



By Mike Knowles

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Polymer Logistics: wood look here to stay

Gianpaolo Mezzanotte of Polymer Logistics believes there is more to come for its pioneering produce crate system



Gianpaolo Mezzanotte, chief operating officer at retail display and logistics specialist Polymer Logistics, speaks to Eurofruit editor Mike Knowles about the group's pioneering wood-luck crate system. The interview is taken from Fruitnet's upcoming Fresh Focus Tech supplement.

Gianpaolo, what big trends are you seeing in terms of in-store merchandising and the way fresh produce is presented in supermarkets?

Gianpaolo Mezzanotte: The trend that we're seeing is that retailers want to offer a very good shopping experience. They want to emphasise more and more the freshness of the product, which means giving the whole produce department a real, fresh and whole-market look. This is why Polymer Logistics has combined a good visual look – the wood effect – with a very efficient

crate, moving away from the cold, logistical look, because we wanted to get more involved in the produce department by giving a very large range of display solutions. This is why we are providing lots of different solutions and trying to meet the different needs of retailers. Our idea now is to go for a holistic approach, offering a complete wood-look effect for the retailer's entire produce department.

Why do you think the wood look has become so trendy? Why does it resonate with shoppers?

GM: A lot of surveys have been done and most say that the shopper loves to shop in a store where the atmosphere is warm. Also, the food itself makes more of a connection because the wood is a natural material and of course it is a better fit with produce. At the end, what we did was try to combine the advantages of the plastic material in

a very nice effect to build the look of a traditional market. This has been appreciated not just by the retailers but also the shoppers.

Where in particular is this proving popular?

GM: We started in Italy because one of our most important customers is Carrefour Italia, but we have been expanding worldwide and around two or three years started introducing the wood-look solution with Walmart in the US. We are also carrying out some tests with retailers in the UK, while trying to go into other markets. Most retailers really appreciate and approve of our solutions, which makes us happy given how much we have invested. It has been a kind of out-of-the-box thinking.

When it comes to working with retailers,

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system.

We started with the wood-look RPC

GM: Not always, but yes in most cases we are trying to build the right solution for the format of the store together with the retailer. We try to be very pro-active and offer a win-win approach.

What further innovations can we expect from Polymer Logistics in the near future?

GM:

terms of hygiene with

Well, innovation is a never-ending process. For instance, we are now providing a kind of cladding solution for retailers that have equipment in store that maybe is not very good visually. The idea is based on what we did with the wood-look effect.

Just finally, one of the big trends among consumers

do they also get you involved in the design and layout of the department itself?

is a concern about packaging. Your displays seem to favour loose product. Is that a deliberate part of your strategic approach?

GM: Yes, this is one of our targets. We hope that this kind of trend will continue.