

# A Nice REVOLUTION

Offering solutions for home management, from security systems to integrated home automation, Italian company Nice is forging a glittering reputation. We caught up with CEO Roberto Griffa to chat about how technological innovation is enhancing the domestic experience.

**ROBERTO GRIFFA**  
CEO @ Nice



**F**ounded in 1993 as a home automation company, Nice, headquartered in Oderzo, near Treviso, at the heart of the Venetian plain in Northern Italy, has since ridden the wave of the tech revolution. Increased mechanisation has, of course, long been a growing trend in most industrial sectors, but home tech is perhaps less discussed. Automatic doors or light activation systems are now widely used. Applications like Alexa or Siri have familiarised consumers with AI, while smartphone-activated heating or security systems have developed a market share. But what if these sorts of developments could reach further? What if all aspects of home tech could be combined into one operating system? Enticing answers to these questions are provided by Nice as its R&D process continues to create new possibilities.

Having worked previously in a variety of sectors, including a stint as European process manager at Fiat, current CEO Roberto Griffa joined Nice in July 2011. He became CEO in November 2015, an appointment which excited him on several levels.



**The team always understood what we were doing.**

### Global opportunities

“I first joined Nice as managing director of the Latin America division,” Mr Griffa recalls. “At the time, we were very focused on gate and door automation. Then around 2014 or so, we identified the opportunity for Nice to become a global player in this sector. Apple was trying out some ideas, but we were the first European company to really step into that arena. So it was all quite new, and we were discussing how this could work, projecting five or ten years into the future and so on. We realised there was great growth potential there, and I took up my position as CEO with this vision in mind.”



It was a vision which has borne visible fruit. In the eleven years of Mr Griffa’s stewardship so far, Nice has evolved into a global leader in the home management field. Employing over 2800 people, the Nice People, across five continents, operating fifteen research and development centres and thirteen production plants, the company’s customers are spread worldwide. Naturally, however, the journey involved some challenges, particularly at the outset.

“There was a lot happening on the technology side, but also on the customer experience side,” the CEO explains. “We also knew we needed to expand geographically, and we

needed to incorporate some technology. We had to make decisions about how to do this and went down the path of making a series of acquisitions. In this way, we created a base to build on. We were able to put all these

technology specialisms together into one package.”

### Putting it all together

Combining different systems such as smart home devices or AI technology into one offer, which is Nice’s focus, engenders a new process of R&D in itself. How these different systems integrate and communicate with each other required further development, but through this process, the company was able to establish a unique market position.

“The whole idea,” Mr Griffa states, “was that the team always understood what we were doing. My challenge was to take the →



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vision of the founder, which was to improve the quality of life by simplifying everyday movements, build a team, and take that to market in an expanded way. I'm fortunate that I created a team which was very united. We have such great people, and they knew that this whole process was not just about getting bigger, it was about getting better. It was just that we needed to be bigger to be better. So one element fed the other. But the key point is that when you have this kind of spirit, everything becomes easier."

With this vision largely realised and impressive progress already in place, targets are now being set for the short- and medium-term future. One of the most important of these is to create brand awareness.

"This is a key point for us," says Mr Griffa. "We want our name to be known. We want the consumer, the end user to know who we are, in the same way that they know who Apple is. This can move us from a B2B focused company to a B2B2C one. In this way, we want to become more customer-centric and place more importance on the consumer experience. So instead of creating engineering and devices and simply putting them into the market, we will be working on experiences, becoming a broad, solution provider, which is a different



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animal. This requires a radical change in the mindset of the company, and at the moment, we are putting together skills and resources to continue this transformation."

**On the rise**

That new vision for the next phase of the company's development looks set to provide the platform for further growth. The technological proficiency and geographical reach of Nice means the company is well positioned to implement the new approach. If the process of integration and organic growth proceeds as expected, with further inroads made into the American and North European markets, including opening, last June, the

new headquarters of Nice Brasil in Limeira, in the state of São Paulo, then figures "around double digits" are expected, according to the CEO.

"We are confident in this," explains Mr Griffa. "Because the simplicity of our solutions and the advanced electronics we have give us an advantage over our competitors. Not only that, but our capacity to offer a full range of solutions, while normally other companies in this sector concentrate more on one particular aspect. People that come to us can find solutions involving automation, security, smart appliances, AI, you know, the whole gamut, and we are very attuned to future housing trends. The other key point is that we have access to all the world's major markets, so in that way, we are very balanced. Most companies in our sector are either Europe-focused or US-focused, but we are not limited in that way."

**Rewriting the future**

It's an impressive package, in which all angles seem to have been covered. While there is still plenty of work to do, it seems safe to assume that Nice's upward trajectory will be continuing in the coming years and that its approach to the future of home life will have widespread impact.



**Being the main partner of Nice in its multiyear business and digital transformation is exciting! We are working as one team, translating strategic vision and ambitions into a global operating model enabled by new technologies, ensuring a smooth adoption for the entire organization.**

**ANDREA MILANI**

Partner and Private Sector Leader, Deloitte Consulting (Italy)



**The team always understood what we were doing.**

"This is really what it's all about," the CEO concludes. "We are seeing the beginning of an evolution in the way we live in our houses. The house will become more of an entity. It will become more conscious. I believe we are going to redefine the relationship between humans and the buildings, even the cities in which they live. This is something that is going to happen. And if we apply the correct technology, all of this will really improve the quality of our lives. So we are here to reduce stress and create a better world." ➔



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