

Various Authors



NOW I KNOW HOW!

*A new way to foster creativity and
entrepreneurial spirit of youth!*



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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Erasmus+ KA2 in the field of school education

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Erasmus+ KA2 in the field of school education
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE FOR YOUTH
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NOW I KNOW HOW!

*The project “Now I know how!” is a new way to foster
creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of youth!*



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Eliška Pospíšilová, “Now I Know how!” Student

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PROJECT SUMMARY

The “Now I know how!” is an Erasmus+KA2 project involving three European countries, Italy, Bulgaria and Czechia, and 30 young people (from 16 to 30 years old) coming from these countries.

Nowadays, the objectives of this Erasmus+ course stem precisely from the “Made in Italy” brand, with the aim of extracting technical, lifestyle and personality patterns of its best protagonists (“how to do” and “how to be”) that can offer inspiration for the formalisation of a business idea or become exportable models for innovative projects, projects that would in any event be linked to the peculiarities (raw materials, cultural identities, development models) of the respective economies.

The “Now I know how!” course is structured in two experiential modules, each lasting five days and taking place in Lombardy and Umbria, alternated with virtual learning.

The curricula are tailor-made to the specific group of students and include a mix of a great variety of guided visits to companies, ateliers, artisan workshops, classroom talks with “Made in Italy” entrepreneurs, theoretical and practical learning carried out by entrepreneurs, university lecturers and business consultants, as well as individual career guidance. In this context, the stories of accomplished entrepreneurs – presented in order to trace the path of an enterprise from the formalisation of an initial idea up to its broader development - constitute a truly valuable educational opportunity, an impactful one for young people, who will undoubtedly be able to gain food for thought and enriching stimuli both for a

successful integration into the professional world and for launching their own business project.

Project Aim:

To train young people entering the job market, with a view to enhance their competitiveness and employability, to foster creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, to equip them with key competencies necessary to operate in the globalized world (with a strong accent on intercultural skills), to ease acquisition of practical leadership skills, to revive the interest of young generations for ancient crafts that are nowadays at risk of extinction, but above all to draw inspiration from them as to the mind-set leading to success in any professional path, as well as to provide career guidance and opportunities for identifying authentic individual passion, talents and aspirations that can lead to a concrete successful business project.

Project activities:

- carrying-out the training “Now I know how!” composed of experiential and online learning
- interacting virtually between the training modules
- preparation of a booklet and video material explaining the pedagogical approach applied in the training
- dissemination of results

Project partners:

Gymnázium Ústavní (Czech Republic) – coordinator
Foilservice s.r.l. – FOIL (Italy) - partner
Black Sea Center of Excellence (Bulgaria) – partner

The state Secondary School Gymnazium, Ústavní was founded in 1990. The school provides students with two types of studies, eight-year study in the Czech section (for pupils after the fifth grade of primary schools) and six-year bilingual education in the Czech-Italian section (for pupils of the seventh grade of primary schools), in which selected subjects are studied in Italian (Italian literature, history, mathematics, chemistry, physics). Study programs in the Italian language are finished by a school leaving exam, which is recognized in both the Czech Republic and Italy. The Czech-Italian section was founded in 1991, based on an international agreement between governments of the two republics. Our school is attended by 650 students, it employs 60 qualified teachers.

Foilservice srl – Italy is a consulting and training company founded in Milan in 2001. Its core-business is to provide entrepreneurs, aspiring entrepreneurs, managers and senior executives with the skills necessary to deal effectively with the human element and, most of all, with the social dimension of the company, achieving business success in the process, enhancing innovation, managing change. Foilservice has nowadays two main target groups: entrepreneurs and young people entering the job market. The Foil trainers have significant professional experience gained both in Italy and abroad, have an in-depth expertise in their specific field of action as well as a solid background in managerial psychology, organizational psychology. Foilservice stands out also for its international outreach and the strong interdisciplinary character of its training.

Foilservice didactic has been tested for over twenty years and, during this period, its results have been disseminated in a large number of publications and conferences.

Black Sea Centre of Excellence (BSCE) – Bulgaria

has been acting as a non-governmental organization (NGO) since 2011. Its mission is “empower people to make the difference”. The main objectives of BSCE are as follows: educate – provide opportunities for specialists in different economic branches, high school students, employed and unemployed to improve their qualification and to expand their knowledge; consolidate – maintain a database with current information regarding specialists as a resource for the community and business; stimulate – the creative potential of specialists by providing a forum to discuss and solve local problems through workshops and seminars; manage projects - prepare and manage community projects.



Black Sea Centre of Excellence (BSCE) - Bulgaria

PRESENTATION

Alessandro Venturini

(GGG, Coordinator of the Project “Know I know how!”)

It is extremely difficult to judge a project of which one is the coordinator of the coordinating institution. Objectivity is lacking. We tend to tell the “good” because we even do not see the “bad”. However, it is useful to say a few words in this regard.

I will not write about single experiences in particular. For this, there are dedicated pages. I want to talk about the project in general.

The educational experience overall was more than satisfactory from many points of view.

Let's start with the participation of the students. Students were not of the same age and their background was very varied. Both because they were coming from three different countries, their school experience was not identical, and their age was a little different. So, it was a group made up of groups and individuals with various objectives. But from the first meeting in Borgo Lizori, also thanks to the atmosphere of the place, and despite the difficulties imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, interpersonal relationships began to work immediately and well.

The atmosphere of the village. It was not an optional element, standing outside the training course. It has been highlighted several times to the students that realizing where you are is important, essential. The psychological aspect of the experience must go hand in hand with the physical sensations. Beauty must be seen, understood, felt on one's skin. A beauty

that, as has been repeated several times, constitutes a fundamental part of Made in Italy. A beauty capable of becoming a feature which is not exclusively Italian, as long as those who repeat the experience elsewhere do so with the same taste, the same attention to detail and to the way of living the place in question. By keeping the eyes open, both the real eyes and those of the mind, the Made in Italy can be reproduced in the Czech Republic, in Bulgaria, etc. etc. It is enough to know how to valorize the reality in which one lives and where one starts to work. The entrepreneurs (and designers) we met have been doing so, and showed us how: in various ways but with one and the same spirit.

Another element that involved more and more the students was the one of passion. From the beginning to the end of the educational experience, students had been hearing about but above all seeing with their own eyes (again the physicality of the experience!) how passion is the foundation of all our activities. There can be no excellence without passion.

And if passion does not automatically guarantee excellence (there are many variables that play a role), it guarantees the satisfaction of those who pursue it. And the combination of “passion and doing” has been understood practically by everyone. Therefore, in the various activities proposed, a lot of focus was made on the business, the one made by entrepreneurs in their companies; but also on the business understood as “activity”. And here, I believe that the project managed to respond to the expectations of those who do not plan to start a business in the future.

A great “plus” of the project was its variety (proven by the index of our booklet!). Within a scarce two weeks in presence and a series of online training modules, the offer was truly a

Gymnázium Ústavní – Czech Republic

vast one. And every single activity (be it lectures, workshops, guided visits or interviews ...) has added a piece to the mosaic of the itinerary. We can see it from the way we have worked together - young people and trainers: it is a path, as we all know, that is never finished. Passion pushes us forward, and our doing becomes a challenge - with ourselves in the first place, more importantly than with the others – in pursuing our passion (our passions).

I started by writing about the students because they are the heart of the project. Without them all this would have made no sense. But what I wrote for the students also applies to the project managers and - more generally - to all the people who shared the experience. Passion above all. Like a mantra. Re-checking the budget at night to be sure that the accounts have been done well, organizing and participating in activities despite the back pain forces us - at the same time - to resort to physiotherapy, find last minute solutions for the unforeseen circumstances that arise, overcoming difficulties and stress. Who hasn't asked themselves the question: "why did I decide to do this?" Trainers and managers, just like the entrepreneurs

and external trainers who met along this educational path (but perhaps it would be better to define it a 360 degrees “experiential path”), shall not hide difficulties and frustrations. But the answer came (as it always comes) right the next day, or two days later. Passion. Because, basically, we like what we do. Because we see a sense, for ourselves and for the others. Passion is certainly the way - if not always towards excellence or business and professional success - but often it is! – to the existential success.

Project partners during the kick-off meeting, Prague 2021



INTRODUCTION

Hana Jungová

(Partner Foilservice srl)

In surveys, young people frequently mention a perceived lack of capabilities to start a business and a certain gap between the knowledge acquired in the school bench and the competencies required by the job market which they find themselves to face. Facilitating access to the job market, stimulating creativity and fostering entrepreneurial mind-set, in order to become able to respond to current societal needs, has therefore been the challenge for the “Now I know how!” project. An innovative training has been developed, tailor-made and fine-tuned to the needs of the specific group of students as they were gradually emerging and taking shape. The project reunited participants coming from 3 countries: Czechia, Bulgaria and Italy. It provided all of them with a new territory, a virtual and physical place where to discover, explore and play with their talents, aspirations and personal creative styles, where to become acquainted with successful entrepreneurs, while having the possibility to learn from their story in talks, guided visits in companies and interviews, to reflect together in interactive theory classes, to follow-up on outcomes with their teachers and, last but not least, to start implementing ideas and projects inspired by the training followed. A variety of training methods was used and alternated both in virtual and experiential training modules, so as to broaden the choice of channels for skills acquisition and ease access to everyone. The “Made in Italy” brand, with its history of centuries of highly skilled work, top level craftsmanship and entrepreneurial projects of different sizes, was used as a

background and a case study to stimulate entrepreneurial skills. We tried to retrieve a know-how that could subsequently be transposed and developed in different cultures and in different fields of activity, based on the student's individual ambitions, potential and the needs of the society they live in. Statistics indeed confirm that students participating in any form of entrepreneurship education are three to six times more likely to start a business at some point later in life than those who did not receive such education. "Now I know how!" was therefore designed for students of a relatively early age and it aimed at giving answers to their individual questions, nurturing curiosity, in other words, providing them with seeds and ingredients that could subsequently grow with them and accompany them on their path.

What, finally, did we do well, over the 9 months of training, with a rich programme of activities taking place both online and in several regions in Italy? This book, material result of the "Now I know how!" project, summarizes the main thematic pillars, aims at sharing the experience we gained and brings a sort of full story report of lectures, guided visits, interviews and activities held. Various points of view will appear: those of students, their teachers, trainers and entrepreneurs involved.

We wish our book to be of inspiration to our readers: young people, but above all teachers and stakeholders involved in developing curricula or looking for ways to embed entrepreneurial learning in various sectors of education, including non-formal learning, where the main goal is the one of empowering young people to be competitive, employable, able and ready to solve pressing societal needs, with enthusiasm and success.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN IDEAS ON WHICH THIS PROJECT IS BASED?

Cristina Cecconi

Pedagogical Coordinator of the course “Now I know How!”

The project that we wish to illustrate in this book is a concrete and effective example of a training and a professional support that suits the needs of all young Europeans: a format that we have started to test, obtaining excellent results.

We believe that it should grow and be disseminated more and more. It could represent a model that could be applied on a large scale.

What are the main ideas on which this project is based?

The project draws on an internationally recognized, successful experience: the Made in Italy.

The origins, root causes, characteristics, secrets, points of strength of the brand get all studied on the ground, practically, both in a technical sense (‘knowing how to do’), and in terms of personality profiles and lifestyle of its representatives (‘knowing how to be’).

This choice was made bearing in mind multiple objectives. First of all, to retrieve a model from the ‘Made in Italy’ experience, that could be reproduced in a variety of national contexts, while valorizing their vocations, excellences, raw materials, cultural identities, as well as the development type of economies of each country and territory in question. Further, to accompany young people on an individual path of growth, through the discovery of their individual talents, their life project and responsibility of an apprenticeship that cannot be but professional and psychological at the same time.

Experiences of the creators of the Made in Italy brand were brought directly to the classroom, explored live, with a particularly effective, interactive, theoretical-practical training approach. Lectures were led in person by successful entrepreneurs, young themselves, who, in a fruitful exchange with the project participants, described their own entrepreneurial journey, starting from how an idea took shape up to its broader implementation. Precious training opportunity for young project participants, with food for thought and concrete take-aways.

Aspects related to lifestyle and personality - ‘knowing how to be’ and ‘knowing how to do’ were studied in depth, entrepreneurial psychology, job interviews as well as aspects of self-knowledge and inner evolution which constitute the pre-requisites for entering the business world, together with the notion of autonomy and responsibility.

The young participants took part in practical workshops, which were highly appreciated: they worked with chefs, blacksmiths, jewelers, oil producers and so on.

They also deepened their knowledge of the vocations, excellence, raw materials and cultural identity of their home countries.

Further, they had the opportunity to see how economic success can stem from the art, culture and history of a territory: knowledge acquired together by visiting venues of particular relevance (such as Rome, Milan or Assisi). More specifically, one of our objectives was the one of enhancing participants’ awareness of the cultural and socio-economic identity of their own country and its relations to the identity of the other European countries involved.

The project contributed to improving the quality of work of young people through focusing on the importance of

apprenticeship, responsibility for results, and the quest for excellence.

This project was an opportunity to share a “know-how” aimed at mutual enrichment of young people coming from different countries: an exchange of knowledge and practices with a view of developing a new spirit of enterprise by the young participants.

The Czech group at Borgo Lizori, September 2021



AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pamela Bernabei

CEO Foilservice srl

For a training company like FOIL, whose mission is precisely to provide those who are willing and apt with the tools allowing them to trace inside a path to follow in order to bring into being a positive protagonism in the professional and existential area and to evolve it further, the “Now I know how!” course was an occasion for a very pleasant confirmation.

I would like to thank everyone who made this project possible. It would not have been the same without the invaluable work of so many people who really went out of their way to make sure that everything was organised in the best possible way, especially in a time that was not easy, characterised by Covid. Not an easy project, very articulated and with a rather wide age range of participants. Two different generations that, despite being contiguous, have very different characteristics. Organising activities that would appeal to such a varied audience was a pleasant challenge, we hope we succeeded.

Young people and adults, capable of collaborating to their best with one or the other, for a good service to all, that is, for what we call “common good”. It was a confirmation that certain simple, universal values of human beings can sometimes echo across generations and consolidate a timeless humanism. In this experience, we have in fact seen entrepreneurs, managers and business leaders being open to the necessity of a new pedagogical approach. Entrepreneurs able to lead with an abundance of fruits and transmission of knowledge,

entrepreneurs who told their story with enthusiasm, listened to the participants' questions and tried to answer them.

In our view, there are young people willing to work with commitment and sacrifice, who are ready for the seeding season, equipped with great adaptability skills, yet rightfully ambitious. Young people willing to learn and to evolve, who can do anything but to sit on their hands. Young people who know how to recognise a leader, in their teacher as well as in a craftsman's workshop.

So much intelligence and liveliness characterises the new generations. Young people should be the ones who shape it according to their natural inclinations, because in so doing they will do the best service both to themselves and to the social context in which they live.

We hope that this little book will inspire those young people who have decided to be there where life crowns them with success.

The headquarters of the company Foilservice Ltd., Marudo, Italy



MODULE I

PROGRAMME



Co-funded by the
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“NOW I KNOW HOW!”

Erasmus+ KA2 in the field of school education
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE FOR YOUTH

*The project "No, I know how!" is a new way to foster
creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of youth!*

27 September - 1 October 2021

Umbria, Borgo Lizori - Campello sul Clitunno (PG)

The training course kicked-off with an experiential module in Italy, in Borgo Lizori located in the heart of Umbria, between Assisi and Spoleto. Lizori is a medieval hamlet with more than 2000 years of history. Recently redeveloped, after years of neglect, it is now a venue suitable for organizing courses, events or exhibitions, also on an international scale.

In the course satisfaction survey, the venue of the hamlet received the highest score of the entire course from the participants: 9.7/10. The beauty of the place has charmed our young participants, but not only them, lecturers and entrepreneurs who got to know it during the course also found it delightful.

