to other AIDA Group companies. For example, with the current difficulty in procuring thick steel plate in Japan, AIDA can now take advantage of the shorter lead times for this material in Europe.

**ISMR:** What are your immediate aims and objectives for AIDA Srl over the next six months? How do you intend to achieve these? Can you comment on how AIDA's European production will be organised?

**MS:** AIDA signed the final agreement on the sale of the Manzioni and Rovetta businesses on 25 October 2004. During the first six

months, our most critical task is to continue to build a European customer base while taking advantage of AIDA's worldwide sales network to increase the factory's use on a broader scale.

As I mentioned, we are already filling the factory's schedule for 2005 and sales for Manzioni and Rovetta products are also increasing. In addition to AIDA Srl in Italy, AIDA also has European sales and service offices placed strategically throughout Europe. AIDA-SAS is based in France; AIDA-UK

have you set and how do you intend to achieve these?

**MS:** The sales team's immediate goal is to continue building orders. Through sales and production activities, AIDA expects to bring AIDA Srl into the black from fiscal year 2006 (1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007) and has targeted a near term goal to reach 100 million euros per annum.

**ISMR:** Can you comment on how this acquisition may affect current



Above: Rovetta division workshop

in Great Britain and Copres in Germany. AIDA Srl will lead our European business.

**ISMR:** What short, medium and long-term targets for the business

or future product lines or product development?

**MS:** The press business is faced with different customer requirements for each market. For example, in



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**Face to face**

Europe, customers primarily look for an adjustable stroke length feature on presses with a capacity of 600 tonnes or less. In Asia and North America, a fixed stroke length is the industry standard with almost no requirements for an adjustable stroke length.

In terms of products, gap-frame presses are extremely popular in Asia. In Europe however, straight-side presses are in demand. These market differences necessitate a marketing strategy that is tightly focused on customer needs. These local market requirements must be incorporated during the product design phase. From this perspective, the globalisation of AIDA is not



**Above: S4-20000 and S8-30000 twin slide transfer presses**

**Left: High speed press**

merely the establishment of manufacturing facilities around the world, but also the simultaneous globalisation of our engineering group.



are the most promising marketplaces in the short term? Which European markets have the most potential for growth?

**MS:** Automotive manufacturing holds a large share of the European press market. In recent years, the production volume of automotive units in Europe has exceeded that of the US, and the markets related to this industry are extensive. Japanese and Korean automotive manufacturers have expanded their market shares and the number of inquiries from their Tier 1 suppliers has increased dramatically. As a major player in the Asian market with customers who are also beginning to expand into the European market, AIDA is in a prime position to support manufacturers' needs.

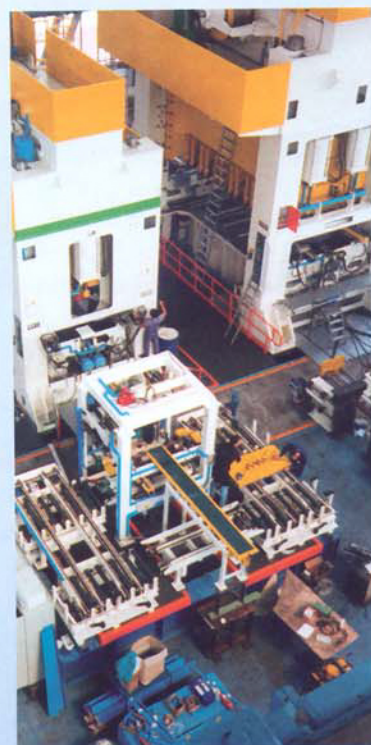
We also expect the modularisation of automotive functional parts to continue to increase. As modularisation increases, we believe that the trend of automotive manufacturers to concentrate their orders with part suppliers able to offer development resources and cost competitiveness will also grow. For manufacturers, the right metalforming solutions will become more important than ever.

In response to this, the automotive and home electronics engineering corporations have already expanded and are active in countries worldwide. Core technologies are being shared throughout the AIDA Group, and engineering will continue to design products able to meet the requirements of each individual market. With respect to product development, Japan has primarily led this effort. But development teams for Japan, the US and Italy will work together more closely in 2005 to support highly efficient product development.

**ISMR:** What first attracted you to the Manzonigrup and Rovetta business and how long were negotiations in place before agreement was reached?

