

# From Adriatic cities to small villages

## COAL, Italy ... Local commitment and modernity

This cooperative covers central Italy by enhancing local preferences and food traditions that make it feel increasingly proud of its identity. COAL (Italian acronym for COMmissionaria ALimentaristi, translated loosely as 'Food Commissioner') is a cooperative from the Marche region (an eastern Italian region that is wedged between the Appenine mountains and the Adriatic sea. The coop has been active for 63 years in the organised food distribution market: it has over 300 outlets distributed in six regions of central Italy (Emilia Romagna, Marche, Abruzzo, Lazio, Umbria and Molise), covering 220 municipalities.

COAL is a limited liability cooperative company (the members are responsible for the social capital). It was founded in 1961, with the aim of allowing its members the ability to trade goods in bulk.

In 2022, its turnover was 300 million Euros and in 2023 it could reach a sales increase of 6% (318 million Euros). The cooperative owns sixty outlets that are rented out to members, while the balance is owned by the members themselves.

The Headquarter of Camerano, near Ancona, the agri-food platform in Mosciano Sant'Angelo (Teramo) and the coop-owned stores have around 500 employees. The entire network, including the members' employees, employs over 3 000 people.

But what are the biggest advantages for entrepreneurs to join COAL?



A COAL Market Plus shop, decorated with the colours of the cooperative, on opening day.



Carlo Palmieri, president of the COAL Cooperative.

Local fresh produce with messages on localisation, respect for the environment, low carbon footprint and sustainability processes.

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## Distribution organisation and competition

COAL aspires to be like a 'big family', a cooperative in which the 'Member' is at the centre, actively participates in the life of the company, benefits from a continuous training programme, a meat processing centre and a hub (one of a kind) for processing and packaging fruit and vegetables. This organisation allows it to skip intermediate supply chains, choose the quality to offer to customers and manage it consistently over time. Another aspect is the 'first level logistics', i.e. fruit and vegetables daily deliveries (order today with delivery tomorrow) while, on alternate days, cured meats, cheeses and meat are sent to the stores.

The members do not pay for transport costs. Within the cooperative they talk about their competitors as, "every blade of grass makes its shadow." The market is full of competitors, but competition should not be feared. It must instead be interpreted as the stimulus for continuous improvement.

Carlo Palmieri, President of COAL, often declares, "we must not be the first, but work to be the best!"

The underlying aspiration is to stand out where traditional spending habits are concerned.

On the 'very fresh' products, the cooperative boasts a 50% contribution to overall turnover. If one includes self-service perishables and frozen foods (the so-called 'cold grocery'), the percentage is increased even further.

COAL's commercial operations take place in regions with a strong food tradition. Central Italy is the home of the pork butchery, so cured meat specialties represent true excellence.

But this is also the case for cheeses, pasta, extra virgin olive oil and native breeds of cattle and pigs.



Mouth watering cheese displays geared for tasting and selling.



Local, national and international cheeses, in many cases with origin certification.



Loose displays of fruit and vegetables with a minimum number being prepacked.



Colourful displays of such freshness are bound to create extra sales in the fresh produce department.



**Insulated Structures**  
*Efficiency At Work*

## Effective solutions to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration

### Polyurethane Injected Panels

- Standard panels: Outer and inner skin of frost white Chromodek, also available in black finish.
- Polyurethane injected panels for superior insulation and adhesion.
- High-impact PVC interlock profiles on all edges provides totally sealed insulation and a perfect vapour barrier.
- Tongue and Groove panel options available.
- Easily erected.
- Optional skin finish in Stainless Steel – Grades AISI 304 AIS 403.

## Cold & Freezer Rooms



### Floors – Fabricated and Concrete

#### Fabricated Floors

- The inside floor finish is 1.5mm Aluminium tread plate glued and screwed to a marine ply base.
- Galvanised plate options available in lieu of the Aluminium Chequer Plate finish.

#### Concrete Floor

- Concrete floors are used for flush or step-up entry and in permanent structures. Usually a recess of 150–170mm is used to accommodate the foam slab insulation and the concrete screed.



