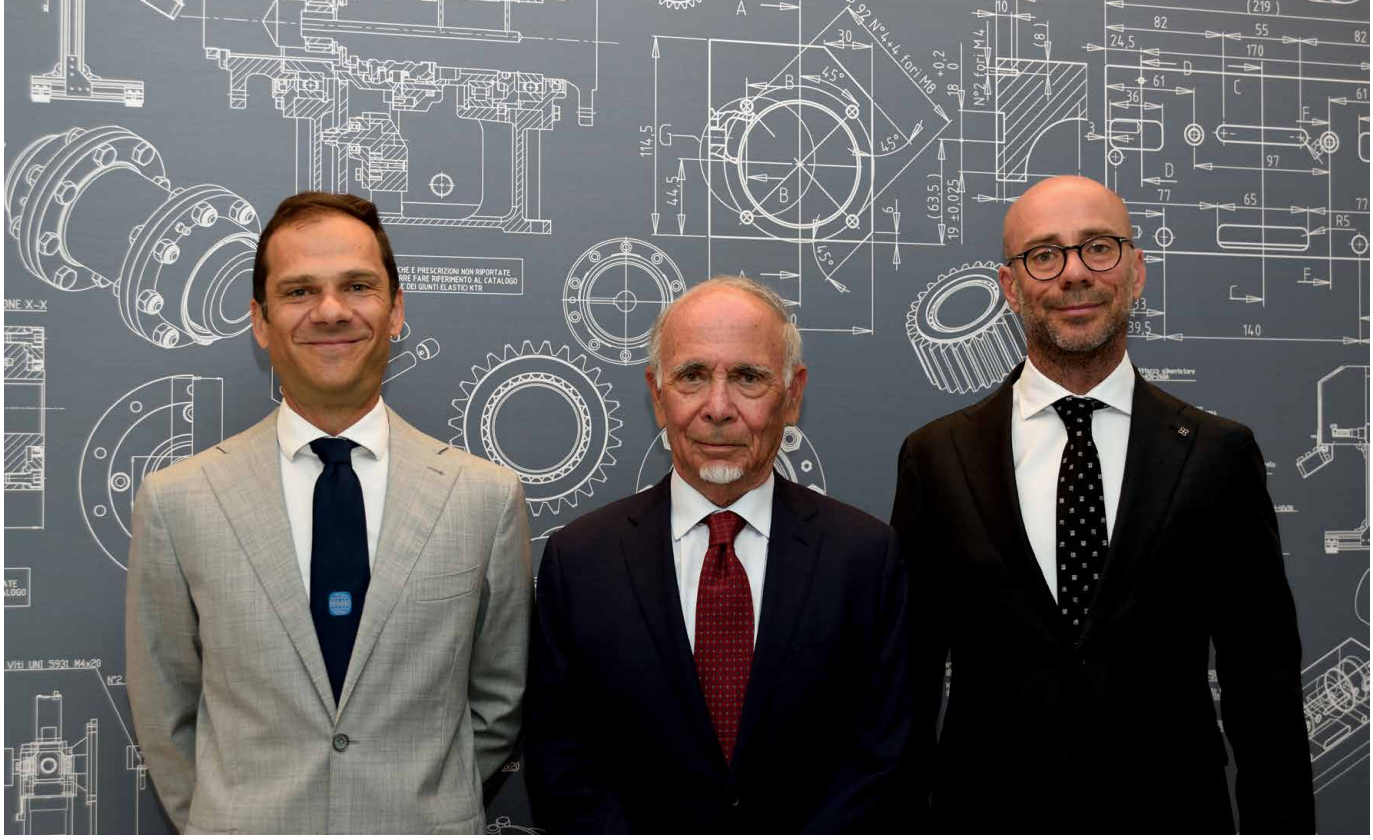
80 Years in Motion:
How Mondial Turned Vision into Industrial Leadership

An exclusive BearingNews interview with the Bandelli family on Mondial's journey from post-war distributor to mechatronics specialist.

On the occasion of Mondial's 80th anniversary, BearingNews visited the company's headquarters in Milan to meet Eng. Marino Bandelli, son of founder Claudio Bandelli, together with Group Board Members Alessandro and Stefano Bandelli. Eight decades after the company was founded, Mondial has become much more than a bearing distributor. Today it is an international engineering group active in bearings, power transmission, linear motion and integrated mechatronic systems. We spoke with the three generations of leadership about the company's history, the turning points that shaped its evolution and the challenges that lie ahead.