The thematic line *'Lifestyle and Personality'* was introduced on the opening day of the course and it covered topics such as 'How to enter the professional world'. A forum was opened on the course platform and students could express their view on what are the important points in their view. The topic became

a sort of thread common to all the course sessions and was be taken up directly and settled in the last module (cf. chapter The Three Points for Entering the Professional World, Module V). The thematic line **Lifestyle and Personality** was addressed also in a philosophical key, with the lecture “Beautiful therefore good: the ethics of aesthetics from the classical roots of ancient Greece”, and it was then further developed to deal with the importance of contact with nature as well as the importance of contact with nature through, among others, walks in one of the most beautiful olive groves of Europe.

There was also a workshop of cinelogy - a teaching tool that will be explained in this chapter – with the movie “The Devil Wears Prada”, dealing with the topic of young people and the professional world.

Within the thematic line '*Enterprise and Culture*', aspects linked to 'territory, landscape, recycling, energy, biodiversity, permaculture' were treated, drawing on the centuries-old roots of the Umbrian model.

This topic was explored further in Assisi, with a guided visit to the Basilica, an experience that was particularly appreciated by a high number of participants.

Getting to know the excellence of some Umbrian entrepreneurs was an important and inspiring opportunity.

The guided visit to the atelier led by the founder of the international TUUM brand; a talk with the CEO of Marfuga – company producing the best oil in the world 2021/22/23 according the international Flos Olei ranking v and the visit to the Tenuta Castelbuono estate, to the Carapace sculpture that was created to fulfil the dream of the Lunelli family of witnessing the creation of a wine cellar that would look like a treasure trove for wine.

Finally, within the thematic line ***How to do and How to be***, the topics of product and service of excellence were extensively covered, with the lecture on the “12 points of service psychology of Made in Italy”.

Several workshops took place where participants carried out practical activities: from metal processing and cooking to photography, about which we will be reporting.

Borgo Lizori (Umbria, Italy) where the first training module of the Erasmus+ project “Now I know how!” took place in September 2021.



THE 12 POINTS OF SERVICE PSYCHOLOGY OF MADE IN ITALY

Cristina Cecconi

The purpose of this chapter is to propose an easy-to-consult ‘vademeccum’, a roadmap for studying, intended for anyone wishing to relate to the customer in the most appropriate manner, to contribute to teamwork in the most effective manner, and to develop a most impactful marketing activity.

This is a vademeccum addressed also to those who wish to carry out a similar exercise. No doubt that they will find further links or relevant points of content, even more pertinent ones, thus contributing to the best definition of the ‘12 points’, as a work in progress.

We will define “product” as any activity performed by a company or a professional, even when it involves intangible goods such as consultancy, training, communication, etc.

By “service” we shall mean the way in which that “product” is placed, proposed, sold, promoted on the market, supplied in a relationship with the customer and/or recipient.

Let us consider, by way of example, the business of an estate agency.

By “product” we mean the intermediation as such, aimed at matching supply and demand (what house, at what price, etc.). “Service” will include all those qualities required for having good relations with the client (seriousness; reliability; confidentiality; quick response; competence; technical assistance at all stages of the process, from the foreclosure to the deed; congruity of the commissions applied, etc., which

will end up being the real factor in choosing an agency over the another, although properties available might be the same. If two places have the same quality of cappuccino and a brioche they sell, why do we prefer one over another, if not for the politeness, discretion or smile with which breakfast is served in one or the other?

The top-level product quality will never be enough on its own to determine success, if not enhanced by a ‘service psychology’ which is decisive. Between product and service, priority is therefore the latter. The scheme is reversed.

Made in Italy as a paradigm

In fact, successful experience of a genuine Made in Italy represents a synthesis, a clear recurring example of what we mean by ‘service psychology’: i.e. a relationship with the other person for business purposes that fully involves one’s identity, the inner dimension (of an entrepreneur, professional or leader). A distinguishing feature of his or her ‘savoir être’, capable of producing a ‘savoir faire’ of outstanding quality in the society.

We speak of the way in which the entrepreneur pursues his or her ambitions of being the best, also through passion and pride with which he or she positions himself or herself to be an exclusive response to the needs of others; his or her ability to achieve ultimate self-fulfilment through satisfying the customer’s needs. We speak of an expertise that is fully felt in every detail of an item which is perfect, of a way that the item is delivered to a third party, as an exclusive privilege reserved only for the person for whom it had been created.

We speak of the ‘unique’ or tailor-made item that does bear the signature of its author, *but for sake of making the customer feel unique.*

What is meant by service psychology?

I) selling, negotiating, advising, buying, mediating, invariably with real benefit to the other. The real business is when both sides earn their share

II) the customer's well-being is always both a part and a cause of our gain

Indeed, without understanding all this - without fully grasping the underlying importance of these two preliminary points - it is difficult to penetrate the genuine 'service psychology' and appreciate fully the scope of the '12 points'.

THE TWELVE POINTS

1. The reference point of value is the customer

In opting for a path or a project, in setting up one's core business in a certain way, in making the product precisely in a certain way, what is the 'value' that the leader or entrepreneur strives for, beyond the product itself?

In training workshops that accompanied a variety of company visits, classroom talks organized throughout the course, we kept searching for an answer to this question. It was a fruitful exercise.

What was the common thread of training sessions with Made in Italy entrepreneurs?

First of all: 'savoir faire', polished into a high-level technique with the aim of fulfilling to the best the value chosen as an underlying principle.

And then: constantly evolving the ability to serve others, for the sake of one's own dignity in the first place.

And again: the 'love' – the passion – for what one does, without which the Made in Italy brand would not even exist.

Finally, the ability to understand and provide the 'missing element' to the other party: that is, not a garment as such, no matter how excellent it may be, but the particular garment which suits best the strong points of body and personality of the person who will wear it; that is, not solely furniture or interior design, no matter how beautiful, but the solution that the craftsman conceives for a particular environment or event, personally taking care of the assembling process until the very last moment, for the customer's peace of mind.

2. Never yourself

The sense of 'never yourself' refers to that 'self' that transforms a business relationship into yet another theatre where to show our complexes. Featuring the same old antagonism, the habitual conflict or arrogance, the usual need for applause, for the brownie.

'Personalizing' the relationship with the other party where what ultimately takes over, is the repetition of a role of a protagonist, which is not efficient to the relationship with the customer.

The customer thereby gets 'affiliated' to oneself (as opposed to loyalty to the company and the good that the company produces).

Is giving up one's self-regard a reductive factor here? Quite the contrary: if I can make the other person great, I refine my own professional skills, exactly for what they are.

There are oddities or intrusions that can harm a project and that ultimately add nothing to the quality of the tile with which we are individually called upon to compose a mosaic.

Company visits we had in other courses have provided us with a great deal of input in this regard, both in a negative and a positive sense.

For example, all participants could witness how detrimental can be, for the image of a Sienese confectionery company, albeit an excellent one, an under-code message constantly conveyed by the sales manager who guided the visit: he was very much oriented towards a ‘minimalist version’, he kept banalising things all the time (jokes, half-answers, tone of voice...); ultimately, he presented a very narrow (not to say poor) vision of the product and of the company as such; as if he alone knew the real secrets behind the scenes.

In short, he was communicating that “not everything that shines is gold...”

And perhaps all this relates to the fact that in spite of the excellent level of the sweets baked there, this company, unlike other Sienese brands that are much better known throughout Italy and even abroad, never made any quality leap in terms of its market and has remained confined to a narrow provincial dimension...

On the other hand, at the exact opposite end of the spectrum, there are employees of other companies we visited who have never conveyed such latent messages: employees who have never put their own ‘style’ before the one of the ‘house’.

The production manager, the right-hand man of the boss, public relations workers in a showroom...: in all these cases, the collaborator was able to act as the best testimonial, as a perfect ‘business card’ of the company, making his own person disappear (‘never yourself’) in the sense of never hijacking the scene of the product, of the company, of the entrepreneur.

On the contrary, each of them in their own way knew how to be an excellent ambassador of their primacy. In so doing, they were also earning respect and consideration that they would never have obtained otherwise...

3. Avoiding to speak off-topic with sub-codes

This third point clearly refers to the countless cases of conversations with clients that are not directly related to business as such: interactions during which the 'purpose of the relationship' must never be lost of sight.

It is a matter of a constant fair-play approach, always underscoring style and professionalism, respect, attention to the other and anything else that helps to confirm the purpose and respective roles.

Since we keep talking about how to effectively practice 'service psychology', it is obvious that the possibility, here, to best serve the customer can get either facilitated or, vice versa, irretrievably compromised. Impossible not to mention a situation where we witnessed the approach, far too 'off-topic with sub-code', of the head of external relations of a very famous Italian liquor brand: he was as if obsessed with seeking confirmation of his own sex-appeal, rather than representing the timeless appeal of the excellent *amaro* (a digestive liqueur), that has been produced for centuries by the company where works.

4. Serving the other is the best service one can render to oneself

Serving the other is the best service one can render to oneself. Through refining, adapting, and conceiving the most functional tailor-made service for the customer, the entrepreneur may even end up creating a new 'product' and exponentially expanding his or her range of action thanks to it. This was the case, for instance, of a small high-level company in Parma, which builds machinery to produce fresh pasta: machinery with which the company has been conquering Arab countries and the Far East, South America and Japan, because

it is able to propose solutions tailored to the specific raw materials of a distant territory to potential customers, rather than a standardized machine only.

5. Giving up profits in order to gain a steady customer

We are referring to a particular type of customer, who can provide us – by means of his own judgement, a more qualified one than that of other customers – with a kind of profit that can be even more important than the mere financial one; consisting in advice perhaps, or tips, or word of mouth which is a particularly reliable way of advertising and therefore it is more profitable than a promotion campaign.

At certain levels, debt or credit does not exist anymore. People always finds a way to reciprocate. What we gain from serving this kind of customer, to the best of our ability, can be worth far more than money.

In order to recognise this type of customer, in order to know how to deserve their respect and trust, in order to be able to find a way of serving them matching their level, the entrepreneur or professional has to use their flexibility, sensitivity and astuteness, the only tools.

The same applies to countless other instances where this fifth point may apply, such as being open to accepting a request for a small ‘special discount’ (as if to emphasize the ‘special’ nature of the person who asks for it), choosing to accompany the product supply with an extra service on top (which has the same practical function as in the previous example).

It is always a matter – whatever the case may be – of a sort of ‘investment in the future’, which the entrepreneur or professional must be able to do, depending on the circumstances, while being farsighted enough to give up an immediate return, in order to get something much more

valuable at a later stage (valuable also from a purely economic point of view).

6. Knowing how others serve in the same field

Even for knowing how to serve – together with how to produce – it is necessary to have a competitive, superior competence. The best way to start acquiring it is to find out everything about how others operate in this regard: what kind of after-sales service they provide; what are their delivery times; how many spare buttons there are in the packaging of a fine jacket or coat; what discounts do they offer; what cocoa embroidery they put in the cream folds of a cappuccino...? Product excellence, in other words, must also match service excellence.

This undoubtedly also constitutes a part of a natural Made in Italy DNA. The series of meetings with leading entrepreneurs in the course provided a wonderful overview in this regard. Each had their own style of service, a very personal way of doing things.

Even though we were rather their ‘students’, the quality of the welcome we were given, the care for the meeting venue they displayed, the staff involved in their presentation, the valuable gadgets they offered, the exceptions they made to timetables and strict production protocols to welcome us - this all was enough to see how high is the service that each one of them takes pride in offering.

Service which is just as special as their product. Handy “snapshots” of what ‘service psychology’ means for Made in Italy.

7. Loyalty to the value and service of the product or service

This timeless rule is partially common sense and popular wisdom, ‘it takes two to tango’ as they say. Here, it is not a

question of a generic good behaviour, but a very concrete moral obligation with very concrete material consequences: it concerns the quality/price ratio; the raw materials used; the true stability of a roof as opposed to the one that seems to be; the declared purity of a stone in a piece of jewellery; the durability of an item of clothing; the efficacy of a therapy, beauty treatment, legal advice that is promised, and so on.

It takes two to tango: and it is a question of loyalty.

Loyalty is considered historically as a very important aspect, in philosophy and in ethics in particular (for Plato, only the right person is capable of loyalty), and it is usually identified as a mental behaviour that implies consistency with certain values; a mental behaviour rooted in the determination not to cause any harm to the other party. The opposite is betrayal, dishonesty and deception.

8. Avoiding the bureaucracy of queuing or numbers

Materially, concretely, in our daily lives, how is this ‘service psychology’ to be exercised? How should we treat the customer? Starting from an essential caveat: which is to absolutely avoid treating the customer like any other XYZ, perhaps hiding behind the screen of handy procedures and interfaces. For example, imposing waiting times on the customer; precluding a direct contact with the owner; resorting to triangulation with secretaries who are not always capable to mediate; practising only standardised service modalities, so that things often end up in saying the usual ‘this is impossible, it cannot be done’ (or not this way, at this time, at the end of a shift, etc. Politeness and exquisiteness are the words of order. Ability to honor the person who comes to us to buy something... It is certainly not a question of superficial good manners: once again, it is rather a question of mentality.

9. The company has real interest in that customer (everyone is that)

Once the bureaucracy of queueing or numbers has been overcome, the relationship with customers gets (re)personalised. And each one of them (re)becomes the only and most important customer: the planet around which the company and the entrepreneur keep turning. While it is true that the enterprise and the entrepreneur have their own style (including the service style), the same certainly goes for the customer. 'Everyone is that': but who?

It is first and foremost a matter of showing to each customer what is the real interest of the company in him. And, sometimes, very little is enough: a few small touches; a greeting card; remembering an anniversary or a particular taste of theirs; fructose instead of sugar in the coffee; ham cut by hand rather than with a slicer; no hairspray on the hair, without having to be reminded of it.

In short, in order to best serve the other (existing or potential customer), first you need to know exactly who this other person is and what he or she really likes. And to do this, one must be able to listen, one must learn how to anticipate the customer's requests and needs.

10. An admiring respect for the customer, without using emotional language of another kind

We have already seen how, in the relationship with the customer – see especially point 2, 'never yourself' – many mistakes can be made because of a structural issue linked to the mentality of the entrepreneur or a professional. With this point number 10, we refer to all cases where this 'issue' gets be triggered by the customer, perhaps simply due to his or her character or way of doing things.

We run the risk of getting emotionally involved in the relationship with a client (a quarrel, a conflict, a mishap, an offence, a breach of contract, an excessive demand...) and consequently to forget even the simple 'etiquette' (which is the classical case where form becomes substance), etiquette that could save so many situations, guarantee some room for manoeuvre for the control tower – ourselves – but we eventually give it up, every time we get carried away by circumstances.

Being objectified by a problem only provides psycho-energetic fuel to the problem itself. It disqualifies us in the external interaction, on the level of social image. And, above all, it cuts us off from our inner self and thus from the only possibility to solve the problem.

There is also one more specific 'emotional condition' that can undermine the relationship with the client, i.e. the condition of need in which we think we are and which we risk transferring to the other person: this way we for sure make the client run away, lose the deal and the respective profit. The only antidote is not to lose sight of the real purpose of the relationship we are in, to focus exclusively on the goal which is to supply a certain function to the other. In short, to centre oneself, in a correct 'service psychology' mode. Full stop.

11. In the event of customer behaving improperly, always appeal to ordinary politeness

This eleventh point is certainly an exceptional situation.

Within these '12 points of service psychology' – after so many guidelines relating to the psychological dimension par excellence of the entrepreneur or an expert, covering the risks that nestle in our unconscious as well as points referring to the necessity to evolve the personality of an entrepreneur or

professional, this upcoming point is the only one where risks stem from the client solely.

Previously, any tendency towards dishonesty and cheating stemming from a mental approach of the entrepreneur got condemned. Now however, with point number 11, we consider the hypothesis under which the cheating (prevaricating, stealing, deceiving, complicating) is already part, in very concrete terms, of the premises under which the customer starts to negotiate.

In order to neutralise this scenario, there is a technicality of an economic nature: give and take at the same time, in real time; without granting the other party any advantages in time (deferments, postponements of any kind concerning payment or terms or delivery of the goods). Doing that would sure bring harm.

