



Winning the innovation game with Ricoh Smart Lockers



COMPANY PROFILE

The sport padel has been experiencing exponential growth in Italy with each year that passes, in terms of both player numbers as well as court availability. This means lots of new players, who only need one thing to play this sport: a racket. The services offered by Care Sport, a start-up founded in 2020 with the idea of bringing the sharing economy to the world of padel, are centered specifically on this piece of kit.

Care Sport is clear about its goals: it aims to innovate the way in which players hire and try out rackets, enabling them to do so directly on-site at clubs without having to visit a shop. "Over the last few years, the habits and requirements of sportspeople have changed a lot. We aim to offer tangible solutions, operating as an interface between players, padel centers and producers of rackets and accessories", notes Paolo Capelli, who set up the company alongside Michel Remino.

Care Sport chose Ricoh Italy's smart lockers in order to realise this ambitious project.



“

Ricoh Italy carried out system integration work to link up the smart lockers with the apps used for booking courts, making the entire process fast and seamless.

PAOLO CAPELLI, FOUNDER OF CARE SPORT

”

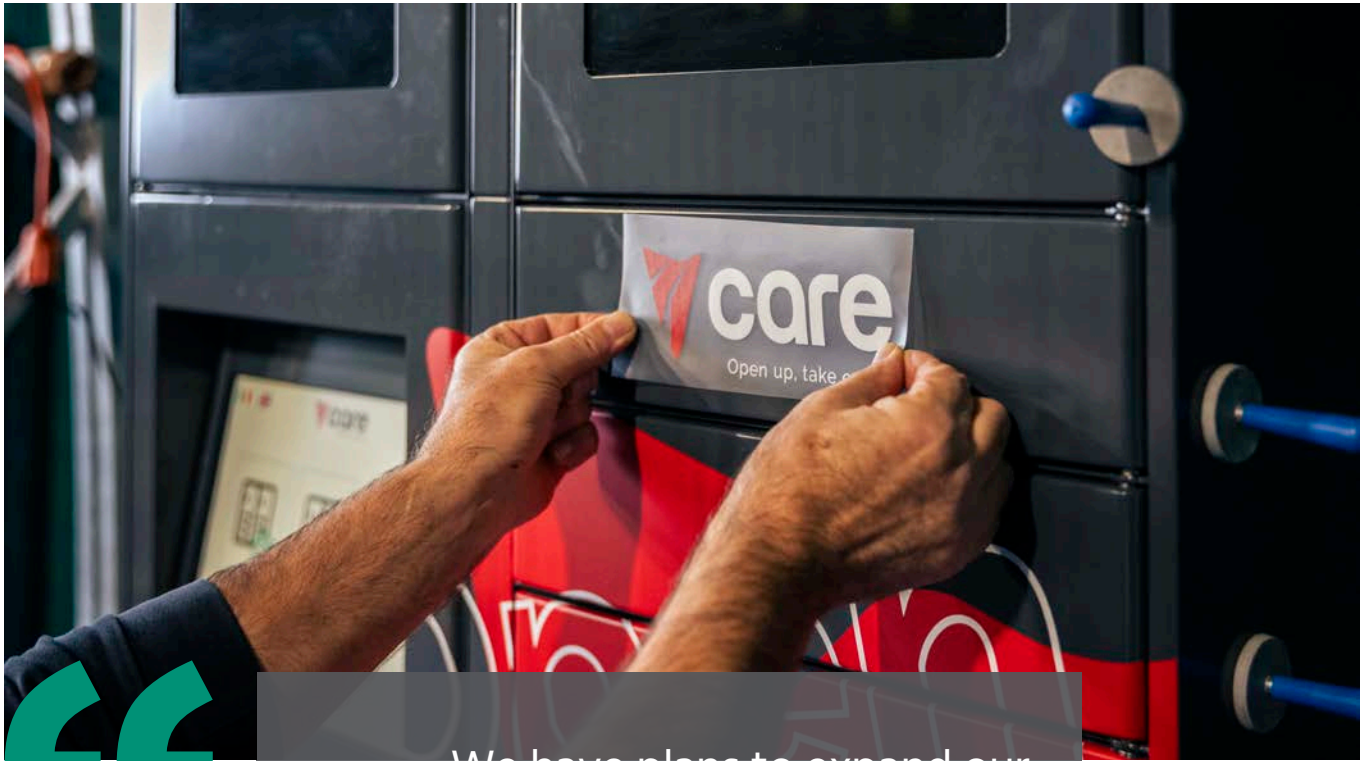
Bringing the sharing economy into the world of sport

Before purchasing a mid-range or high-end racket, players always need to try out a range of different types. This involves having to go to a shop to collect a racket and then return it after use. As well as being impractical, this also takes time and is associated with an additional cost.

This is where Care Sport comes in, as Paolo Capelli explains: “We want players to find everything they need directly on-site at clubs and sports centers. We were able to make this idea a reality by installing Ricoh Italy’s smart lockers in clubs”.

Ricoh Italy carried out system integration work to link up this technology with the apps used for booking courts, making the entire process fast and seamless.

Players can use their smartphones to hire rackets, choosing among the available models displayed along with a detailed technical description and a photograph. Once they reach the court, all they must do is scan the in-app QR code via the locker screen, which then opens the locker compartment containing the racket booked. After the game, it can be returned to the same locker using the QR code.



We have plans to expand our innovation to other countries, again in partnership with Ricoh.

PAOLO CAPELLI
FOUNDER OF CARE SPORT



An extra gear for everyone

Commenting on the innovation, Paolo Capelli states: “We have been receiving extremely positive and enthusiastic feedback from users. There are lots of opportunities for everyone. Players can find a racket directly on-site at sports centers, and also qualify for discounts when they make a purchase by redeeming the points accumulated when using the service.

Padel centers are extremely happy with this service: in offering an innovative service without any need for dedicated staff, it makes them more attractive for their users. Finally, producers can present their products to a wider market, whilst also collecting data on users, which they can then use for marketing and commercial purposes”.

What's around the corner

11 smart lockers were installed at the end of 2023, although the network is constantly expanding, and Care Sport has already set its sights further into the future: “This is a model that is also attracting major interest in other countries.

We have plans to expand our innovation to other countries, again in partnership with Ricoh. The sports sector has undergone a major transformation and is still changing.

We are ready to work alongside it and to help operators master new challenges, offering new services based on players’ requirements”.

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is a leading provider of integrated digital services and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation of workplaces, workspaces and optimise business performance.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh's global operation reaches customers in approximately 200 countries and regions, supported by cultivated knowledge, technologies, and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85-year history. In the financial year ended March 2024, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,348 billion yen (approx. 15.5 billion USD).

It is Ricoh's mission and vision to empower individuals to find Fulfilment through Work by understanding and transforming how people work so we can unleash their potential and creativity to realise a sustainable future.

For further information, please visit www.ricoh-europe.com