### Meat Rails

- Hot Dipped Galvanised system.
- Support structure integrated into insulated panels.
- Optional free-standing continuous galvanised system with bends and switch gear.

### Aluminium Chequer Plate

- Installed as an option to protect panels from scratches and light impact damage.
- 1.5mm and 2.0mm thick options.
- Standard height 1 250mm AFFL.





**Insulated Structures**  
Efficiency At Work



Up to 40%  
Energy Saving



New or Retrofit  
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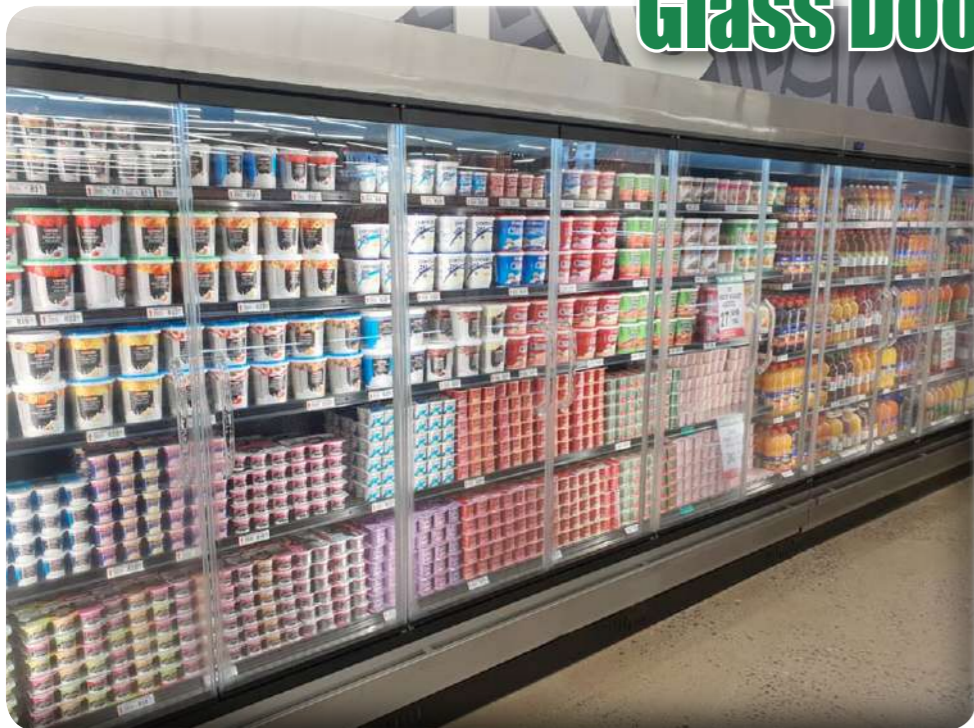


Environment  
Respect

## Benefits of Airshield Glass Doors

- Reduce Energy consumption.
- Extend Product shelf life.
- Double Glazed Argon filled void for better insulation.
- Optimal Product temperature.
- Glass doors have an option of Mullion lights. Quoted separate.
- Handles included.
- Up to 40% energy saving.
- Solution for new cabinets or retrofitted on existing cabinets.
- Doors are spring loaded.
- Less cold air spillage – warmer aisles.

## Airshield Glass Doors



## Ways to save

With energy cost rising and food retailers looking to improve the shopping experience environment for customers, Insulated Structures has developed an effective solution to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration while enhancing the customer experience.

Insulated Structures doors are easy to retrofit on in-store cabinets to reduce the energy required to keep chilled foods at the correct temperature.

Meanwhile, customers are able to clearly see and access the products on offer. Reduced energy requirements means smaller refrigeration plant selection for new stores. These savings will off-set the initial cost of the doors. Up to 40% reduction in refrigeration requirement has been achieved.



Standard Airshield Glass Doors with a Black Frame.  
Heated Hybrid also available in this design.  
Heated Hybrid Glass Doors are fitted with a heater to reduce condensation on the doors in Coastal areas.  
Heated Hybrid is fitted with soft closers.

