

Product certification in the wood-furniture supply chain is rapidly evolving, with an objective that is becoming increasingly important: to involve the end consumer in this "value chain".



There are no doubts: the highest expression of any **quality certification** is the value, the goodness (not in an organoleptic sense) of a product, of a semi-finished product or a raw material that - sooner or later - will end up in some way in the hands of all of us, final consumers. Although companies and enterprises have been involved in this process for decades, it is only in the last few years that it has become clear how much we are approaching the public in an evident and visible way, in everyday life.

Even for the wood industry, the process has experienced a gradual acceleration that has led from the certification of raw materials, already recognized and desired by companies for several decades, to finished products, a tangible sign of greater sensitivity to end users who are increasingly informed, attentive, involved. There is a **different awareness** that has matured in recent times, a strong attention of the consumer, of end users towards the themes of **safety, quality** and **sustainability** of everything that is introduced into their and our homes, goods and products, furniture and armchairs, closets and beds with which we interact continuously, which are a fundamental part of our living.

In this perspective we believe it is worth refreshing our memory and reviewing together **what the term "certification" means** and then trying to evaluate how and why this concept is evolving.

THE MEANING

The verb to certify derives from the union of the two Latin terms "certus" and "facere" and it therefore means to make it "sure" or however "stating the truth" about a fact or a specific product.

The task of certifying is the responsibility of a third party not involved, in the case of a product, in its production and commercialization, someone who is entitled to be above the parts, but who has got all the skills to express an objective evaluation.

A fundamental aspect of this process, in fact, concerns the need that the need for the certifier to be an authoritative subject - that is accredited by a superior body, such as the State - or whose authority is in any case evident and recognized by the market. The "benefit" of the certification process is, in fact, that of **reassuring** the buyer of the goods on their quality or safety since these aspects have been verified and "stated" by a third party that can boast a recognized trust.

However, this is not the only benefit of a certification: there are undoubtedly other factors at stake, first of all the **image** that a company wants to give of itself and of its product, because being able to boast that a chair, a kitchen, a sofa bear a mark that immediately tells that product responds to certain characteristics of value, a mark issued by an authoritative body - is undoubtedly a powerful marketing tool, as well as a sort of "convenient license" that the consumer can recognize and prefer.

But for us, at Catas, product certification is much more than that, as it allows the certified company to be - first and foremost - constantly aligned with those market requirements that are dictated by relevant **technical standards**. As we know, in the furniture sector, standards are constantly evolving and the certification body must therefore constantly update its regulations, an update that in turn determines the testing methods a product is subjected to in order to be certified, and therefore absolutely and first of all compliant with the requirements of the most **up-to-date** standards and law.

There is even more: a certification is realized in the continuous relationship between the company and the certification body. What does this mean? It means that these two realities inevitably share a path towards the highest quality, a path along which any criticalities or defects are faced together, discussed, evaluated to create a virtuous circle that leads the producer to do more and better!

We would like to strongly emphasize this aspect: the function of a certification process is not only to certify the quality of a product over time but also to contribute, if necessary, to make it better and better.

CERTIFICATION AND TEST REPORT

Considering these introductory statements, the difference between the **test report** and the product certification is clear: with the first document, a laboratory exclusively expresses only the result obtained from the test carried out, without forgetting that the same - whether positive or negative - refers only to the sample tested.

Product certification is much more than that, as the certification body certifies that the entire production, and not only the tested sample, complies with certain normative, legislative or specific regulatory requirements.



EVOLUTION OF CERTIFICATION

The first product certification issued by Catas dates back to 1993 and concerned the low level of formaldehyde emission from wood-based panels. Over the following years, the number of certified products has gradually increased (now there are 180 products) including, in addition to panels, coatings, glulam beams and other raw materials.

These certifications have always been so-called “business to business” certifications, which are effective within the manufacturing world, where the Catas brand is certainly recognized, appreciated and “expendable” as a guarantee of quality. Recently, however, the market itself has encouraged Catas to offer **a different kind of certification**, addressed directly to the end user, as we mentioned at the beginning of this article.



A significant novelty, which sees important industrial groups as well as small and medium-sized companies asking for the certification of the goods they produce or resell, in order to **offer the end user a guaranteed product** (in terms of safety, resistance, durability and Italian origin) by a third-party body of recognized authority such as Catas.

This step represents a significant novelty for us at Catas, who are seeing our name affirmed throughout the whole supply chain, right up to the end consumer. Recently, the logo of our institute has in fact appeared on a few million flyers sent directly into many Italians' homes and has filled large walls in some railway stations, as well as being continuously featured on the websites of some furniture manufacturers and distributors and in an increasing number of communication tools.

A new reality that leads us to think about what new challenges the market may launch in the next future. The issue of sustainability is certainly at the forefront and product certification will definitely be involved with a brand guaranteeing the low environmental impact of the product or the low emissions of the furniture. Catas is now ready to accept these new challenges, for which we have been preparing specific product certification schemes for some time, putting all our expertise and experience at the disposal of companies and consumers.

THE WORLD OF CERTIFICATIONS BY CATAS...

Low formaldehyde emission boards



Playground surfaces



Italian furniture origin



Coating systems for indoor, outdoor and antibacterial



Gluelam beams for windows frames



For info:

Franco Bulian

+39 0432 747231

bulian@catas.com

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