12. “Second best” in relation to the other (customer) on business or trade or transaction

Having cleared the field of the pitfall that can come under the other point (n. 11), the ‘dodecalogue’ ends by placing the choice entirely and solely in the hands of the entrepreneur/professional and to the special primacy that he must be able to confer to the client. The last possible mistake to avoid is when we absolutely need to think of ourselves as being superior and when we feel we must behave accordingly. Like a need to impose a sort of ‘mental imperialism’ on the other; to place ourselves on a higher step and to pollute the relationship with narcissistic claims.

In the specific sphere of ‘business, trade or transaction’ relationship, the attitude to be held towards the other is a ‘taking the second-best place’: giving up that admiration or reverence that we often believe we are entitled to; giving up

our pretence that trust and respect are due, free of charge. Remembering that it is the customer who provides us with the steps leading upwards and nurturing gratitude towards those who bring us money. This helps to set an inner attitude modality that will refine our outer image in encountering the customer. On the contrary, snobbing customers is a direct way to self-sabotage by the entrepreneur/ professional.

More generally, there is no leading player in the genuine Made in Italy who would not know how to be 'second to the other' even when he is, and precisely because he is, number one.

There is no leading player of the genuine Made in Italy who would not know how to best serve the needs of the other, always in line with given circumstances.

There is no business or work success without pursuing – through business – a higher value; without enhancing one's leadership also through 'service psychology' that these 12 points propose.

DAILY LIFE: THE REASON WHY IT MATTERS

Hana Jungová

The importance of daily life: reason why it matters

One could easily think of professional success as of a topic somewhat disconnected from the very basics of a daily-life routine of everyone, with its almost invisible details and ever repetitive actions: more, maybe, a matter of a theoretical background built over the years, acquisition of skills or pieces of knowledge in a school bench, development of competencies through experience, a question of hard work within an earmarked portion of time after which, once the commitment is successfully honoured, the way of doing one's daily routine does not generate any impact of particular relevance. Why should infinitesimal things of one's daily routine matter in relation to developing an entrepreneurial mind-set...?

Let's think of a difference between, for instance, eating at a table set with care to meet one's taste, in good company, and eating in a rush, as it happens. The former is a moment of recharging, relaxation, perhaps joy and harmony. The latter reduces a lunch or a dinner to a mere act of refilling containers with the objective of not feeling hunger or thirst. Two opposite extremes, with many grades in between. Through *choosing* one way or the other, day by day, gradually one acquires a habit and qualifies a personal style: to aim at the best within a framework of available options or to do the survival minimum, without intervening actively more than necessary. To innovate, to play, or to endure the given circumstances. Such habit inevitably walks with a person, leaves a mark that sticks even in a moment of taking a decision in the professional field and

produces its effects. Precisely through the automaticity with which they get performed, crumbles of the daily life and the way we deal with them imprint a pattern, which can be of invaluable support or, on the contrary, take down to a faded version of oneself. As such, lifestyle is a precondition to success in any sphere one's life, rather than an optional to a knowledge acquisition path.

Travelling to study in a new context proved to be a precious experience in itself. Finding oneself temporarily „dislocated” from the habitual, stabilised routine, while being at the same time supported by the generous welcome of a venue rich in history, artistic and natural beauty, was an opportunity to let the mind breathe and to test one's habits against the background of a situation offering abundance of novelty and fresh stimulus. Does one get more inspired thanks to a walk through the olive groves rather than just sitting at a desk, does the pleasure of a beautiful valley view get more intense through the effort of slowly walking uphill rather than getting there by car effortlessly, does breathing fresh air indeed predispose to a clearer focus and deeper understanding of a theory lecture coming afterwards? Already first steps towards realising, through practical experience, how one is gifted with a certain inner order, personal to each and how qualifying a lifestyle through the “little crumbles” actually means refining intelligence and predisposing the very basic conditions to unfold one's creative potential in any field. So, travelling far, but in order to “get back home”, closer to one's nature and identity.

Walking through the olive groves also represented a chance to appreciate the miracle that can happen when human genius embraces nature. Not an easy climate, the Umbrian one, for the olive trees brought in the region by the Etruscan civilisation

centuries ago. A continental one (and not the more obviously favourable Mediterranean) with very cold winters and occasional frosts that can jeopardise entire years-old groves, steep slopes and a highly calcareous terrain with pebbles: challenging circumstances, yet precisely those that triggered the development of particular cultivation techniques allowing to accommodate the trees on the slopes, to protect their life cycle while safeguarding the surrounding unique biodiversity and ultimately leading to the creation of an olive oil with sensory and nutrition qualities just unrepeatable elsewhere, as well as a landscape of an outstanding, soothing beauty. A chance to witness what a functional interaction between human intelligence and nature means in practice and how much beauty and value it can produce.

An online talk within the framework of the following “Now I know how!” training module allowed to reconnect to the practical experience from which each participant could benefit and to develop the topic of daily life further. A short introductory debate with participants about the first thing done each morning was particularly fruitful as it showed once more how many apparently unimportant steps, yet powerfully predisposing one’s mood, one takes automatically and in repetition, without being aware of them: checking the notifications on one’s self-phone scored among the most frequently “forgotten” actions done upon waking up, before even having breakfast or brushing one’s teeth! Yet, a deed which could not easily get skipped, drawing already the coordinates of a newly opened day. Tips and pieces of experience were shared on grocery shopping, dressing or organising one’s time and living space: the goal being, rather than to uphold and to apply a recipe (pages of lifestyle magazines and books have been offering those with

remarkable variety and regularity), to patiently create one's own recipe, connected with a personal natural order, aesthetic sense, thus gradually building a “safe harbour” for one's line of action in any field of activity.



Walk through the olive groves between Assisi and Spoleto - Umbria

THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE GOOD

Paolo Bianchi¹

The “beautiful” and the “good” are criteria concerning the human being. Kant, the philosopher who best defines modernity, says in his Critique of Practical Reason to be awed by two things: the starry sky that he sees above himself and the moral law that he recognises in himself. He is awed by aesthetics and by ethics. Nowadays, these are still two disciplines that seek to analyse the universal value, that is, valid for everyone in all places and at all times, of the good and the beautiful.

To reflect on these two paradigms means to try to understand not only the distinctive features of any historical era, but above all to look into the foundations that determine how each of us mediates our relationship with the environment and with others.

This is a decisive analysis from an identity perspective. Understanding what is good and beautiful helps to understand the world around us and ourselves.

We started by saying that these two categories pertain to human beings exclusively.

What does it mean?

Undoubtedly, we can recognise certain criteria of choice presupposing ethical and aesthetic values also in other animals: a dog, for instance, prefers a certain kind of food, he shows affection towards certain people or certain other dogs.

¹ Philosopher and entrepreneur in the field of glass making art, Murano, Venice.

This means that there are “values” guiding these choices that are attributable to the idea of good and beautiful.

What is the difference then?

To understand this, it is first necessary to establish what is the distinctive feature of humans, what differentiates humans from all other living beings.

Aristotle defines human being as a “political animal”. The human being, for the great Greek philosopher, contains two dimensions: animality and sociality. But the decisive aspect does not lie in this duality, because social organisation is for sure not a human prerogative. Just think of wolf packs or of the sophisticated hierarchical structure of an anthill or a beehive.

The specificity of the human lies in the kind of response given to the environmental stimulus and in the premises that govern social organisation.

An animal reacts to the environment according to rigid patterns of an instinctual nature, interprets reality within genetically constituted limits where “choices” are possible, but always within a pre-established order.

What differentiates the human, what for Aristotle represents its “political” essence, is the possibility of going beyond these given limits and creating different realities.

This is possible because humans have at their disposal “images”, which allow for the possibility of having alternatives to the given reality.

Inventing a wheel or building a computer are actions made possible thanks to the ability to imagine reality according to assumptions other than the given ones.

The fundamental tool to do this is language.

Heidegger says that animals have “little world” and he intends that, for them, there is no alternative to the given.

In other words, animals do not speak because they have nothing to say, they communicate but do not need the creative skill of language, because their instinct exhausts their sense of reality.

To demonstrate this statement, it is sufficient to think how much social relations of humans and their relationship with the environment have changed over time: a man who lived 2000 years ago was radically different than the one living nowadays, the same goes for the world surrounding him, while the animal world remained substantially the same.

The topic of language is essential and it has been at the centre of the philosophical speculation since its very start, but for our purposes, it needs to be examined in the light of the relation with the moral and aesthetic instance.

One interpretation key is offered by the debate on art, which is a reflection on the aesthetic value of reality but can easily be extended to the moral field as well.

Once again, it is Kant who offers a useful definition for reflection. The German philosopher defines an art object as “a sensible universal” and he invites us to reflect upon the paradox.

To this definition, we should add the statement by the semiotician Umberto Eco, who says that art is always a mirror of the society, therefore reconnecting the aesthetic aspect to the moral one.

If you say “a sensible universal”, you contradict yourself. It is like saying that something is high and low at the same time, while seen from the same perspective, that a solid substance is a gas, and so on.

So, what type of reality is Kant referring to? Philosophy teaches us that contradictions are “unreal”; therefore, art

speaks to the modality of reason through twisting the meaning of “universal”.

What is universal is the idea. If I say “chair”, I include in one single definition all possible and imaginable chairs, those that have been made in all places and at all times and all those that will be made in the future. But what I can have a sensible experience of is never an idea, it is always a determinate object, it is always an “entity” that relates to my senses.

So how is it possible to speak of artistic experience as a synthesis of these two irreconcilable dimensions?

This is where the “subversive” value of beauty and the “political” essence of human come into play.

Communication occurs through universals, if I say: “I went for a walk and I leaned against a tree to rest” and I say this without showing the tree I leaned against, I refer to an infinite meaning that will take a specific shape according to the environmental and social circumstances around me. Those who listen to me will, in turn, delimit the field of meaning to what is necessary for the purpose of understanding.

The relationship between the idea and a sensible reality is an “analogical” one that relies precisely on the “political” essence of man, the need to organise and reorganise society and the environment according to the needs of the moment. The shared meaning of “tree” is an analogical meaning that summarizes the social relationship: what, for Aristotle, is the “political” essence of the human.

In this context, artistic representation is a kind of “magic” that enlarges the meaning of things to the point where the sensitive representation coincides with the conceptual reality as such. When Van Gogh paints sunflowers, he represents particular flowers, “those” sunflowers, but the representation is so harmonious, so beautiful, that the “meaning” overflows to the

point of breaking the limits of the “given” and of attaining the universal value of things. Van Gogh’s sunflowers are so beautiful as to be able represent the beauty of all flowers in the world.

Van Gogh’s sunflowers are so beautiful that they succeed in representing the beauty of all the flowers in the world.

The protagonist of the representation happens to be beauty itself; the object of art is not the “given” which may be a face or a landscape, but the ability to experience, through the senses, the being of things, their conceptual fullness.

The experience of beauty is unbalancing because it mixes and, in some cases, overturns the usual sense of an experience.

Let’s take the Stendhal syndrome, a disorder which can emerge in certain people when confronted with an intense artistic experience, but let’s take, above all, love: love which,



Paolo Bianchi during the lecture “The beautiful and the good”

as Plato teaches us, is the most sublime form of madness allowing to live the other, a singularity, as a perfect synthesis of all human relationships.

Love is always “crazy” because it breaks the principle that governs reality. Those who love, in order to express their feeling, must resort to the paradoxes of poetic language. They need to say that the presence of love makes the air clearer, the sun warmer, they need to let the moon speak...

Beauty is the pavement on the road that leads man to the most intimate reality of his being, to his own nature released from the limits of animal instinct.

The aesthetic order follows the mechanism of the moral order faithfully, for what would the good be if not a paradigm that releases judgment from pure gain and convenience? What is often referred to as the content and imperatives of conscience is nothing more than an order that releases from individual selfishness and does so by glorifying the most intimate dimension of subjectivity, appealing to the structural need for sociality that every individual has.

The good and the beautiful that awe Kant are categories that best describe the human being in its completeness, although for various reasons they represent a mystery for the reason.

CINELOGY

Cristina Cecconi

Cinology is a FOILservice training tool, very effective for young people in particular, that can be applied in groups of participants of any nationality or culture.

In practice, it involves watching a movie as a group. The choice of which movie to watch is made on the basis of a specific topic to explore, including all its possible problematic junctures: romantic relationships, friendship, sexuality, integration into the professional world, leadership, etc.

The movie is used to assess, on an individual basis, the 'points of contact' between the story of the main characters and one's own emotional reactions: for example, which parts of the story were moving; which ones provoked reactions of approval or disapproval, anger, sadness, euphoria; how is a certain passage interpreted on a personal level by different people, or a behaviour or a choice which appears in the movie and with which it can happen to identify in real life.

After the showing, participants verbalize individually reactions that the provoked in them, which allows to bring to the surface the unconscious dynamics that can often be at the source of these reactions, and therefore, also at the source of our own personal behaviours, beliefs or some mental stereotypes.

The second phase of a cinology workshop, the one that follows the showing, consists in a guided analysis of the movie with the help of a tutor who is specialised in the technique of conducting cinology. The comparison of experiences between peers who had watched the same movie together allows to

raise the level of awareness of the interpretational and emotional projections that got triggered for each participant: the movie gets analysed in a more structured way. Then, it is easier to see the issues shown in the movie more objectively and concretely, while gaining awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses and while reaching a more mature, deeper level of knowledge of issues that are crucial in the life of any young person.

The support provided by the tutor, who coordinates individual interventions and the overall discussion among participants, allows to identify more easily the unconscious dynamics that can frequently affect one's way of doing things and thinking. The 'collective' analysis of the film - analysed "as if it were a dream" - helps to put one's problems into perspective, while reinforcing self-esteem and sense of identity.

Much more than a theory lesson on a given subject or a presentation delivered by an expert, cinelogy represents a very effective tool for young people because it allows them to tackle issues through a 'bottom up' approach: that is, starting from themselves and their peers who share the same difficulties, aspirations, problems and desires.

A concrete example

A very concrete example was provided by the cinelogy workshop delivered in the first module of the Erasmus Project "Now I Know how!": it was based on the film "The Devil Wears Prada" (2006, David Frankel).

From a young person's point of view, this movie can certainly be a most useful opportunity to reflect on some of the crucial points in one's personal development and professional training.

This cinelogy provides indeed a great abundance of food for thought. For example: how to develop one's life project, what are the intermediate steps? How to ensure one's economic independence? How to fit into a new work environment? How to adapt and up to which point doing it? What to learn? How much to invest yourself? How much can one gain from an experience? How to relate to the leader of an enterprise? How to collaborate, to what end? What role does one's family, friendship, relationships play in this phase? What is the winning attitude, what are the risks, possible mistakes? By what are they to be measured? When facing a great variety of situations or relationships, what is the winning or losing choice? Considering the dynamics that unfolds in the movie, what is the judgement of a boy concerning the behaviour of the protagonist-young woman? Was she wrong and, if so, where? Could one have acted differently...?

All these questions echoed among participants (during and after the cinelogy), in the footsteps of events happening in the movie: as if they were looking in the mirror of those events, in order to fine-tune themselves. A work in one's inner dimension that continued even after the conclusion of the module where the cinelogy session was held and that continues even after the conclusion of the entire Project.

An international tool

All participants and regardless of their origin, Italian, Czech or Bulgarian, understood the input provided by this cinelogy workshop.

The cinema market is a global one nowadays and so the language of movies is international, one that is familiar to any nation or culture, which is another advantage of this tool. It is a tool for introspection, self-awareness and personal

development that can be applied across the greatest variety of contexts.

It is not a mere coincidence that the cinelogy got introduced many years ago already, while being successfully applied since then in countries with a high degree of diversity. From China (in 2011, for example, cinelogy was illustrated and conducted live in Beijing, at the International Youth Art Festival, promoted under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture), to Latvia (where in 2006 an expert from the Ministry of Education attended a cinelogy workshop with young people and had described it in very positive terms as an “innovative method, to be inserted in general school education programmes, since it is capable of developing critical thinking, gaining a better knowledge of oneself, analysing one’s behaviour and one’s professional and private choices, encouraging personal growth and initiative”), from Italy (where high school students in Lombardy took part in a series of cinelogy workshops that were scheduled to take place, since 2015 and repeatedly, in several editions of ‘BookCity Milano’, a programme of cultural events prepared by local institutions), to the rest of Europe (such as cinelogy workshops delivered for groups of young people of different EU nationalities in the context of other Erasmus+ courses in which FOILservice was as a project partner providing training).