MONDIAL®



— *Eng. Marino Bandelli, son of founder Claudio Bandelli, together with Group Board Members Alessandro and Stefano Bandelli.*

Eighty years is a remarkable milestone for any industrial company. Looking back, what does this anniversary represent for Mondial?

Eng. Marino Bandelli: Eighty years represent continuity. Markets, technologies and customers have changed dramatically over that time, but our philosophy has remained remarkably consistent. My father founded Mondial in 1946 with a simple idea: always look ahead. Every important decision we have made since then has been driven by that mindset. Whether moving from distribution to manufacturing or from mechanics to mechatronics, we have never been afraid to evolve.

Your father's entrepreneurial journey began immediately after the Second World War. What was his original vision?

Marino Bandelli: Italy was rebuilding everything, its industries, infrastructure and supply chains. My father quickly realised that the country's future depended on opening itself to international markets. He travelled extensively across Europe, importing industrial products and learning directly from manufacturers. Those journeys were not simply commercial; they were opportunities to understand new technologies and discover products that could support the growth of Italian industry.

One of those discoveries was the needle roller bearing. At that time it was still relatively unknown in Europe, but its potential was immediately obvious. It offered compact dimensions, reduced friction and higher rotational speeds, making it ideal for engines, motorcycles and many demanding mechanical applications. That product became one of the foundations of Mondial's development.

Mondial started as a distributor. At what point did you realise that distribution alone was no longer enough?

Marino Bandelli: As Italian industry became more sophisticated, customers needed more than product availability. They needed technical expertise. We gradually moved closer to our customers' engineering departments, helping them select the right bearing for each application instead of simply supplying catalogue products.

That changed our entire business approach. We expanded into complementary technologies such as freewheels, couplings, linear motion products and power transmission components, always following our customers' technical requirements rather than chasing market trends.

One of the company's most important milestones was becoming a manufacturer through Unitec. Why was that such a significant decision?

Marino Bandelli: Because it fundamentally changed our identity. Manufacturing special bearings allowed us to participate directly in product development instead of remaining purely a commercial organisation.

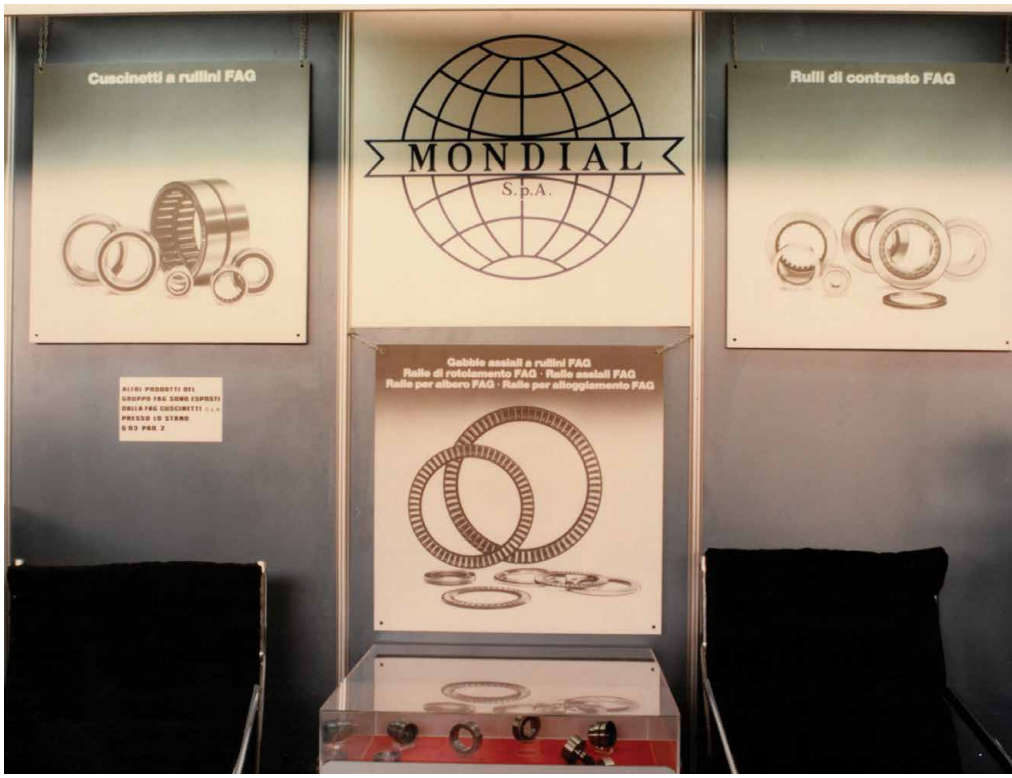
Many Italian industries, including machine tools, forklift manufacturers and steel producers, required bearings that simply didn't exist as standard products. They needed customised solutions designed around very specific operating conditions.

