



Press release

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400 receipts in five hours, a constant stream of customers and cardboard bank notes and coins. The euro debuts 42 days ahead of schedule at the Brughiera est Autogrill, to unexpected effect...

Dress rehearsal for the euro: Autogrill offers facsimiles for purchases and times queues at the cash-desk

Milan, 20th November 2001 - Customers need 50% more time to get their money ready, while the cashier takes two hours to become fully operational, thanks in part to a cash register showing amounts in lire and euros. These are the first findings of the test conducted from 6 am to 11 am on 20 November at the Brughiera Est Autogrill service area on the Milan-Varese motorway.

The operation, which counted on the element of surprise, was very simple. As soon as customers entered the location, they received a gift envelope containing facsimiles of euro and lire bank notes and coins (in three possible combinations: only lire, only euro, euro and lire), for an amount sufficient to pay for a large breakfast. They used the facsimiles to pay at the cash-desk, where change was provided only in euros. The cashiers had received special training and were able to provide information and clarification.

The result? Thanks in part to the entertainment value of the test, there were no real difficulties. "We are extremely satisfied," said Aldo Papa, Head of Information Systems at the Autogrill Group. "The system has been run in and is ready to start. Autogrill has made timely investments in the re-organization of its processes and above all in staff training. So we are in a relaxed mood as we wait for 31 December to strike midnight, and we know that in all likelihood, a few moments later, the first receipt with change in euros will be rung up in one of our outlets, which are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

The extraordinary situation of an organization that collects takings, provides change and issues receipts for relatively small amounts on a daily basis over a nationwide network of approximately 4450 locations has involved Autogrill in lengthy and demanding preparations.

The "Euro for breakfast" test was part of this program and will be repeated over the next few weeks in other parts of Italy, in order to:

- check the network's level of preparation on various fronts – IT systems, processes, staff training – as a result of the action taken over the last few months;
- analyze customer purchasing behavior when using the new currency;
- obtain further information on the impact on cash-desk productivity during the period when both currencies (lira and euro) will be in circulation.



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The main focus of the test is the cash-desk transaction, when the cashier issues the receipt and provides change in euro, irrespective of the currency used to make payment.

Precise measurement of transaction times and methods will help Autogrill optimize planning of staffing levels in its locations during the initial period following the introduction of the euro.

The Autogrill Group

Autogrill today is the world's leading provider of restaurant services for people on the move. The parent company is controlled by Edizione Holding, the Benetton family's financial holding, which owns 57.09% of equity. Autogrill operates in 16 countries over four continents: North America and Europe (which account for the majority of its business), Australia and Asia. In 2000, it reported revenues of 3.041 billion euros. The Group operates through five main channels: restaurants on motorways and in airports, rail stations and shopping malls and quick-service city restaurants.