Step by Step

On this basis, some of the Italian participants of the “Now I Know how!” course proposed an initiative aimed at launching a cooperation between young people of different nationalities, starting with the participants of the “Now I Know how!” project. It is about applying cinelogy on a larger scale: the tool that can be of great benefit in schools, youth associations,



Cristina Cecconi during cinology – September 2021

career guidance and educational bodies, agencies dealing with consultancy and training for youth entrepreneurship, and so on.

These are the phases they planned to carry out step by step:

- ♣ In a first phase, young people involved in the project will select bodies where to promote the use of cinology, they will identify contacts and will schedule presentations and meetings, during which they will also determine areas of greatest interest (e.g. drug and alcohol addiction, business culture and similar).
- ♣ In a second phase, they will identify specific movies currently on the offer that they consider to be most useful with regard to the selected areas of interest.

Further, they will carry out an ‘in-house internship’ with the aim of gaining knowledge: of the movie as such and of the lessons that can be learnt from it in the light of cinological interpretation.

♣ In a third phase, live cinelogy sessions may be carried out for the selected stakeholders: schools, associations, agencies, etc.

♣ Finally, the fourth phase will consist in preparing a calendar of cinelogy workshops to be delivered in the various contexts involved, as well as in the actual delivery, in agreement with trainers and consultants interested in the use of this tool.

♣ In all phases, the young people involved in the project will be able to avail themselves of the advice and support of tutors, starting with a preliminary training where they will get a general introductory background.

The main deliverable will be to build up a group of young operators, capable of interacting with their peers on the topic of personal and professional growth through cinelogy.

Cinelogy as a tool for working on “how to do” and “how to be”, explained by young people to young people, in a context which will be as intercultural as possible.

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

Hana Jungová

Watching a movie actively: that is, paying attention to one's feelings and emotions during the show, retaining passages that were particularly interesting, points of the plot that were thought-provoking or striking, that “rang the bell” for one reason or another, in order to subsequently review those points in a guided discussion together with other participants.

“The Devil Wears Prada” was chosen for the exercise because of its plot, touching upon several aspects that were topical to the training, such as entering the job market, facing a job interview (and not an ordinary one...!), learning new skills and competencies, developing relationships within a team, handling a demanding boss, making decisions and choices.

Andy Sachs, protagonist of the movie, is a fresh graduate who wishes to have a career as a journalist. She looks for a job and, confronted with a lack of opportunities, applies eventually for the position of junior PA to the editor in chief of the Runway magazine: the most exclusive one in the world, deciding upon trends of the future. A one directed by a woman who, de facto, dominates the fashion world: Miranda is powerful, eccentric, precise and extremely demanding. Andy lands the job, despite not knowing much about fashion at the start, even perhaps despising it a bit. She becomes object of scorn around the office because of her style. Her boss is definitely of a particular kind, however, without showing too much, she recognizes Andy's potential. Gradually, Andy starts to adapt her style to the position, deals with her seemingly impossible tasks in a more and more competent manner, amid a team with its many



Our students during the cinelogy

challenges to understand and to digest: a senior assistant Emily whom Andy outperforms and rules out from the great aspiration of accompanying Miranda to Paris for the fashion week, as well as the one with the art director Nigel, her mentor, who serves his boss faithfully, yet gets “sacrificed” in a situation where it is Miranda who needs to defend her position. Ultimately, Andy makes her choice and takes a position.

Unlike a discussion in a film club, cinelogy does not aim at discussing the movie as such, with its qualities, context, quality of acting or similar.

Participants are invited to share their experience as freely as possible, and tell “their” story: what are the factors that they see as significant in the various situations? How do they see

choices made, positions taken, what were the moments of most emotion for them? Once all wishing to take the floor have done so, it becomes evident how many points of view there are, different highlights, gaps or omissions, interpretations and discrepancies: almost as if each participant created a “second” movie.

Cinology is a tool that helps to become aware of different possible interpretations of facts and situations and the main underlying motivations.

Taking part stimulates critical thinking, allows for developing decision making strategies, to adapt one’s style in managing situations, and it also opens a way to understanding – and taking into account – the diversity of possible positions in a situation. Through cinology, participants also acquire a self-analysis strategy which can then be recalled in situations resembling the one narrated by the movie.

Choosing a movie on a topic with which young participants can identify smoothly, makes the debate richer and therefore helps to attain the goals of the exercise.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SELF-PORTRAIT

Barbara Bernabei

I had the idea of developing on this subject while listening to people who review their self-portrait shots with me. Their statements, reactions, comments or simply silent emotions made me think of the ego states and their diagnosis according to Berne's criteria: behavioural, social, historical and phenomenological.

Photographic self-portrait

Phototherapy¹ is an activation technique of the subject that allows to enter and to experience certain areas of self through the use of photographs, divided in 5 techniques. One of them is the photographic self-portrait, which I perform as follows:

- A photo set is created with a black backcloth, flash lamps and a camera equipped with a remote control to take the photographs autonomously. The backcloth isolates from the surroundings which is useful for the exercise.
- The person doing the exercise will stay alone in the room of the set. There will be no people influencing the course of the session and the person will be able to take photos of

¹ The term phototherapy is currently being questioned because of the word therapy. Alternatives are being considered in order to avoid confusion with the health aspect of a therapy. Is hugging trees therapeutic? Is watching art exhibitions therapeutic? Pet therapy, art therapy, are other terms that can lead to confusion. In this case, the use of photographs are activation techniques that can be applied in areas other than therapy, such as team buildings, creating working groups, in sports to increase motivation etc.

himself/herself with the use of a remote control. The person receives instructions on where to move in order to get a sharp image and on the field of action within which he/she will appear in the frame of the picture.

- Before starting the shots, a conversation takes place in order to determine the motivation for the exercise and to establish its objectives. Those taking part in this exercise can be people who attend counselling sessions, or team building groups as well as support groups, such as those of cancer patients. Depending on the situation, one considers what emotions to represent in the exercise. It can be anger, fear, euphoria, sadness. Or "What do you look like when you go to a job interview and want to be hired?".
- The person is then left alone and has about 10 to 15 minutes to take a maximum of 10 shots. The depth of the exercise will depend on how deeply they can dive into their inner world and connect with those parts of themselves that they want to take a picture of. Here, each person decides for him/herself.
- Afterwards, the photos are reviewed together with a facilitator (in this case it is me). In interaction with these pictures, the person brings out content, memories, while commenting on what he/she sees. My role is not to interpret, but to moderate and to hold back the situation, in case feelings become strong and disruptive.

Looking, photographing, reviewing oneself

There are some general observations to be made regarding the relationship with one's own image. First of all, by nature and for the way we are made, we cannot see ourselves directly in the face. We can, however, see ourselves in a mirror. And what

we see is a reflected image that we have learned to recognise. But others do not see us so 'backwards', they see us in front of them. Their image of us is different from what we see in the mirror.

A photograph captures us exactly the way others see us (the right way, we could say) and not the way we see ourselves in the mirror. This creates an initial dissonance when we see ourselves in a picture, because we look different from how we usually perceive ourselves in the mirror in the morning.

To understand, think when you take a selfie: some phones (iPhones) will flip the photo over. I always wondered why, when seeing the photo flipped over! In a selfie, when we are about to take a picture or a video, we see ourselves as in a mirror, while the final shot is like that of a normal camera and that is why it is flipped. Over time, mobile phone manufacturers have built in a portrait option and the photo is no longer flipped, making it look right as we perceive ourselves. Maybe nobody has paid attention to this, but smartphone manufacturers have.

When we take a photo of ourselves and capture our emotions, we get a product (the photo) in a click, with a lot of details of our face that we are not used to seeing or that we do not know at all. While we look at ourselves in the mirror, we adjust and censor certain parts of the image, to have it coherent with the way we imagine ourselves, but in a photo, none of this is possible. We see everything.

While making a self-portrait, when we recall an emotion, we set in motion a complex pattern of physiognomic and non-verbal movements, but we only freeze one of them in a split second by using the remote control, the moment we decide to take the picture. Not a second before and not a second after. A normal fluid movement of the body gets interrupted and only

a snatch of it gets extracted to the photograph. Will it be the right one? Will it be the one that best describes a given emotion? The experience? Have I captured a defence? An impression? Or have I managed to capture the depth? Thinking about Berne and the ego states, reviewing the image of oneself is the most intriguing part for me. Which ego state emerges when I recall an emotion (for example, when I imagine or retrieve a memory)? More importantly, what ego state of mine gets activated when, later, I review the same shot again? Is it the same? Is it complementary?

Hence, I came up with the behavioural and social diagnosis, but performed directly by the person who is reviewing him/herself. So, it is not about someone observing someone else's behaviour. It is me observing myself in a picture. It is not someone reacting to my behaviour, but it is me reacting when I review myself. We are used to seeing and reading (consciously or unconsciously) the non-verbal part of others but how are we when we see our own?

We are not talking about ordinary pictures, but pictures taken by ourselves, of ourselves, activating a given expression.

For example, I did a photo session for myself, because I wanted to see what I look like when a client sits in front of me during a counselling session. And without too many tricks, excuses or resistance I plunged in the situation (who knows if one can speak about phenomenological diagnosis in this case) and I snapped. What I saw made me reflect, I really didn't think I had that face and something has changed since then.

Workshop

The following pictures are those of young people coming from northern Europe who took a group exercise. The topic

was “What do I look like when I go to a job interview to get hired?”, as well as other emotions that they could pick and represent in a picture.

Here, context and situation differ radically from the previous ones. In addition, participants compared their shots with the ones of the other participants. However, the apparent lightness of the situation did not spare anyone. The emotions came straight through. Some participants looked at themselves and said “Frankly, with that face of mine, I would not hire myself”. Others, when seeing themselves, were amazed by the difference between how they thought they were and how they appeared in the picture and, in addition, how the difference was perceived by the group.

What was interesting, however, was the group work.





There are several things that happen *simultaneously* when working together. First, there is the moment when participants get confronted with their own image and perceive the reaction it creates inside.

The second aspect is the inner thought “How do others see this image of me?”

The third aspect is “What others say, is it a reaction to my face? Is it true, the interpretation they give? Why do they see me like this?”

The fourth aspect is “What others are saying, could it be useful for me? Is it bothering me? Can it perhaps be true? Could it be they are talking about themselves rather than me?”

The fifth aspect is when participants observe personal reactions of the group members to the images of others, expressed in words or non-verbally, and how they engage with each other.

Conclusions

What is put in motion and brought on the surface through reviewing one's self-portrait? Is it possible, through the 4 diagnostic criteria of Berne's ego states, to activate a process of change or at least to collect data?

Diving in one's own emotion in order to take a self-portrait could make you think of a phenomenological diagnosis. After all, an experience from the past is recalled. Or, is it only a general emotion being recalled and captured in the snapshot? The source of the behavioural diagnosis is the content represented on snapshots. From all the various elements that Berne mentions (tone of voice, proxemics, physiognomy, non-verbal communication), I can ultimately only see the physiognomy and a frozen posture which gets extrapolated from the non-verbal continuum. Eventually though, the added

value here is the choice of a moment coinciding with a particular state of mind.

Click!

The remote-control button gets pushed precisely in that moment. Can I guess a first ego state from there? Some people could say, “Wow, I look just like my mother here!” But in saying that, what ego state is activated? The adult one, because I make a simple observation? Or the baby one, because I say it in a resigned way?

In some cases, there are very specific situations and memories that re-emerge, situations and memories that were not at all on one’s mind in the phase of taking the shot: “I remember that until the age of 18, I was convinced to be incapable of studying. I thought that I was silly and that I would have never made it. Then everything changed and I managed to get my high school diploma. I don’t know why I am saying this, but when I see this picture, it comes to my mind”.

Once it happened that a lady who had suffered a series of major losses in her family, commented her own image like this: “I didn’t follow the guidelines we had established before taking the shots. I wanted to explore my pain. But I would have never realized, without seeing it on these photos, how strong that pain was. I think that time has come to start changing this”.

In the context of the group work by young participants, it was clear to everyone that there is room for improvement on the one hand, but they got also more aware of strong points that perhaps had not been considered and adequately assessed previously. And seeing it in pictures taken by themselves brought an awareness more powerful than a thousand words. A very lively and interesting work, for those who were able to appreciate it and grasp the nuances of the workshop done together.

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Students accommodation, a window view in Borgo Lizori - September 2021



HOW TO ENTER IN THE JOB MARKET SUCCESSFULLY?

Student's Forum

What do you think are the 5 key points for successfully entering the job market and gaining economic autonomy?

Luca (IT)

- a good strategy
- strategic knowledge
- good advertising
- creativity
- constant analyses

Linda (CZ)

1. Have enough passion to never settle for anything less than perfection. Strive to be the best.
2. See challenges as a positive not a negative, they help you grow.
3. Actions speak louder than words, actually do the things you want to do don't sit and say it isn't achievable.
4. Be true to your idea, have a uniqueness that distinguishes you and your business. Make people remember you.
5. Take every opportunity that you have.

Eva (CZ)

- 1) Having the right contacts
- 2) Not being afraid of challenges (being glad for them, they will elevate us to a higher level)

- 3) Having a source of income
- 4) Being original or finding a blank space on the market
- 5) Trying to use every opportunity, experience, person for our success

Georgi (BG)

- 1, To stay positive no matter what
- 2, Luck
- 3, Creativity
- 4, Vision
- 5, To be able to learn from others

Hristiyan (BG)

The first step, in my opinion, is to research the market one is trying to enter, such as researching the demand for olive oil if one were to produce olive oil. Having researched the demand for a product or a service, one knows if it would be of value to people. The next thing is to start the actual manufacturing or development of the service or product, which calls for public or private funding. The third step is to start advertising so that people would get to know the product or service. A good advertisement is a half-sold product. The fourth point is to conduct surveys in order to acquire useful feedback from the client and then improve the product or service. The fifth and final point, which may be done in an earlier stage, is proper networking. To be more precise, having business contacts with other companies with common interests could benefit one because it provides a competitive environment and is an opportunity for better development.

Moreover, networking could attract potential investors and thus expand the company.

- Create third-party revenue outside your business, take advantage of all our knowledge to have money to invest in your company
- Pay attention to every detail of the product we create and sell to our audience

Yanislav (BG)

1. Money- It is needed to begin a normal business.
2. Relationships- They are needed to succeed in a business because nowadays all happens with relationships.
3. Creativity- That means a good and interesting idea.
4. Location and distributes of the business
5. It will be successful, if the business attracts customers

Jan (CZ)

1. Ability to make sacrifices
2. Determination
3. Clear priorities (be organised)
4. Problem solving and thinking outside the box
5. Have a clear vision
6. Enjoy the process and be passionate

Antonio (CZ)

1. Have clear goals and know what you want, but be ready to reasonably modify them if necessary
2. Keep your options open - don't fully commit to something, you might change your mind in the future
3. Be ready to sacrifice and compromise between your wants and your duties
4. Manage your finances responsibly and with your future in

mind

5. Be aware of your limits - don't take in work you know you won't be able to carry out to a good level

Zhana (BG)

1. To have passion
2. To take advantage of every opportunity
3. To have your priorities in order
4. To be confident
5. To be able to foresee upcoming changes and adapt

Neda (BG)

1. to do market research
2. to understand how you can really be useful to people
3. to make a good advertisement
4. to want more and more to improve your skills
5. to find the positives of every situation.

Hana (CZ)

- 1) it is better to set smaller goals than bigger ones. We usually fail when we want to reach bigger goals, and that demotivates us. If we stick to small goals, we will enjoy ongoing success and move on.
- 2) do everything 100%, with joy, passion and be kind to others.
- 3) at the same time, act prudently, be realistic. Always write pros and cons for some action.
- 4) it is also very important to be able to learn from mistakes. If something goes wrong, it doesn't matter, keep going.
- 5) be different from others, invent your own ways, be creative and original so that people will remember you.