When you manufacture, you can optimise every detail: dimensions, materials, heat treatments, lubrication systems and tolerances. That's where engineering creates real value.

Mondial later expanded into linear motion. What drove that evolution?

Marino Bandelli: Automation. As manufacturing became increasingly automated, the demand for precise linear motion systems grew rapidly. Through partnerships with specialised international manufacturers, we introduced linear guides and ball screw assemblies to the Italian market.

Today those technologies are fundamental in robotics, packaging, machine tools, logistics and countless automated production systems. Once again, our objective was not simply to sell components but to help customers choose the most appropriate technical solution.



Alessandro and Stefano, you represent the third generation of the family. How has the business changed since you joined the company?

Alessandro Bandelli: The speed of the change is probably the greatest difference. Industrial companies today operate in a completely different environment. Digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence and global competition require continuous adaptation.

Companies can no longer rely on business models that worked twenty years ago. They must continuously invest in new skills and new technologies.

Stefano Bandelli: Our responsibility is to preserve the company's technical heritage while preparing it for the future. That means strengthening our engineering capabilities, expanding internationally and developing increasingly integrated solutions.

One of the biggest transformations has been Mondial's move into mechatronics. What motivated that decision?

Stefano Bandelli: Manufacturing itself has changed. Machines are no longer simply mechanical assemblies. Today they combine mechanics, electronics, software, sensors and intelligent control systems.

In the past, Mondial supplied the mechanical components while customers sourced the electrical and software elements elsewhere. That often created integration challenges.

The acquisition of TecnoMotion and Smart Factory allowed us to combine those disciplines within the Group. Today we can deliver complete mechatronic systems where mechanics, electronics and software are developed together from the beginning.

