The software of your dreams becomes a reality

Born as a hardware manufacturer, Custom has invested more than ten million euro to become a leading developer of apps. All to support the growth of its clients, who are demanding ever more simple, flexible and complete solutions.

If any company has built its success on "bits of metal", it is **Custom**. Born literally in a garage in the province of Parma in 1992, it quickly conquered the market for specialised printers (for cash receipts, tickets, boarding passes and so on) in competition with Japanese and American multinationals - often emerging as the winner. Today, Custom is a complex, diversified company. The instinct which led its two founders, Carlo Stradi and Alberto Campanini, to establish a fully-fledged Group also guided them through an evolutionary process which followed the **changing needs of their clients**, who demand services rather than products, so that they can concentrate on their business without having to deal with non-strategic activities like maintenance, and who want software together with the hardware, so that they can make the most of the most innovative technologies, such as mobile devices and multi-channel functionality.

"Working closely with our clients," says **Carlo Stradi**, President of Custom, *"we realised early on that we were only offering part of the service they needed. We therefore started investing in software and services. We set up service centres, developed software and acquired other companies. Our most recent acquisition is a small specialist app developer which is the Italian leader in terms of productivity."*

Today, **Custom's catalogue lists more than 320 apps**, many of which are intended for retail applications. *"This sector has also seen important developments,"* Stradi continues*; "we have passed from applications developed to follow trends and surprise the client, but which were little more than the retailer's showcase, to modern functional apps which allow you to book a restaurant table or receive an invitation to a happy hour, and more business-oriented ones, like the most recent one we developed for OBB, the Austrian railways, which protects employees in case of emergency or danger (a fall, attack, sudden immobilisation or illness) using a remote monitoring and advanced emergency call system."*

But the evolution has not come to an end yet: this autumn will see the launch of One Store

While Custom's in-house design and development of hardware has not stopped, the company's new orientation towards software and services is literally changing its image. *"Ten years ago,"* says Stradi, *"I found software intimidating, but now it's a fundamental component of our offering and will become even more strategic in the future."* In June, Custom inaugurated the **Service Custom Center** in Mestre, in the new Torre Eva building, the highest floors of which give a view of Venice. The SCC now houses the technicians who previously worked in Treviso and Padua, and are now working closely with the software developers.

"From our Mestre Center, we provide assistance to clients who have installed our products (more than 12,000 shops worldwide)," says Stradi, *"in expectation of the big changes we will be seeing in the period September to November, when we finally roll out our new software, a product we've been working on for three years now."*

Alberto Campanini and Carlo Stradi, founders of Custom

One Store, as the package is called, is now in testing at the premises of a major Milan fashion and retail brand, and when is completed it will enable the user to handle all aspects of modern retail from a single cloud-based station. *"It'll be multi-channel, multi-lingual, multi-device (it will work on smartphones, PCs, cash registers),"* says Stradi, *"will be fully customisable, easy to use (no computer technicians required!) and will not require continuous investment of resources in maintenance, updating and security, because it will be hosted on the cloud."*

One Store will integrate with the most common **Erp software** (including SAP and Oracle), will be the ideal solution for retailers with points of sale around the world (it is also multi-currency) and is easy even for temporary employees, who have no time for training, to use.

"One Store is the realisation of a dream," Stradi concludes, *"the dream of the retailers we've spoken with over the years, who've told us what they really need for their business. In embodies the Retail 4.0 philosophy, which we arrived at after ten years of experience in the world of fashion, luxury goods and catering. Its user-friendly configuration is the natural expression of our philosophy, which has enabled us to achieve our leading position by exploiting the synergies between our various businesses and mixing them together in a simple way."*