Ester (CZ)

Sociable - it's important that he/she likes people so she/ he could be able to work with them. And also, to be empathetic so the person can see his point of view and understand what he wants.

Innovative - it is favorable always have new ideas and never be behind. It's good to be inspired by the wiser who have experience but never try to do exactly the same.

Enthusiastic - to be the best in particular the person should do his job with passion, that's the way he can put everything into it otherwise it would be a brake compared to others.

Trust themselves - one must trust him selves so he wouldn't panic in difficult situations so he will be able to solve problems. When a person believes in himself, he is not afraid to really take risks so he can grow up.

We must have things settled in us - nothing goes easy if we don't have a good background (good lifestyle, to enjoy food, have order in life, have experiences and good study opportunities...) and have supports (family and friendship, someone who always stands behind us and keeps us in difficult situations).

Anna (CZ)

- You should always want 100% in everything and not be satisfied with "only" 95%
- You have to believe in yourself and believe in things you are doing
- You should try to be surrounded by people who believe in you and who will always try to help you
- You should try to be different from the others
- You should try to put "a piece of you" in things you do and do simply what you like

Veronika (CZ)

- You have to believe in yourself
- Not to be afraid to share your point of view with others
- The second point leads to not to be afraid to speak up for your opinion and visions
- Hardworking
- Be surrounded by people who will support you



"Now I know how!" students in Lizoni, 1st module, September 2021

Francesco M. (IT)

Knowing how to serve others

Mastering foreign languages

Loving and having passion for one's activity

Being curious

having perseverance and humility in improving continuously

Aleksandar (BG)

1. Know your expectations

2. Apply for an internship

3. Don't pass up on opportunities to network

4. Never stop learning

5. Work on a great CV

Eliška (CZ)

1) Make sacrifices

2) Networking (valuable connections)

3) Determination

4) Make priorities

5) Have ambition (have a specific goal)

Vendula (CZ)

- great and positive mindset

- respect your coworkers, treat them as you wish you were treated

- take some inspiration from more successful people or just your boss, learn from their mistakes, learn from your own mistakes, try to be better than them

- don't overwork yourself, know where your limits are because if you'll feel tired your stamina will get worse

- when your young try as many as jobs as it will be possible so you can get more experience that could possibly help you in the future

Adriana (BG)

In my opinion, the first step to a successful business is to find your niche. Then a good research of people's demand. You need to find the unique thing that no one else can imagine but yourself.

Assessment of our financial capabilities and the most important thing is care for the client.

Sara (IT)

Hello everyone! I have tried to find 5 fundamental points which I am pleased to share with you.

- Be a person of culture. To the word culture (vast in its meaning) I would add being curious to always know a constant novelty. Be the best on what is within your competence
- Learn to serve the other (the boss or the person in question and then arrive) as if you were yourself, in the best possible way. And above all, always be ready to serve.
- focus, concentrate on the goal you want to achieve, trying to avoid distractions by investing your time in actions that are as functional as possible.
- walk the path with conviction. Often doubt, fear can make us waver. The important thing is not to get lost, even in the face of "problems". Problems arise to be solved. have perseverance!!
- Having passion, passion for what you do, passion for what you study, passion for your work. You can make your work a continuous pleasure, by feeling comfortable

Valeria (IT)

Hello everyone! Even with a delay I'm pleased to share my 5 points with you. In my opinion, to be successful it's necessary to have the courage to try not giving up.

One needs to know how to adapt and be creative, resourceful, responsible and hard-working.



"Now I know how!" students in Assisi

TRADITION, INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP MARFUGA OIL

Hana Jungová



Francesco Gradassi, CEO Marfuga

When you find yourself in Umbria, region right at the centre of Italy, one of the tiniest ones of the peninsula and the only one whose borders are not lapped by the waves of the sea, you are plunged into a landscape of stunning beauty. Rich, warm greenery with many unique species growing on the hills and in the valleys, vineyards in certain

areas, but above all olive trees. Virtually everywhere you look, especially between Assisi and Spoleto on a foothill surface of more than 40 km, olive trees (1,5 million in total) are ever-present. One would almost take them for granted, so harmonious and peaceful they look. As if they grew almost effortlessly in a generous embrace of mother nature. Yet the contrary is true: olive groves cultivation is originally exotic in this region, brought by the Etruscan, and through centuries it

has been facing many challenges. Steep slopes, limestone terrain, a continental climate rather than a Mediterranean one, with winter frosts that can be even fatal for the plants in certain years, to name a few. What allows the Umbrian olive oil to boast unique taste and quality features that could not be reproduced elsewhere, and the landscape to be one of the most touching and unforgettable in the world, is a thousand years' long tradition of applied knowledge, "sweat and tears" in developing cultivation techniques transmitted through generations, and a coherent, smart, continuous intervention in nature and in the landscape by the human factor.

And in Umbria, Campello sul Clitunno, we meet Francesco Gradassi, oil maker and CEO of Marfuga, company located at the foot of the majestic hill from which it takes the name. Francesco's family has been making and selling oil since 1817, the great-grand father Domenico already used to send glass jugs with the precious nectar to families of northern Italy. But a powerful business development arrives thanks to Francesco's father Ettore, despite the fact that during the years of agriculture crisis in '50s - '60s, he undertook a banking career to make a living. The passion remained strong, oil making kept alive and the motivation, together with skills and knowledge, transmitted to Francesco. A new mill was set up in 1976 and, during the '80s, Ettore and Francesco spent several years travelling to the North of the country in order develop a customer base in a true sense of the word and make it grow. "Through personal contact," says Francesco. "The best option when you want to learn everything about your customer's needs and, from there, develop your business. It will seem easy to you", he adds, "but one needs to imagine that the distance, at that time, between Umbria and Lombardy was much more of a challenge than it is nowadays. It was far away! With the

cars we used to have, without a GPS that would lead you effortlessly to that restaurant you'd like to visit because you wish to meet its owner, talk to him, learn about him as a person and as an entrepreneur, see and explain what you have to offer and, maybe, start a cooperation. We made a lot of sacrifice, not everybody would have been ready to do the same, and we endured thanks to our passion and sense of adventure.”

Needless to say, that the product of Marfuga is a top level one. Every piece of the long tradition of knowledge and techniques leading to uncompromising quality are in place and preserved faithfully. He talks us through it passionately, while adding: “Quality and passion are essential, but you need more to succeed in business”. He tells us, for instance, how he was the first one in Italy, to bet on monovarietal oil, one of his greatest products to become. Anything but a given, as monovarietal oil did not have any reputation of being special at all at the time, quite the opposite. It was a bold choice of innovation, he says. He mentions packaging and he shows us, for instance, a wide range of available formats, ranging from the smallest ones for tasting purposes or as a “souvenir”, through classical bottles, up to cans of different dimensions: a variety that allowed him to attend his customers flexibly even through challenging years of poorer harvest and a more modest yield. Beautifully designed labels, each of them stemming from an idea, but all of them focusing on promoting not only the product and its features as such, but the roots and the cultural uniqueness of which it is part. A communication effort of great coherence, visible in every detail, distinguishes Marfuga from other high-level quality oils in the area: through years of taking part in international competitions and awards, for instance, Marfuga oil made it up to the best PDO Extra Virgin Olive oil, in the world Award of the Flos olei guide in 2021/22/23.

And Francesco shows us the newly acquired technology. He underlines that “none machinery alone would be enough to make a good extra virgin oil. But it can make a great extra virgin olive oil extraordinary”. He takes us warmly through his mill, a space newly designed in 2003.

Unlike the traditional mills, small and dark, open only for the harvest and therefore for 3 months every year on average, here we are in an airy, light open space.

What accommodates the product rooted in tradition is a vanguard loft. And it stays open all year around: “there are various ways to enjoy olive oil, not only during its making”, says Francesco.

“One needs to welcome and host people”, and the mill, besides its original purpose, serves as also a showroom, organizes guided tours, tastings, workshops, conferences and events. “It is a new way to interpret the world of olive oil”, says Francesco. And it is the way that made him succeed, distinguishing him from many other competitors: tradition and innovation walk hand in hand in Marfuga, mutually reinforcing each other and reuniting sources for the benefit of all.

“There is a piece of future and discovery in every day of mine. I get great satisfaction from what I do, it is a wonderful job and it goes long way beyond a mere production. Olive trees in Umbria are very important for farming, yes it’s true, but they play an essential role in a wider context, from the hydrological, landscape and cultural point of view. And so, what I do becomes a calling, a contribution to preserve the roots of our territory, its beauty and its wisdom.”

CULTURE AND ENTERPRISE IN ASSISI TUUM JEWELLERY

Hana Jungová

In Assisi, our first visit could not be devoted to anything else but the Basilica of Saint Francis, UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2000. It comprises the Upper and Lower churches, where the Upper Church represents a major example of the Gothic style in Italy, but most importantly, the Upper and Lower Churches are decorated with outstanding frescos, many of which got beautifully restored just recently, by a series of extraordinary late medieval painters from the Roman and Tuscan schools, such as Cimabue, Simone Martini or Pietro Lorenzetti, but above all Giotto. Giotto's cycle of 28 frescoes illustrating the most significant events in the life of Saint Francis constitute a major breakthrough in the world's history of art. Leaving behind the medieval way of representing the sacred world, governed by rigid stylisation rules, Giotto overturns the way of capturing spirituality, setting a completely new, revolutionary paradigm: spirituality quits to be an unachievable dimension for humans and returns within reach of the earthly existence. It is easy to get captured by the course of the narration, almost as if becoming part of it, as a witness of one story or a protagonist of another. Each of the human faces portrayed, for instance, embodies a genuinely human emotion, a smoothly recognizable one, capable of reaching one's soul through a vivid, touching impetus, capable of conveying a message that is familiar to each spectator. Our experience of it was at the main focus of this visit.

Later on, just a few steps away from the Basilica, we meet Michele Alberti, founder and CEO of the jewellery company TUUM. His calling as an entrepreneur is closely connected with the territory where he operates, Assisi, the company's headquarters, but also San Sepolcro, where Michele was born and which is not too distant and it is another of the important places in the life of Saint Francis, nowadays a pilgrimage destination. TUUM, name of the company, derives from the Latin possessive pronoun, meaning "yours" and it does not refer to the jewel only, be it a gift or a souvenir of a visit of Assisi: it refers to its message. A jewel with a message. Michele together with his business partners had the idea of making personalised jewellery, each piece offering the possibility of engraving something personal, intimate to each wearer, expressed through design and a sequence of words. A message which would be the essence of faith. Rendering spirituality material, tangible, is in fact the company's mission, where faith refers originally to the religious field as such- embodying in jewels the words of a prayer, "the one" for its future owner. But faith, here, is intended also as love: wedding rings are called "fede" in Italian, merging the meaning of "faith" and "ring". And from here, stemming from a word pun, another idea was born later on: the one of making personalised rings for soccer clubs. A very pronounced, deep and impactful kind of faith, the sportive one! TUUM, over the past 2 years, when virtually no-one could be seen on the streets of Assisi, situation that could perhaps have endangered the business, worked on developing a new line of jewellery for football clubs, designing and producing rings for their passionate fans. Michele talks us through the story, passionately and in detail. "Was it hard work?", a question from our Erasmus+ group comes up in the end. And Michele just smiles, pronouncing

only 3 dry words: “Well, that one...”. Meaning, you bet it was, but who cares? Thanks to the meeting with him, we could witness how “hard work” is not even perceived as hard, when you are making a dream come true.

This experience has inspired a young participant coming from Bulgaria, Adriana, who launched her own activity where she designs, produces and sells jewellery, which represents the spirit and the goal with which this course was envisaged (see in this book “Case Study. Now I know How!”, page 227).

Students of the course “Now I know how!” visiting TUUM company with Alberto Micheli, CEO – Assisi, September 2021



PRODUCING AND SELLING WINE IN A SCULPTURE LUNELLI TENUTE

Hana Jungová

The Lunelli family, wine producers, comes originally from Trentino, region of Northern Italy. Lunelli cellars gained experience through growing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in high hillside vineyards of Trentino, and after the great success of the famous Ferrari Trentodoc sparkling wine, the wish came to expand towards new ventures. Exploring red wines, where the Umbrian Sagrantino is a particular, challenging variety. It is powerful, long-lived and it gives birth to an aromatic wine with a strong personality, which is perhaps less widely known than some of the other great Italian reds, but has a potential to stand among them in a fully-fledged manner. A perfect opportunity and so, in Umbria, land rich in history and mysticism, a new production headquarters are to be set. But where exactly, how should the new production plant look like? And yes, it matters, it matters much. There is a wish to tell this wine and its value, to convey it through a special project able accomplish the goal. Why not...inside a sculpture!

Arnaldo Pomodoro, perhaps one of the most important sculptors nowadays, family friend of Lunelli, got entrusted with the new headquarters project. Maybe he would have said no, if asked to project a school, but coming to terms with such an extraordinary landscape, building for a business purpose, was a challenge for him. Breathing the traces of Etruscans everywhere around the Sagrantino area, he came with the idea of designing a huge animal, like a prehistoric one who raises from the earth to embrace the future. And so, Carapace was

born, a turtle shell, with turtle being an animal rich in symbolism: longevity, strength, endurance and the relative plenitude, which all relate to the variety, the landscape and the business in question. The Sagrantino of the Lunelli family is produced right under the carapace, surrounded by the most extraordinary landscape. Because our eyes are sensitive, says the sculptor, living in Italy is a privilege because your eyes get full of beauty - and he has travelled the world inside out. Carapace is a production plant, cellar, showroom, flagship store and serves the purpose of welcoming visitors and host events. **“We have a great history and wished to project towards the future, without giving up on our traditions, roots or culture”**, they tell our Erasmus+ group during a guided visit. Another experience showing the bond between tradition and innovation and how to make it happen.

Visiting the Carapace of Tenuta Lunelli



MODULES

II, III, IV

PROGRAMME



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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“NOW I KNOW HOW!”

Erasmus+ KA2 in the field of school education
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE FOR YOUTH
*The project "Now I know how!" is a new way to foster
creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of youth!*

II module – on line 15-16 December 2021

In this module, highlights of the topics addressed during the experiential module held in Lizori were recalled. The notion of the “Apprentice Leader” was then introduced, continuing with the importance of organising one's daily routine. Finally, the topic of the job interview was tackled through videos and practical examples.

III module – on line 7-8 February 2022

From scratch to business.

The topic was how to enter the professional world, both on a self-employed basis and with a view of working for a company, while starting from scratch.

The lectures focused on theoretical requirements for those who want to start from scratch and lecturers provided practical cases.

Alessandro Fracassi, founder of Mutui On Line Spa, one of the most relevant first-generation entrepreneurs in Italy, conveyed his own experience as a speaker guest. He described his own beginnings, literally from scratch, when not only he and his

future partner had no financial resources but did not even have a business idea to start on. In his intervention, he also indicated the key criteria that he nowadays uses in selecting start-ups in which to invest.

Another presentation was given by Duilio Forte, an Italian-Swedish architect and artist, who showed young participants how art that fulfils also the desires of the market can be done. In so doing, he was able to find resources without having to invest. He also told the students how his double Italian-Swedish nature enabled him to create original works, fruit of these two cultures.

The third presentation was given by Guido Martinetti, partner in Grom Spa, one of the most successful exits in the Italian entrepreneurial world following its sale to the multinational company Unilever. Martinetti told the students how important it is, in business, to be clear about one's individual goals in order to transform business into a tool for achieving what motivates us deep inside.

IV modulo – on line 21-22 March 2022

Before we begin.

While the previous module featured speakers who are accomplished professionals, to this fourth module we invited young people who have been placed on the Forbes list of Italy's most promising young leaders. The point was to show students how important lifestyle and further learning is even prior to entering the world of work.

Further, it was also illustrated how can the years of classical school education be used to experiment with business or career paths.

The topic of S.M.A.R.T Goals and the importance of setting one's goals clearly was addressed, how not to waste time and

how to actually achieve the goals, were questions discussed with benefit.