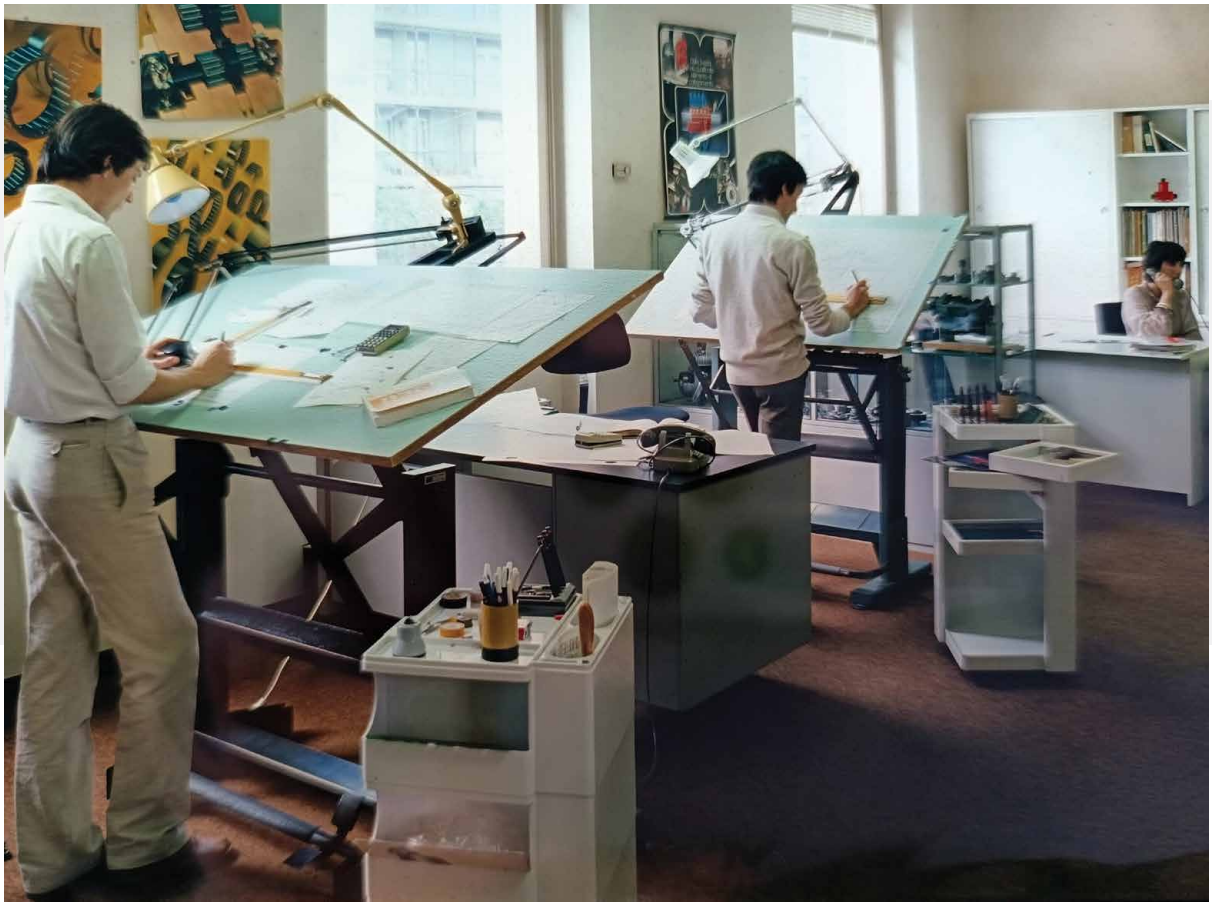
Alessandro Bandelli: Ultimately, our objective is to simplify life for customers. Instead of coordinating multiple suppliers, they receive one integrated solution designed to work as a complete system.

As manufacturing becomes increasingly global, how do you ensure quality throughout the supply chain?

Alessandro Bandelli: Quality is much more than product inspection. It begins with material selection and continues through machining, heat treatment, surface finishing, lubrication, packaging, traceability and technical documentation.

Global supply chains bring enormous opportunities, but they also introduce new risks. Our role is to ensure that customers receive consistent quality regardless of where components are produced.

Stefano Bandelli: At the same time, we continue strengthening our international partnerships so we can support customers wherever they manufacture. Flexibility has become essential.



One feature that distinguishes Mondial is its strong technical office department. Why has engineering always played such an important role?

Marino Bandelli: Because bearings and power transmission components are application products. Selecting the correct solution requires engineering knowledge.

Today many industrial products can be purchased online through digital platforms, but technical expertise cannot be replaced by a catalogue.

Our engineers work closely with customers to understand operating conditions, machine performance and design constraints before recommending a solution. That consultancy is one of our greatest strengths.

Mondial has also worked on demanding automotive and motorcycle projects. What do those experiences contribute?

Marino Bandelli: Extreme applications are excellent teachers.

When components operate under very high speeds, loads and temperatures, every engineering decision becomes critical. The knowledge gained from those projects can then be transferred to many other industries, including machine tools, automation and industrial motion systems.

It's the same philosophy behind our special bearing business: designing a component specifically for its application rather than adapting a standard product.

BearingNews: Finally, what will define Mondial's next decade?

Stefano Bandelli: Specialisation will be increasingly important. Standard products are becoming commodities, while engineering expertise creates differentiation.

Alessandro Bandelli: Mechatronics will continue to shape our future because industrial motion is becoming increasingly integrated and intelligent.

Marino Bandelli: And above all, we must continue to keep an open mind. That was my father's greatest lesson. He looked beyond Italy after the war. We looked beyond distribution and became manufacturers. Today we are looking beyond mechanics towards intelligent systems.

If we maintain that attitude, I believe Mondial's best years are still ahead.

Eight decades after its foundation, Mondial's history is far more than the story of a successful bearing company. It is the story of continuous reinvention, a business that has consistently anticipated change rather than reacted to it. From distribution to manufacturing, from bearings to mechatronics, and from local markets to international engineering, the company's greatest achievement may not simply be reaching its 80th anniversary, but remaining in motion throughout the journey.

For more information about Mondial:
www.mondial.it