

AEM INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS WEIGH IN ON COVID-19 RECOVERY, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Every organization has experienced the COVID-19 pandemic in their own unique way. AEM members – regardless of their size, location or industry served – have faced challenges and opportunities in the weeks and months since the pandemic took hold.

With that fact in mind, AEM recently caught up with a pair of its international member company representatives – Filippo Muccinelli Venieri of [VF](#)

[VENIERI SpA](#) and Jyri Kylä-Kaila of [Epec Oy](#) – to discuss what they've experienced thus far, their opinion on the future of the post-pandemic industry and how AEM can support their recovery.

AEM: *Now that we're more than a year since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, can you assess where things stand in terms of a path to recovery from the impacts of the pandemic on the industry and the markets you serve?*

Kylä-Kaila: *As a supplier components and electronics to the mobile machine and special vehicle market, COVID-19 had a smaller relative impact on our company. In the spring of 2020, we did have a reduction in sales due to the pandemic. And now we are facing a really challenging semiconductor problem in the industry this upcoming year, as the supply chain for semiconductors and automotive components are difficult to source from the market. We have been preparing. While we are not the biggest player in the market, I can foresee that other larger companies may face a lot of issues. Also, we have increased our employment, and we feel that we are prepared for growth this coming year.*

Muccinelli Venieri: *Well, it is a more of a question of how the business has changed in this past year rather than how we have recovered. I believe that we are no longer at the stage that we were at the beginning of the pandemic, and now we simply have a different approach. It is no longer a question of recovery, but a question of how things have and will continue to change, as there have been many changes we have all seen due to COVID-19 in the past year.*

AEM: *Assess where your country is right now in terms of its recovery from the pandemic. What impacts will that have on your organization? What challenges remain, and what do you think it will take to overcome them?*



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Kylä-Kaila: We are a subsidiary with 150 people working, which is relatively small. The biggest thing for us is that we seem to be that we are in the middle of a transition from a medium-sized company to a large company, and this means that we are expanding globally. This also means that we have a large investment program for manufacturing, research and development, as well as quality, and we bring in a lot of capability to produce components and to engineer software in the future. We are expanding globally, and we are planning to have more people of our own in North America. So, our challenge is more related to growth than working in the pandemic.

Muccinelli Venieri: The short-term impact that the pandemic has had on our company was mainly the freezing of business trips. Now, business travel is not frozen, but it has become harder to travel. Traveling used to be so much easier. Even if there is a desire to meet personally worldwide, the attention level is a lot higher than it used to be in the past. Before COVID-19, I spent 180 days abroad, and this has been reduced drastically since COVID-19 started.

AEM: *What are some opportunities that have presented themselves based on the fact that North America in particular is in a good place in terms of a recovery from the pandemic? How will that impact your organization, its long- and short-term goals and your customers?*

Kylä-Kaila: We must remember that the impact of the pandemic has been relatively small up until this point in North America. Lots of companies have increased automation, connectivity, electromobility research and development projects. We have a heightened customer interest, and we see that companies like us are beginning to invest quite heavily in the future.

AEM: *What is your outlook for the future? Where do you think things will stand in six months? A year? Beyond that? What factors will play a role in determining how things will play out, and why?*

Muccinelli Venieri: We look forward to more travel. Travel rules used to change every day or every week, so it was hard to say what the future holds. Now, that is no longer the case. I am a very positive person, so I say the future will be bright. I say that the starting point of returning to business as normal could be [CONEXPO-CON/AGG 2023](#), and it is possible that we will be all together in Las Vegas doing what we love again at that point.

AEM: *What AEM services do you see supporting your recovery? Why?*

Muccinelli Venieri: There are two main ways. One is technical viewpoint, according to the rules and compliance regulations for mobile machines. Guidance and viewpoint is important to us, as we are located outside the U.S., and we do not have the insight on regulations like AEM does today. Travel is more rigid and difficult than it was in the past, so the information the AEM provides about regulations is imperative to our business. The second way is to stay close to the US and to get support scouting new importers and partners. We would like to utilize the association as a local scout for us, and so far this has been very helpful.

Kylä-Kaila: AEM is valuable to us, especially in North America, because the association has the contacts to many other OEMs, and access to important information important to our business. We are happy to be able to be a part of the association, and we look forward to learning more from AEM, its members and the industry as a whole.

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