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In a context in which food specialties change (not only from region to region, but between provinces), it follows that assortment makes 'localism' of decisive importance.

It thus happens that the numerous summer tourists, after having discovered local products during the holidays, leave with an ample supply of them.

COAL trades across the territory through various formats: **Market City** for smaller shops, **Market** for classic supermarkets and **Market Plus** for superstores. The branch of maximum convenience, that is the one structured on the logic of the Every Day Low Price, is based on the **Eccomi** brand.

### Operational modernity and technology

The most functional innovations recently introduced concern the agri-food platform, digital signage installed in stores, self-checkouts and electronic labels.

In food retail, COAL is not inspired by anyone. It does not want to resemble any of the 'top players'. The cooperative is committed to interpreting the territory and market changes to the best of its ability, trying to restore value. The market, and with it its customer habits, are changing much faster than in the past. This requires two essential attitudes – quickly assimilating changes to understand them and, through continuous training courses, transferring solutions and innovations to the network.



Characteristic exposure of hams, seen in both Italy and Spain, gives the consumers great options to choose from.



Deli display of vacuum-packed processed meats.

A final major theme is the generational transition in which COAL feels involved, covering aspects such as cooperative values and working assiduously for quality and profit.



The butchery prepacked meat display area is smaller than the loose serve counter. The display screen on the top left operates as a queueing mechanism for the butchery, bakery, fish and deli areas.



Bakery counters with self-service section for bread rolls – use the spatula to select the product and pack it in the available packaging material.



Beautiful display of fresh meat cuts, including many 'added value' products.



Fresh and frozen fish display – pick 'n choose freshness.



COAL



COAL



COAL



COAL

COAL's social media abounds with recipes and ideas for entertaining. For instance, creating a table centrepiece of home-baked Xmas biscuits, beautiful to look at and good to eat. Then again, there are those who prefer the refined taste of traditional panettone, with candied fruit and raisins, and those who can't say no to the soft Verona pandoro, dusted with icing sugar. Pomegranate juice and seeds could be used to decorate each flute of sparkling wine to make a fresh and sweet cocktail. Have you ever eaten real Valencian paella? Paella is a poor dish that was born between the 15th and 16th centuries from the need of Valencian farmers to have a dish made of easily available ingredients that could sustain them for a day of work in the fields.



**Hippo Zourides**, serial entrepreneur and corporate leader, has been involved in the food trade for over four decades and consults to corporates, large, medium and small enterprises on a variety of management and restructuring skills, including the latest ESG requirements.



**Antonello Vilardi**, professional in managing points of sale at numerous commercial signs, editorial collaborator for specialised magazines, consultant and lecturer in university masters. He has written books on large-scale retail trade.



The Grand Gala of Dance was supported by COAL with a cast of internationally renowned dancers performing on stage. This event was part of the celebrations in honour of the twenty-fourth Blue Flag for the city of Numana.

## A look at COAL's social media pages



Join COAL on a unique journey through time into the excellence of taste and typicality, traditions of Italian territories and gastronomy ...

Abraham Lincoln, the president who led the United States during the Civil War, had a deep love for justice. But he also had a deep love for quality food.

Even the most honest of leaders succumbs to the temptations of the gourmet.

Marie Antoinette was the last queen of France before the French Revolution. Known for her luxury and lavish lifestyle, Marie Antoinette was also famous for her passion for sweets. She too couldn't resist COAL's products.



COAL found creative ways of donating 65 700 meals to ENPA (a national animal protection body), for all the dogs they assist in their facilities. Participating COAL stores stock beautiful soft toys that reproduce six of the most beautiful breeds in the world of dogs: the Golden Retriever, Jack Russell, Rottweiler, Boxer, German Shepherd and a Mixed Breed. The toys are made of material obtained by recycling plastic bottles. For every 15 euros spent shoppers receive a sticker towards the beautiful plush products. For each stuffed animal collected COAL donated a contribution equivalent to a meal for the dogs hosted in the ENPA centres.



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