Francesco Ventre was among the speakers, student of Engineering at the Polytechnic and one of the founders of a company that is providing flying taxis to Italian administrations, Enrico Saverio Pagano who created, while studying to be an orchestra conductor at the Milan Conservatory, his own orchestra made up exclusively of young musicians, and Arianna Pozzi who, still as a high school student, launched her own start-up on clothing tailored to the mood of the moment.

A snapshot of the online lecture by Nellie Gospodinova “The apprentice leader”

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. At the top, the title bar reads "Nellie Gospodinova". Below it, the meeting title is "Gospodinova Nellie". The main content area displays a presentation slide titled "The reality" with a background image of a lion. The slide contains the following text:

The reality

1. Rarely, individuals are both managers and leaders at the same time.
2. No matter the title, you don't inspire people by pointing at something and saying, "Do that!"
3. No improvement is going to make a team with the wrong people in the wrong roles.

On the left side of the Zoom window, there is a chat window titled "Chat pubblica". It shows several messages from participants:

- Barbonari Luca** (disconnesso) 10:09: 2 yes the manager himself has the aim of organize that actually means to "make people do things" but of course he has to be kind
- Lojeková Hana** (disconnesso) 10:12: 2 - yes, if he has good communication skills, good relationships are important, then work is done well. but even if he doesn't, he's still the boss. So I think it can make people do things, but it's even better with a positive mood.
- Barbonari Luca** (disconnesso) 10:16: 3 if he is good he could have the potentiality to do that, but also is important the training and the skills
- Lojeková Hana** (disconnesso) 10:18: 3 - Yes, but he must have a lot of experience and definitely a feeling for his work. In addition, it will need more time. and again, I think good relationships are important.

At the bottom of the Zoom window, there is a taskbar showing various system icons, including the clock (11:04) and date (15.12.2021).

THE APPRENTICE LEADER

Nellie Gospodinova¹

For more than 15 years I have been working as a headmistress of a high school and I have seen many young people whose dream is to go to university, study management to start later their own company, to manage their family business or simply to be a manager.

I often ask them “Why management? Why don't you try to study first engineering, mathematics, accountancy, etc...?”

The most common answer is “I would like to lead people...”

I hope my shared experience and thoughts will give you an answer what to choose first.

The myth and the reality

There is a myth that the manager is the leader and he or she can make people do things, and good manager can manage anything.

However, the reality is that rarely, individuals are both managers and leaders at the same time.

No matter the title, no one can inspire people by pointing at something and saying, “Do that!”.

No improvement is going to make a team with the wrong people in the wrong roles which is true for managers as well.

¹ Black Sea Center of Excellence, Director, Project partner.

Definition

Management - Working with other people to make sure the goals an organization has articulated are executed.

The manager: administrates, maintains, focuses on systems and structures.

Leadership - Setting the goals and leading people to achieving them.

The leader applies innovations, develops the organization, and focuses on people.

4 Short tips for start-ups

1. Choose who you would like to be

Everybody knows the leaders and rarely anybody knows the CEOs

Let's try an experiment with 3 persons who they are. Everybody knows who Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, but do you know who Reed Hastings is?

"We are going to land on Mars by 2025" Elon Musk

"One of the only ways to get out of a tight box is to invent your own way out" Jeff Bezos

While the first two are leaders of some of the biggest international companies and visioners the latter is the CEO of Netflix. Once Reed Hastings said "Do not tolerate brilliant jerks! The cost of teamwork is too high".

2. Right people to right places

Once you have decided to start-up choose the right people for right roles. It is said that hiring is a smart gambling.

However,

1. Job description- job obligations, necessary skills, your company culture and values.

2. Screen candidates- friends or strangers?
3. Employee advancement and trainings
4. Find people of the team for management role

3. Effective team management

1. Clear communication and openness.
2. Organization and ability to delegate tasks and responsibilities
3. Emotional intelligence
4. Problem solving and decision making

4. Leadership style

From the time of Machiavelli to the time of Musk the leadership styles have gone their own way.

“The leader should know how to enter into evil when necessary commands” Niccolò Machiavelli.

“Leaders are expected to work harder than those who report to them and always make sure that their needs are taken care of before yours” Elon Musk.

The leadership style is a cocktail of:

- Commands “Do what I tell you!”
- Vision “Come with me!”
- Affiliation “People come first”
- Democracy “What do you think?”
- Coaching “Try this!”

The style is changing like people who are changing, improving, developing through the time.

STARTING FROM SCRATCH: THE KEY FACTORS

Andrea Zoppolato¹

For one reason or another, starting from zero is a situation that happens to almost everyone: when finishing studies, when changing career path or after losing everything and starting over. **Many people have been there and all those situations have certain common features**, concerning both the taking-off moment and the factors helping to achieve the desired goal. To begin with, I start with my personal case.

1. When I started from scratch: after graduation

I graduated from Bocconi, the most renowned university of economics in Italy. As it often happens, while I was still on the beaten track of school and university, **my goal was to complete the studies**. I also wanted to find ways to finance my daily expenses, hoping to reach independence from my parents as soon as possible. At that time, getting trained outside the school bench, on the job, was an aspect secondary to the economic one. **There was an illusion that college would provide all the training necessary for accomplishing a professional career**. Another illusion I had was that after graduation there would have been a chair with an executive desk, already with my name on it, on the top floor of a

¹ Journalist, President of Vivaio, association that launches projects having powerful social impact and that obtained the highest distinction of the City of Milan, Ambrogino d'Oro.

skyscraper overlooking the city. Reserved for me, for the simple reasons that I had graduated with honours from an important university. Well, nothing could have been more wrong. And on both counts.

Shortly after graduation I could realize that my expectations were vain. The job market required skills that had largely not been provided to me by the university. **And there was no desk or chair waiting for me with my name written on it.** The original illusion got replaced by the prospect of interviews and resumes to be sent out in order to apply for positions starting at a very low level. So much for the top floor with a view of the city.

Here it comes: the first thing that happens when you start from scratch is that **you realize what is your true condition.** At first, this feels just as comforting as a bucket of ice water dashed over your head. To cut a long story short, my condition after graduation was: **no money, no experience, no business idea.** So, what could I do?

2. The key factors of when starting from scratch

Being able to look back at things makes it is easier to understand them. Through an experience already done, one can distinguish clearly between steps in the right direction, leading to good results and missteps leading to nowhere. Reviewing my beginnings, **what were the key factors?** And above all, in any situation of a start from scratch, what are the key factors making it possible to land a rewarding outcome?

After realizing one's own condition, after having faced it without reserves, knowing what I am unable to do or unable to have, the first key thing is to find an answer to the question **“what can I do?”**. The answer to this question stems from two other fundamental questions:

1. **What do I want?**
2. **What do I have?**

Once the two replies to the two questions have met, we can see what we can do.

2.1 The key factor: what do I want?

It can seem obvious, but it is not. In fact, when starting from scratch, “from scratch” means also not knowing what to do. One has either too many ideas, or none at all. **The result is the same: stalemate.** One does not know what step to take. This is a very common situation, especially for those coming out of school. Perhaps it is because school and university teach discipline, they encourage to navigate waters that have already been chartered by someone else. But they do not help one to choose and, only rarely, they foster the ability to turn one's passion into a career path among those available on the market. **So, how to figure out what I want when tackling a professional career?**

In general, what one wants can be understood by putting together three components staying with us throughout any career trajectory. **The three components of a professional desire are: passion, growth and gain.**

Those who have a strong passion are certainly at a greater advantage in navigating their way to the optimal choice. The stronger and more focused the passion, the easier it is to narrow down the focus, to avoid paths leading off the track. The passion is fundamental because **it provides the necessary energy to deal with any career path.** And in order to understand passion, it is sufficient to understand what we like to do in our so-called free time. It can be writing, reading, meeting people, travelling, doing new things. It is important to

be able to distinguish between pleasures providing only short-lived satisfaction which, in the end, leaves us with nothing new or put us in a condition worse than before, and pleasures that represent a real reward for us. Distinguishing between the two is important because the in the latter case, we somehow metabolise and transform pleasure into something more, something rewarding that generates pride of ourselves. **Knowing how to distinguish between short-lived pleasures, sometimes conforming to social standards, and actual personal satisfactions is one of the most important aspects to be drawn from the experience of living.** Because it allows us to focus on what is a genuine passion to pursue, including career-wise, instead of staying trapped in things that make us waste time and energy.

In my case, the passions I had were **writing and the people**. Writing has always been present in my life, whatever the form made possible by the evolution of media. Along the way, I realised that writing was not an end in itself to me, the main satisfaction consisted in **transmitting creative and valuable content** that represented, somehow, my natural identity.

The other passion was **to meet people**. I found that at the end of the day, the most enjoyable moments to recall were those I had experienced in the company of others. I enjoyed doing things together with other people. Even as a child, the other person was, to me, **a playmate**, that is, someone who allowed me to practice the activities I loved most. In my university days, the other person was **my travelling companion, my sporting companion, or my companion in experiences that we enjoyed living together, from a party to a concert**. These two passions converged during my academic years when I founded the university journal: **people writing together in order to convey something new to their peers**.

So today, I would define my passion for writing and for the people as a satisfaction I get from being able **to create new and valuable things to convey to an audience of intelligent people who share similar interests with me**. Whenever I have touched upon this passion in what I was doing, I have achieved rewarding results.

Along with passion, there are two other fundamental components in the answer to the question “what do I want”: **growth and gain**. Growth is a pass-partout for any career choice. Going for what makes us grow is always a good choice. We can never regret growth, we can only regret when we have not had enough of it. In choosing the optimal path for growth, however, passion will be of good guidance criterion, even though also growth as such can turn out to be a passion, especially at the beginning. **It is precisely through growing that we identify better our most genuine passions and see the most coherent path for us.**

The last aspect can perhaps be deceiving. It is a point of ambiguity, although it seems the most obvious one. When making any kind of choice, it is not easy to understand which way is the most consistent one with our passion or which way will enable the greatest growth. Quite the contrary. Often, one can only understand it along the way, after decisions have already been taken. Gain, on the other hand, seems a clear factor in a professional choice, especially if we take it as a monetary gain only.

Financial gain as the only factor to understand what one wants can **represent a relatively easy criterion of choice**: just go where they pay you the most. But limiting oneself to this could lead to two kinds of problems, potentially with a heavy impact on the way to growing and, above all, to the existential fulfilment.

The first problem is that at the time of making a choice, the magnitude of gain looks obvious, while its development over time is doubtful. Therefore, in the long run, the best choice in economic terms may turn out to be the worst one, even strictly economically speaking. Let's compare a steady job to an entrepreneurial activity. At the beginning, there is no match: a steady job guarantees a certain amount of income over time, whereas people who venture into a new business, when starting out, almost never have a reliable income ready; on the contrary, they must often pay to be able to work. This, however, is what happens right at the beginning. If you move the clock forward, you will see that **things can change and they can change a lot in the future**. Those who had chosen a steady job for economic reasons realise that there is a ceiling to their income, while those who have taken a business risk are free to expand their gain without limits.

In addition to the economic uncertainty surrounding the future, choosing on the basis of monetary gain solely brings along a second problem, which is perhaps even more serious. Choosing personal income as one's sole objective can lead to making **choices that will progressively drain one's life**. One becomes, as it were, a merchandise of a career, risking the depletion of one's own existence, losing precisely what is fundamental when starting from scratch along the way: passion and growth. When these two factors are absent, it is difficult to obtain fulfilment from any kind of wealth.

That being said, the economic factor should not be overlooked either. **It is like petrol on a journey**. Even the most exciting journey, without petrol, risks to vanish into thin air. Passion, growth and gain must always go hand in hand, at any stage of a career; they represent decisive factors to be considered as a whole, and not only when starting from scratch.

After having identified one's passion, one's desire to grow and the kind of financial gain one needs, time comes to create a virtuous circle while adding another fateful question: what do I have?

2.2 The key factor: what do I have?

What one wants and what one has **are the two legs** that provide support and that push forward those who start from scratch. But not only, they support and push forward anyone in a career. What you want is what drives you ahead all the time, but what you have is the thing thanks to which it is possible to go far without overstepping the boundaries. 'What we have' means everything and nothing. Those who start from scratch might think that they own nothing. Just like one could think, as a superficial observer, that one owns far too much. So **how to identify "what we have" in a way which is functional to a successful career development?**

The term 'asset' is used in economic terminology to define what are the useful things we have on the professional level. The definition of 'asset' is: anything that can generate profit to us. The definition of what we have changes completely from this perspective. And yes, it is possible to find assets even if we seem to own nothing. **The place where we are**, for instance, can be an example of 'asset' for those who start from scratch. The territory, the city, or even the house where we find ourselves physically: a part of it can be sublet. The objects we own can be sold or rented out. A city is a multiplier of opportunities.

Then we have **a set of acquaintances**. Friends, contacts on social media, even those we don't know yet but to whom we can easily reach out, at no cost. **A network**, even if you don't

study it at university as a point of theory, **is almost always one of the main factors for economic success in any field.** Acquaintances can turn into our first customers, mentors or collaborators. Not by coincidence, many entrepreneurial success stories are also stories of former university friends.

Another extraordinary, decisive asset is **knowledge**. The knowledge that, combined with another asset, **availability**, has the potential to grow further and taking shape by navigating through the needs of a market in development. Which, in turn, constitutes a fundamental asset for the market.

The assets we have are fundamental not only for finding a job or an opportunity to earn money, but also because **they constitute our real treasure**, the one in which we must always invest and which we must see growing over time.

Money comes and goes, so do the market opportunities, but the assets that we gain, precisely when we start from scratch, constitute our most solid professional insurance, that is, they enable us to start again and again, at any time, and to reach any goal we wish for.

So, it is crucial to understand what we have: contacts, knowledge, availability in particular, along the way, experience on the top.

Speaking of myself, upon graduation I realized that what I want is to start my own business. I set myself the goal of never sending out a CV. As a passion, I had writing and the desire to meet people. As for my main asset, I simply had to look around.

Having basically only been a student and having run the university newspaper for fun, **what I had was knowledge of the university world.** At that point it was easy to see what I could do.

2.3 The key factor: what can I do?

What I want + what I have = what I can do. We combine the first two replies and here comes the green light. Understanding what we can do comes as a direct consequence. It is time to get going. “What do I want” represents our permanent compass: at all times of any career, it puts us in security from the risk of ending up as an object of our own assets, which would be like a hamster wheel, i.e. the tendency to just keep repeating what we do and what we are paid for.

When starting from scratch, in order to understand what we can do, the answer does not lie in what we own and what we want only, it is important to see what the market wants. Here, the risk is to focus too much on what we have in our own hands, our assets and will, while losing sight of what the market wants. The key is to translate our will and assets into something that the market grasps and pays for. This does not always go automatically, quite the contrary. An asset can be the ability to cook, but if you don't go out and don't capitalise on the asset, you could be unemployed for life, even if you happen to be the best cook in the world. “What I can do” must therefore be followed by figuring out how to turn the skill into something that is actually appreciated and remunerated. To understand this, the best help comes from the reality. Understanding what the market wants, where is money going, what are the trends, what have people with the same assets like us been doing in order to turn them into profit, career. Market gives the answer, whether we want to sell our time, i.e. working as employees of others, or sell the value we create, i.e. creating our own business.

The result of all this, which can also serve the purpose of measuring the growth potential of our value in the market, is called Know How: the ability to transform assets into products

and services paid for by others. This is done through experience, while coherently sticking to the compass, that is, what we want.

3. The real goal of a career: doing what we love

All great people who are successful in business share the same rewarding condition. They all say that the secret of their success lies in the fact that they get paid for doing what they love. The economic factor, in such condition, tends to be forgotten because it comes a natural consequence of doing an activity that one would do anyway, even for free. **But this goal is reached through experience, apprenticeship, tasks and activities, that one did not love at the start, those as well and first and foremost.** A bit like a football player who becomes a champion and who plays at events that he has always been dreaming of, with the same spirit as when he was a child. A champion who, however, has been through a process of sacrifice and hard training.