**MS:** Talks between the two companies were initiated in May 2004 and a preliminary agreement reached on 25 September 2004. When I first visited the Manzonigrup and Rovetta facilities in February 2004, I was impressed by the high level of skill and efficient work ethic demonstrated by the employees.

**ISMR:** Can you give any indication on how you see the development of European marketplaces over the next three to five years for its press products? Where do you feel



**Above: Rovetta division workshop**

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**Face to face**

**ISMR:** Which metalforming technologies do you feel will have the most impact on users over the next five years?

**MS:** The metalforming technology with the most impact will be the use of high tensile steel plate forming.



**Above: Manzoni division workshop**

As the trend towards lighter automobiles increases due to industry goals to conserve resources and improve fuel economy, high tensile steel plate promises to provide a dynamic solution for helping to maintain strength while reducing vehicle weight.

However, stronger materials like high tensile steel make parts production in a press more difficult to achieve using conventional methods. New ways of thinking, regarding dies and their construction, will be necessary in order to cope with these new materials. Conventional drawing limit ratios and spring-back data will become irrelevant. Press manufacturers will need to develop reliable forming technologies while changing the functionality of presses to meet these emerging demands.

**ISMR:** What is your personal view of the impact that this year's steel price increases have had on metal users? Do you see these prices continuing to rise or do you have other views?

**MS:** Last year's jump in steel prices and the tight materials markets have had a major impact on manufacturing as a whole – including the press industry. We believe that this situation is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

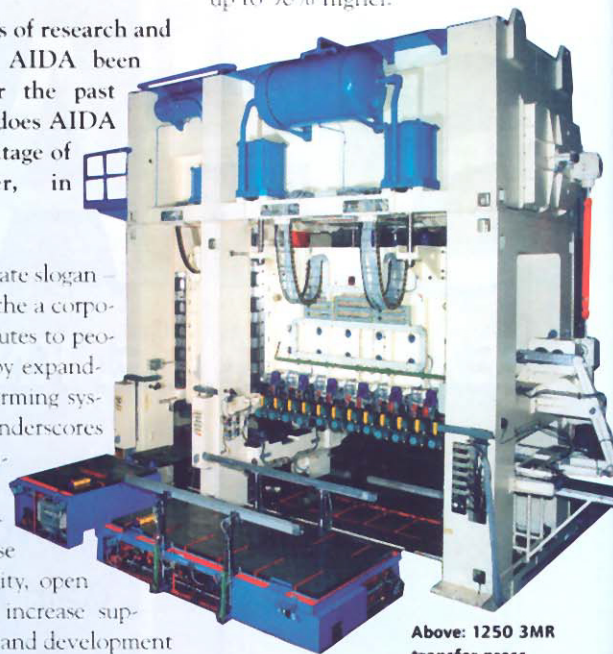
**ISMR:** Which areas of research and development has AIDA been investing in over the past year? How much does AIDA invest, as a percentage of annual turnover, in R&D?

**MS:** AIDA's corporate slogan – 'Continuing to be the a corporation that contributes to peoples and societies by expanding globally as a forming system builder' – underscores AIDA's fundamental commitment to product development to increase product functionality, open new markets and increase support to its research and development and intellectual property.

One recent example of AIDA's commitment to advancing press technology is ServoPro, launched at EuroBLECH 2004. Specifically designed for general presswork, AIDA's proprietary ServoPro is equipped with a fully programmable slide motion and adjustable stroke length for an infinite number of combinations. These features make it possible for a stamper to turn one press into multiple machines – eliminating the need to purchase a variety of presses to perform dif-

ferent manufacturing processes.

The ServoPro high torque, low rpm direct drive motor mounts directly to the press driveshaft eliminating the flywheel, clutch and drive motor found on a standard mechanical press. With ServoPro, stampers also have the ability to run a multi-press transfer line in continuous mode. When compared to a conventional press line that operates in automatic single stroke mode, the ServoPro continuous mode can deliver productivity rates up to 50% higher.



**Above: 1250 3MR transfer press**

**ISMR:** Do you have any indication of how the AIDA Group has performed to date over 2004 or any forecasts on what kind of figures you expect to see for the end of the year?

**ISMR:** AIDA's annual sales are \$300-\$350 million. With the establishment of AIDA Srl our worldwide number of associates has expanded to 1400 and our global manufacturing capacity to 166,000 square meters. **ISMR**

