

**Interview with Filippo Mazzone,  
Technical Support Manager at Bihl+Wiedemann**

# "WE STRAIGHTEN OUT JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING"

**When the cables in a production facility are suddenly quiet, the wires at the Technical Support group of Bihl+Wiedemann start to hum with activity. And regardless of whether the problems were caused by AS-i or not: in at least 9 out of 10 cases Filippo Mazzone and his team come up with the solution right on the telephone. In a conversation with AS-i Master News the head of the troubleshooters from Mannheim explains how that works.**

**AS-i MASTER NEWS:** Mr. Mazzone, AS-Interface is considered to be one of the most reliable automation systems around. Does this mean that as the Manager of Technical Support at Bihl+Wiedemann you have a fairly boring job?

**Filippo Mazzone:** Your first statement is certainly correct: AS-i is in fact considerably more robust than many other systems. But the conclusion is rather far from the truth. For one thing, there is a certain amount of wear in any equipment. For another, because of its outstanding team player characteristics, AS-Interface is often working together with a variety of controllers – which means a variety of the problems we see have their cause

somewhere else, even if they take AS-i down with them.

**AS-i MASTER NEWS:** In such cases I presume a call to some other Hotlines would result in a persistent "wrong number" recording?

**Filippo Mazzone:** Quite possible, yes. But that's quite far removed from our own philosophy. Our ironclad motto is this: If in a system just one single Master from us is installed, we feel responsible for the problem, regardless of what actually caused it. Sometimes our customers even call us when they are having fits with equipment that's not even using Bihl+Wiedemann products. And even then we are usually able to help. I don't want to sound boastful, but we

can straighten out just about everything.

**AS-i MASTER NEWS:** hat sounds a little like there's a magic wand involved ...

**Filippo Mazzone:** No, that's definitely not it! We simply have an enormous amount of experience, because since Bihl+Wiedemann was founded Technical Support has been written in capital letters. Besides which we have tremendous ambition which sometimes borders on being possessed. And if we in Support are at the end of our wits, we simply get our development engineers involved. All together the result is an impressive success rate.

**AS-i MASTER NEWS:** Which you would quantify how?

**Filippo Mazzone:** In around 95 % of cases we find a solution right over the telephone – which may take 20 minutes one time, and perhaps five hours the next. In only about three percent of calls does a service visit to the customer result, i.e. where remote diagnostics and maintenance were unable to resolve the problem.

**AS-i MASTER NEWS:** In other words only around two percent of all cases land in the "Unresolved" file?

**Filippo Mazzone:** Correct. Although I must admit that off the top of my head I can't think of a single example.

**AS-i MASTER NEWS:** What kind of a mood is the user in when he calls? Annoyed because something's not working? Or rather nervous because he's feeling overwhelmed?

**Filippo Mazzone:** Most are simply glad to have actually found someone who can really help them. Often of course there is a lot at stake. Recently for example we had a situation with a blast furnace. If one of those is down for too long, huge quantities of raw material are lost, and the whole furnace may need to be relined. The relief was correspondingly great when we got the part working again in short order.

**AS-i MASTER NEWS:** Situations like that are presumably then the beginning of a beautiful friendship?

**Filippo Mazzone:** The beginning – or a continuation, depending. In any case, our



unique service involvement increases satisfaction among our customers. And this takes the form not only of follow-up orders, but also means that more and more users are willing to support us in the development of market-ready new

products – for example when they volunteer to test our prototypes in actual conditions.

**AS-i MASTER NEWS:** Thanks a lot for this interview Mr. Mazzone.