In my case, in order to do what I loved most, **writing and conveying creative and valuable content**, the first step was to realise that my main asset was the **university world**, which I knew intimately as a recent graduate and editor of the academic newspaper. Back then, there were no social media, the internet was still a very small niche, so companies had to use **other channels of communication with their target audience**. Young people have always been one of the most desirable targets for companies. Having understood this, nothing was easier than proposing to companies **to advertise in universities**, using my newspaper and, above all, my network of acquaintances as leverage, including the network of associations with which our newspaper collaborated and which could be used to promote each product directly to

students. This activity of advertising campaigns for university students, first locally and then throughout Italy, was also accompanied by a network of ‘International Evenings’, university parties with each session dedicated to a different nation, **organised together with the entire network of associations of the Erasmus network.**

Putting these two activities together allowed me to develop the newspaper into a national network and to set up my first company. From there, a journey started brought me to live abroad, to be able to gain experiences crucial for my personal growth and, above all, to reach the goal desired by anyone who starts working: **doing what I love.**

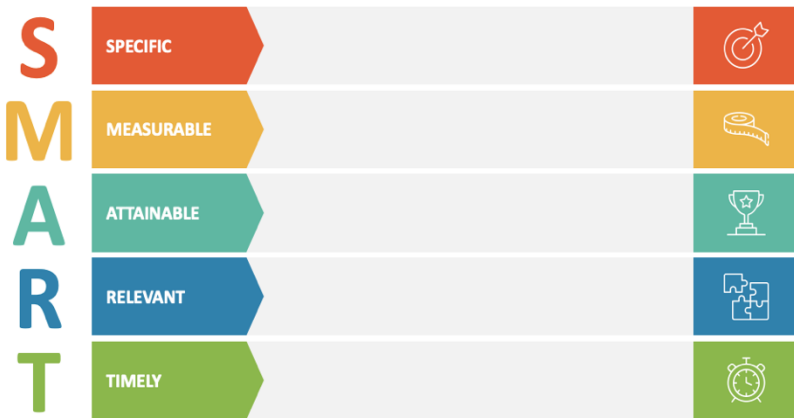
The group of Bulgarian students of the course “Now I know how!”



A GOOD GOAL IS SMART!

Pamela Bernabei

What are SMART Goals?



How to set clear objectives that do not give rise to confusion?
 What are the requirements to follow when setting goals in order not to waste time, to keep up with what you want to achieve and, above all, to understand - before wasting too much time - whether what we are doing is really what is the right choice for us or whether it is perhaps better to go down other paths?

Of course, explaining it to teenagers might have seemed an out-of-context challenge at first, especially in an online module.

However, after an initial moment of difficulty, the students understood very well how to use this tool by adapting it to their needs.

From a didactic point of view, we proceeded as follows.

First of all, we assigned a task to the students: to fill in a questionnaire by answering these three questions:

1. I am able to do (titles, skills, competences, instruments etc.)
2. What I want to do
3. What I still need to acquire to reach what I want to do (titles, skills, competences, licenses, instruments, funds etc.)

The submission had to be made strictly before the start of the online module IV.

The tutors and teachers divided the submissions received into 4 groups.

At the beginning of the module, a short presentation was made to explain how to formulate a SMART goal, all the characteristics of this tool were outlined by means of concrete examples.

Afterwards, breakout rooms were created in which each group could work independently.

The task for each group was to use the SMART formula to create a goal using answers 2 and 3 of the questionnaire they had filled in previously. In practice, they had to link “What I want to do” with “What I still need to acquire to reach what I want to do” by formulating SMART goals for achieving their desired result. In the group work, the young people debated with each other and each helped the other in formulating goals. Sometimes things said by young people to young people are worth much more than many words said by a teacher or family member.

Once the deadline for group work had passed, there was a harvesting session, i.e. each person presented how their goals are set, applying the SMART key to their aspirations. Then the



other group members were asked to give feedback to their peers on the way their goals were set; finally, the lecturer or tutor summarised all the remarks that had been made, while adding, where necessary, further insights or reflections. At first, it was difficult to channel aspirations, joys, emotions and desires into such a logical and formal composition. They are youngsters after all, wishing still for lots of fun, and they were confronted with a rather formal instrument. But in the end, the result was above all expectations. The young people, with a lot of effort, managed to give a very precise and clear SMART formulation of their goals, and they turned their ambition into to a plan in an organized way.

It was really interesting and gratifying to see young people juggling with a tool like the SMART formula, which is usually used in very complex business and organisational environments.

FROM SCRATCH TO SUCCESS. CASE STUDY ALESSANDRO FRACASSI (Founder MutuiOnLine Spa)

edit by Andrea Zoppolato



Alessandro Fracassi

How does one achieve a great entrepreneurial success from scratch? **Starting from scratch** means not being able to rely on savings, family money or activities already launched. Starting from scratch can even mean not having any business idea.

To understand the key passages, the best way is to learn how those who have succeeded did it. One of the best-known examples in Italy in recent decades is the case of MutuiOnLine.

It is a company that was founded by two friends who had **no money and no business idea**.

But from zero in at the beginning, they managed to start a company and that eventually got listed at the main market of Milan Stock Exchange and has currently a market value close to one billion euros.

How does one go from zero to one billion euros? Alessandro Fracassi tried to explain to the students, based on his personal experience.

From his anecdotes, we tried to extract principles that apply more generally, in various fields and competition environments.

As always, we started from the beginning.

1. Objective and market opportunity

“I had never thought of being an entrepreneur”. This is how Alessandro Fracassi opens his story, going back to his university years when he was studying to become an engineer at the Polytechnic University of Milan. “I saw myself as an executive, a manager, an employee in any case, in a large company.

After finishing his studies, as it often happens to university graduates, he decided to take a postgraduate master's degree in the United States. He entered the MIT, one of the most important academic institutions in the world, where he met the person who was to become his business partner. The two-year master's programme ended with an internship for all students. Fracassi explains that: "Usually, the companies themselves contacted the university in search of the best applicants for an internship. So, at the end of the study period, it could only happen rarely and to the worst students that they had to look for an internship in a company on their own." Fracassi recalls that in their course there was a fellow who was considered to be the black sheep of the group by everyone, the least capable one, and who actually found himself without a company for the internship. He, too, was helped to find an opportunity: instead of a big company he had to make do with a fledgling start-up.

“A few months later,” Fracassi recalls, “that fellow of ours whom we considered so untalented had become a millionaire.” In fact, the start-up he had happened to be in had grown so much in just a few months that the value of the company options used to pay the collaborators had reached or exceeded one million dollars. Their friend had also received shares as a benefit and so he went **from the weakest one of the class to the strongest one in the challenge of the market.**

Fracassi recalls that these were exceptional times. At the turn of the 2000s, the ‘dot.com bubble’ had burst, there was a rush by investors to bet on Internet companies. “It was a time when,” Fracassi recalls, “it was enough to have the .com in the company's name to gain a lot of interest from financiers”. It was at that time that Fracassi, given the example of his classmate, said to his future business partner: **“If even he could do it, we can do it, too”.**

So, the example of their successful classmate, in a context of great opportunities for new Internet companies, pushed Fracassi and his partner to try their luck, too. But how, since the only idea they had was to set up an internet company that could benefit from that exceptional moment? The solution was so banal then that it almost appears brilliant today.

2. If you don’t have an idea, let the market inspire you

Having completed their master's degree, Fracassi and his partner returned to Italy and, although they both accepted a job offer in a company, they decided to spend their free time **intercepting what the needs of the market were** in order to set up a company in the future. Not having a business idea, they decided to buy the Internet domains of the Italian translation of Internet companies that were having major success in America. In addition to this, they took other generic

domains, such as salute.it or politica.it, and for each of these dozens of names they opened a website with the name of the domain clearly visible and the words 'site in the making'. Their idea was to launch a series of 'sites under construction' on the web, making those who got there believe that they were carrying out an activity similar to the one that was successful in America. While in reality, apart from the domain and the words 'site under construction', there was nothing under construction.

The plan that sounds almost insane actually paid off. In fact, a person wrote to one of these sites, mutuionline.it, introducing himself as an investor, asking if the site had anything to do with the one that was achieving such great results in America. They replied that it did, the business model was the same, i.e. the aim of offering a comparison between all bank mortgages to buy a home. To the question at what point the project was, the answer was the one of a true poker player: **'we are about to finalize the website'**.

At this point, the guy who wrote to them said that he was going on a tour of Europe precisely for the purpose of identifying sites in that field across the main European countries and, in case, investing in them on behalf of his group.

They fixed a meeting and booked a room in one of the best hotels in Milan for the occasion. **This was, in fact, the only investment they made with their own money.** To be prepared, however, they had to work on a convincing business plan. Not only that. Since they knew that in order to obtain the financing they also needed a team, they created an organisation chart consisting of friends and relatives who knew mostly nothing about the mortgage market. The two future founders had no idea or a particular passion for mortgages but they gathered information and tried to reproduce the American site

by adapting it to the Italian market so as to be ready to show a preview to their financier to be.

Everything seemed perfect except for the fact that on the big day **no one showed up**. The potential investor, later on, justified himself by saying that he had missed his plane and that there would have been other opportunities. Opportunity that never came true, however. So, what looked like a stroke of luck instantly disappeared without a trace. What do the two future partners decide?

3. The investor has gone, but now we have the idea

They decided not to despair. On the contrary. Compared to that first contact they had had, they had come a long way. **They had a business plan, very well drafted, a sketch of a site and an initial responsiveness of the market** to the idea that, in America, was having great success.

What remained to be done, at that point, was to continue improving the site and to try presenting the business plan they had already prepared to **other investors**. As mentioned, it was an extraordinary market situation, where investors were looking for business ideas online, so it was not difficult for them to get appointments with angel investors or potentially interested companies and get funded for a start.

4. The first period: key success factors

The first phase of the new company MutuiOnLine goes just as for many other start-ups. The first strategic choice is to **give up their permanent job** in order to devote themselves completely to the new business. "It wasn't easy, especially explaining it to my mother was hard," said Fracassi: it is difficult for a parent who had invested in the child's education to see him or her turn down a permanent work contract in order

to launch their own business where the only certainty was the initial investment.

"Which in fact was not even a certainty," Fracassi explains, "quite the contrary". Due to a sudden market failure one of the investors eventually withdrew from the agreed capital increase they were counting on, leaving them completely broke after the first few months. They did not have a dime and had to face new investments, including having to pay salaries to employees, but once again they had come a long way compared to the previous time. Now the site was up and running, the business model ready to be tested, there was a team sharing the project and they had a very clear idea where to go.

On the one hand, while jumping through hoops a bit, they were able to defer debts and to repay collaboration with options instead of cash, they moved on and started to look for potential investors who would eventually be featuring **a more stable position and more of a long-term vision than before.**

"In the initial phase," Fracassi explains, "**you need to be ready to change plans, to seize the opportunities and to face unexpected issues.** A clear objective, loyalty to the decision taken to go all in, a clear and trusting relationship with the team and a focus on implementation and development of the project, step by step. A project that consisted, at that point in time, in providing the best possible optimisation when comparing offers on the market".

These are the fundamental keys to which, in their case, one adds the relationship of complementarity between the two partners: "To avoid any overlapping from, the outset we divided the tasks: **I take care of everything that concerns the present, you take care of everything that concerns the future**", this was the division of roles between the two of them.

5. From economic success to the existential one

How can one focus one's professional life by developing a business for which one feels neither particular passion nor distinctive competence? In the case of Mutuonline Spa we have seen that the business idea is a random one. Had they been approached for any of the other domains they might have been dealing in travel or clothing products today. Their great ability was to realise that the know-how they developed with this new business was not limited to offering mortgages. **It could translate to optimising the comparison of offers for many other services.** This led the company to grow in the mortgage market and to diversify into other areas, with the creation of comparison sites for other products, from insurance to energy to segugio.it and trovaprezzi.it, which allow people to find the cheapest offer in every sector. **Rather than mortgages, they became an 'amazon' of services, a low-cost online supermarket of products that compete mainly on price.**

Not only that, they replicated the same model in other countries, trying to enter where these sites were missing. Here again, they were faced with unexpected challenges and changes of direction, like in the case of Turkey. "I thought we were in a position to replicate the same model everywhere, but then I realised some markets, even on the same product such as mortgages, can be subject to a high degree of diversity". For example, Fracassi says that while in Italy banks compete a lot to get a new customer, in Turkey the reality is different, because the market is more regulated. The solution in that case was **to delegate strategies to local partners, to trust their ability to cope with specific market needs.**

The company that at the start found itself without even the financing agreed on by the first investor, is now a joint stock

company listed on the main market of Milan Stock Exchange, with a capitalisation (market value as a sum of the shares) of **almost one billion euros**. Fracassi and his partner, Marco Pescarmona, **were named Italy's Entrepreneurs of the Year** while also making happy all the employees and investors who believed in them.

But perhaps the most important thing for Fracassi is that this economic success is **not the aim but a means to an end**. A means to accommodate a more spiritual part of his existential dimension. A vocation that can be summed up in the concept of 'giving back'. Fracassi explains how his motto has always been **'I am always under the sun**, in broad daylight', explaining that he feels to have a morality which applies to every sphere of his existence, without grey areas, because, precisely, he feels to be always in broad daylight and therefore never free to behave in a way that contradicts his principles. This "living in broad daylight" makes him feel obliged to give back to the society at least a part of the luck that the society has given to him, through his ability to put himself at service. That is why he founded associations and joined non-profit institutions to spend time and money to help others in developing their projects, especially those that have a significant social impact potential.

Perhaps his greatest motivation and source of fulfilment is precisely this: **the "give back", giving back to the society at least a part of the fortune he had earned**.

FROM SCRATCH TO SUCCESS. CASE STUDY

GUIDO MARTINETTI

(Founder Grom Spa – Mura Mura)

edit by Andrea Zoppolato

In every story, it is the departure point and the arrival point that raise most interest. Many people think that the departure point and the arrival point of an entrepreneurial story are the same: it is money. In their opinion, a lot of money is needed to get started and the aim of an entrepreneur is to make a lot of money. The reality, as is often the case, is very different from this common view, although a common factor does exist in this case. It is true that almost always the departure point and the arrival point of an entrepreneurial path are the same: only, it is not money, but motivation. It is the motivation at the start that, if it is genuine and strong, ignites the initial spark and shines naturally until the arrival point of every entrepreneurial journey.

In the case of Guido Martinetti, who told us about his experience to explain the determining factors in any professional career, be it when working on one's own or for others, it is evident. **The key to everything is motivation.**

1. The beginnings: a passion for intelligence, for beauty, for nature

Guido Martinetti is one of the most well-known entrepreneurs of his generation in Italy. He is known for having founded and having brought to success Grom, an ice cream company that started from a small outlet in Turin and ended up being bought

by Unilever, a large multinational company. But Grom, for Martinetti, was neither the departure point nor the arrival point. He tells us that it all started from a passion of his that led him to graduate in agriculture. **He had a passion for wine and, together with the one for beauty and intelligence, those passions have always guided his choices.** After graduating, he did an internship in France at the famous Bordeaux producer Chateau Margaux in order learn more. There, Martinetti not only learnt the technique but also understood what distinguishes a unique product from the rest: **the quest for excellence, in every little detail.** And he discovered that the master of all excellence is nature, source of harmony and perfection. And what is the unequivocal manifestation of natural excellence? Beauty.

After this experience, Martinetti returned to Italy where he met Carlo Petrini, founder of Slow Food, an association that aims at 'restoring the right value of food' through the return to natural farming methods. Thanks to his passion for wine and nature, his experience in France and his encounter with Petrini, Martinetti had an intuition. He realised that in order to be successful, one has to **come up with something that does not yet exist.** He asked himself: why are there markets, such as the wine market, in which excellence and perfection are pursued by taking care of all production aspects, from the initial ingredients up to the final product, while the others compete on price only, or economies of scale, and give up the thirst for beauty in exchange of an industrial approach?

From his perspective, the opposite to the wine market seemed to be the one of **ice cream.** In the sector of ice-cream for general public, there is no search for refinement, for the most exclusive ice-cream, and above all, no element of excellence is conveyed in the products on the market. So Martinetti

realised that there could be opportunity for a product conceived as 'the best ice cream in the world', achievable through natural production methods, as it used to be in the past. **'Ice cream as it used to be'**: this was the claim that came to his mind, even before having produced one single ice cream. Yes, because Martinetti was passionate about wine and natural cultivation methods, but **he knew nothing about ice cream**. And not only: little he knew about accounting, let alone business, so he decided to talk about his idea with his best friend, who had a degree in economics. The friend's name is Federico Grom, a perfect name for an ice cream, thought Martinetti immediately, giving up effortlessly the possibility to boost his ego by seeing his own name written in the company brand.

Two graduates, one in oenology and an in economics, decided to enter the ice cream business, with, on the top, the ambition of producing something better than what was already on the market. Without money or skills, what could they have done?

2. His existential mantra: if you want to learn how to make something, go to the greatest one (and learn at your own expense)

To learn how to make ice cream, you have to go to **the best ice cream maker on earth**. This was the first step that the two friends decided to take. After some research they discovered that the best ice-cream maker in Italy lived near Orvieto, they contacted him and offered to work with him for free for the time needed to master the technique. 'Working for free,' explains Martinetti, 'is the best way to learn. In exchange for your time you get training, in a transparent and mutually convenient relationship'. Not only, working for free with the greatest ones, for the time necessary to master the technique,

means also staying humble enough to understand that **the know-how is the greatest asset of any career**.

After having worked for months and having learned how to make ice cream, the two friends decided to launch their own plan. With little savings and a loan of 32,500 euros, they opened an ice cream parlour in Turin. From that moment, a journey began that saw them render the diffusion and conservation techniques industrial, as well as the use of raw materials, which Martinetti took care of personally, **in order to guarantee the identical, very high quality of their ice creams, a uniform one for all outlets throughout the territory**. "We opened in Tokyo before we did in Rome," Martinetti recalls, explaining that market opportunities can often lead beyond what would seem logical, such as a gradual territorial expansion.

Step by step, the company grew, more and more outlets were opened, until the takeover offer from Unilever, the large food multinational, arrived.

The time had come to choose whether to continue alone, perhaps putting more care into the product as such, or to accept to sell the business, to a company whose industrial style could have compromised the original idea of making "the best ice cream in the world" and, above all, of producing "ice cream as it used to be".

The decision was taken, in consistency with the original motivation. Which was not to produce ice cream, but to feed his passions: **wine, beauty and intelligence**. Martinetti realised that selling Grom to Unilever was to make his dream finally come true: to produce an absolute top quality wine, in Piedmont.

So, thanks to Grom and Unilever, Martinetti was able to build his 'land of milk and honey': Mura Mura.

3. Nature and beauty to attract extraordinary people

Martinetti explains his beloved project by going back to the early years of his life. "I had a distant father, with whom I did not have an easy relationship, and above all - wine and gastronomy aside - I did not see a master in him."

What Martinetti always thought was that should he become a father, he would wish to be a father who takes his children by the hand, every day, to raise them so that they grow as respectful human beings.

"I would like my children to grow up in an intellectually stimulating environment, putting them in a position to compare themselves with the best ones in any field. What do intelligent people want? They want beauty. And who is the greatest creator of beauty? Nature. The entire project was born on those principles".

Mura Mura is located on the magnificent hills of Monferrato that resemble sea waves. It is a vast piece of land where Martinetti initially planted many varieties of fruit trees, suitable for making excellent quality ice cream, in order to obtain his extraordinary product. He then focused on his great passion, wine production, which reaches the highest levels of quality in the area.

The following step was to develop the organic farm into "a **place that welcomes extraordinary people**", which became the definition of Mura Mura.

Martinetti has built a restaurant there, *Radici*, alongside with the accommodation and wellness area, Relais Le Marne, surrounded by pure nature. **It is nature that reigns sovereign at Mura Mura.**

In all the spaces built, the minimalist windows are like a painting, positioned precisely to let one admire and enjoy the wonder of nature. Each place is built with its own identity and

always conveys harmony, beauty and the pleasure of a natural life.

The aim of all this is to create the best possible conditions so that extraordinary people come to visit and share their knowledge. **The business carried out is not money but intelligence.**

"I always think that at the end of my days I will ask myself a question: what have I done in life? The best answer I would like to be able to give to this question, is what I try to achieve every day I have left ", this is Martinetti's conclusion at the end of the visit of 'Now I know how!' Erasmus+ students at Mura Mura.

Guido Martinetti during his lecture for "Now I know how!" course students at Mura Mura – May 2022



CASE STUDY

MUSIC: FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION

ENRICO SAVERIO PAGANO

interview by **Andrea Zoppolato**

Enrico Saverio Pagano. Scoring on the Forbes magazine list among the most promising leaders in Italy of up to 30 years of age. While still studying at the Conservatory, he decided to make a dream come true on his own, the dream of becoming a conductor. He set up the Canova Chamber Orchestra from scratch, orchestra composed entirely of young people where he is not only the conductor, but acts also as a producer and a true entrepreneur.

The beginnings

“The orchestra was born as **a workshop for young people** who wished to get involved and to try their luck in the profession for which we were all studying. Initially, we were seeking practical experience that our studies at the conservatoire lacked. Then, as it happens, one thing leads to another, and a project that began without defined objectives gradually grew and brought some important opportunities. The key moment was 2018 when they started treating us like pros.”

Music: from passion to profession

“As a child, I wanted to become a doctor. Then, when the time came to learn more about myself, I realized that my passion for music would turn into a profession. These are choices one makes at that stage of life when one is less afraid of the future

and therefore has the courage to take less conventional and more risky decisions, like **becoming a conductor**.

The conductor must be the catalyst and motivator of people, otherwise it is difficult for him to be followed by an orchestra. I learnt how to develop and enhance certain characteristics of my personality, which are impossible to learn at a conservatoire, such as being able to establish relationships with sponsors and politicians, as early as when I was 19. It was these skills that enabled me to pursue my dream profession.”

Lifestyle: anything different from your peers?

“If you choose such a profession, you have to know that **it will always come first, before the other things**. This does not mean not having friends or not going on holiday, but that if you have a holiday planned, for example, and you are called last minute for an important concert taking place at the same time, the holiday gets cancelled. The same applies to planning your leisure time, which is always subordinated to professional commitments. This is not the case in traditional jobs where, when you take time off work, you take it 100%. Those who do my profession can never take 100% time off, probably because they feel a constant urge to work.”

Training: what did you learn at school and at university? And what did you learn through hands-on experience instead?

“Some theoretical subjects such as harmony, counterpoint, orchestration cannot be studied anywhere else but at the Conservatory.

Theoretical training was essential for me, otherwise I wouldn't have been able to tackle a score. For the rest, **university and the Conservatory are not sufficient**.



Enrico Saverio Pagano

Skills such as public relations, the ability to raise funds, knowing how to get into harmony with players in the orchestra are things you learn as you go.

Another very important skill is **being able to extract the best out of the people you work with**, so that when they come to play with me for the first time, they also decide to come back for a second time, a third and so on.

The years I spent doing rowing competitions were crucial in this. Teamwork, rowing together towards one single goal, are aspects that have a lot in common with what I am doing.”

The moment when you started from scratch: difficulties? Incentives?

“The main obstacle is that **many people you meet for work are unreliable**. Vain promises are frequent. Being able to understand and to accept that people are often not reliable has not been easy. But what always pushes me forward are concerts. Often with my collaborators we complain about the hard work that goes into making the orchestra project

sustainable, but what keeps us going is the knowledge that the hard work enables us to get on the stage, in front of an audience, to play wonderful music.”

Lavoro in team: l'importanza della positività...

“For those involved in music professionally, there is a risk is that working as a musician may become a routine activity.

This has a very negative impact on the orchestra, because **people are individuals and a group at once**, and if the individuals lose their energy and motivation, the whole group suffers. When we have to select musicians for the Canova Orchestra, we look for professionals with high technical and artistic skills, but this is not enough.

In Canova, we always try to work with people who have the same enthusiasm as us, the founders. These are things that even the audience notices: those who come to listen to us recognise immediately the desire to play with passion and the commitment to achieve a common goal. A serene working environment is essential to achieve the best possible result.”

CASE STUDY

MY FIRST BUSINESS ACTIVITY WHILE STILL GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL: ARIANNA POZZI

interview by **Andrea Zoppolato**

Creating a company before even finishing high school? That's what Arianna Pozzi, founder of GaiaMyFriend, the app that suggests users what to wear based on various subjective parameters, did.



Arianna Pozzi

The beginnings

“I have always had a great passion for fashion, but I never thought that at the age of 15 it would already start to become my professional activity. When I was 14, I asked myself the question why there was no help in choosing what to wear.

I talked about it to my father, to understand how to do it from a technical point of view.

He told me that with artificial intelligence one could figure out what clothes to suggest based on a person's taste and mood. Then I met people thanks to whom I could build my first team.

With a crowdfunding campaign we were able to raise more funds to invest on the social networks and development.”

Lifestyle: anything different from your peers?

"The key thing is organisation. I still attend school, I still have a social life, so **organisation** is key. In addition to the ability to get organised, you need a great deal of **determination** because that's what allows you to keep going and overcome difficult moments.”

What is the motivation at the basis of your determination?

“First and foremost, to be proud of myself. I don't like things to be left unfinished. To remind myself the reason why I started, my own path and that of Gaia with its purpose to make young people believe in their dreams, alongside with the business success as such.”

Training: what was useful in school for what you are doing? And what did you learn through hands-on experience instead?

“Unfortunately, the Italian schools do not teach anything in the field of entrepreneurship, apart from the encouragement that I, for one, received from teachers. I had to acquire knowledge elsewhere. **I think this is something that can be improved in the Italian schools.**

Through experience in my field, apart from organisation and determination, I have also learnt about economics and team management.

Also, how to identify the motivation that is needed in the phase of growth to keep a team in cohesion.

Then I also learnt about finances, public speaking, social communication.”

Key skills that you realised needed further development?

“A lot of **flexibility**. Flexibility is key because the needs change all the time. At times, we set things straight at the beginning, then we have to change them. You must not fall too much in love with your project but always be ready to change it. I also want to learn more from a technical point of view such as code and graphics.”

The main obstacle?

“In general, an entrepreneur has to face the difficulty of **not seeing early the results** of what he has been doing. But you have to be even more determined to have the results coming, sooner or later.”

And for the team, what is needed?

“In recruiting, one needs **to understand what are the person's values and aptitudes so that they fit with those of the company**. For integrating them, a lot of flexibility is needed both from me and from them. I work a lot with deadlines so that everyone can do their work while focusing on results, while at the same time managing other aspects of their time.”

How do you relate to the “grown-up world”?

“In a **natural** way. Having started with adults, I have always been at ease with them. I almost forget the age difference with those I talk to.”

GOING TO A JOB INTERVIEW

Pamela Bernabei

As a premise, let me stress that finding a job requires a certain cast of mind (*forma mentis*). Even very good contacts will be of no help if we lack an intelligent approach to the job market. Employers should also take this into account: they are better off hiring someone who is less talented but has the right cast of mind than someone who has all the required skills but an inadequate attitude.

Let me clarify what I mean: a young graduate who enters the professional world should always keep in mind that he is *potential*; the firm he applies to, by contrast, and particularly the leader of this firm, is already a fact of history, they have already proved themselves. In other words, the applicant's academic titles, knowledge of languages, of computers, and so on, are useless if he lacks this cast of mind. An employer is better off delaying a project than placing it in the hands of someone with the wrong attitude. This attitude can be ruinous – due to pretentiousness (this is sometimes the case of highly qualified individuals), bureaucracy, laziness, etc. Let me give two examples, one from the point of view of the employee and the other of the employer.

A young man aged about twenty-five, whose CV includes post-graduate education, several fluent languages, excellent computer skills, reasonable public speech and various international experiences asks to collaborate with a firm. In fact, he goes even further by proposing a project. The firm is a solid, constantly growing reality, a very good starting point for our candidate. The President shows interest in the proposal,

even though he thinks it should be formulated in a completely different way – but this is already an achievement. The firm proceeds to call the candidate, and leaves a message on his answering machine (this is already a negative point, for the candidate should expect some kind of positive or negative feedback, and try to be personally available). The candidate answers by email in the following terms: “Dear..., I received your message late in the evening. I am unavailable tomorrow: would it be possible to arrange a telephone appointment on Friday, between noon and 6?” Wrong answer: he has lost his opportunity. The candidate’s attitude shows an inappropriate cast of mind: he certainly has potential, but he is not at the historically consolidated level of the firm, so he cannot afford to set a telephone appointment. This episode seems incredible, but in fact this attitude is not rare. I used it as an example with some of my younger clients to illustrate the wrong cast of mind, and two out of five of them thought that his behaviour was fine. Many young people have this pretentious attitude when entering the job market. They think they have all the necessary knowledge, but in fact they have not demonstrated anything concretely. Other applicants, faced with the same opportunity as our candidate, would have found a way to promptly return the firm’s call even in the middle of the desert. They may not have the same CV, but they will succeed because of their different way of positioning themselves in relation to the firm.

I could give many examples of the opposite perspective: many firms keep on employers who are no longer functional, in the sense that, although they may have the right technical capacities, they have an inadequate way of relating to their colleagues or even to their boss. The employer often justifies

himself by saying that he does not know how to replace that person; in fact, this gives the employee the impression of being indispensable to the firm, which is the worst thing of all. It is better to give up a project or close a branch than keep a collaborator with this cast of mind. An employee or collaborator should never have the feeling of being irreplaceable – everybody is replaceable. The damage caused by a person with the wrong cast of mind is greater than the cost of keeping an unproductive sector, or of training a technically unqualified collaborator. The personality of the worker is what determines the success or the failure of the firm.

We will analyse the selection process both from the point of view of the candidate and of the selector.

Many problems that arise in the relation between the firm and its employees are caused by erroneous selection or placement. Erroneous decisions in this phase often determine problems that are seriously detrimental to the life of the firm – unsatisfactory performance, high costs for training, etc.

The job interview is the most delicate phase in the process of creating the firm's human structure.

A good job interview requires a situation of optimality with respect to a number of – typically uncertain and often contrasting – factors.

The mechanisms of selection and placement are just as important with respect to the individual: as in all relations, first impressions matter most, and can only be changed with difficulty.

A mistake at this stage can deform the relation between the two parties, leading the firm to make an inadequate decision or the worker to enter his new job under non-optimal conditions.



The interview

Once you have an appointment for an interview, you need to prepare to put your opportunity at stake in one hour – possibly less. There are so many variables at play in a job interview that its outcome often depends on some factor that has little to do with your professionalism.

There are a number of methodologies for the selection of the staff; among these, the job interview is paramount. It is a “moment of truth”, during which the parties face each other personally, integrally, in their professionalism, personality and relational style. The unfolding and the result of the interview are often unpredictable, as each person has a different perspective on reality, based on personal schemes, opinions and judgments.

This is particularly true in the case of something as subjective as the evaluation of another person. Hence, as a candidate, you should consider that what you think you are expressing does not necessarily coincide with what your interviewer is gathering. Sometimes an interviewee tries to act in a pleasant, sociable way, but is evaluated as emphatic or naïve; or, he tries

to appear serious and moderate, but is perceived as rigid and introverted. The opposite case – namely, that the interviewer gets a better impression than the candidate believes he has given – also occurs.

The following advice is valid for all types of interview, but there are two variables that should influence your behaviour: 1) whether you are unemployed and looking for work, or you are working and looking for a more lucrative or satisfactory job; and 2) your position in relation to other candidates: whether you are at the top of the list, somewhere in the middle, or towards the bottom.

That is, as in all competitions, you need to change your tactics depending on your competitors. If you get the impression that your CV and experience place you among the favourite candidates, then you should concentrate on avoiding mistakes, playing your role confidently and impeccably, without taking risks. If on the other hand you have a disadvantage (your degree or your experience is not exactly as required by the firm, etc), then standard performance in the interview is not enough: you need to do something special in order to be taken in consideration, even if this means taking some risks – in the end, you have nothing to lose.

Hence, the recommendations below need to be interpreted depending on the situation. Playing outside the script, in terms of contents or in terms of relating to the interviewer, may be a risk or an opportunity, depending on how you are positioned in the list of candidates.

Different kinds of interview

Interviews vary in relation to the interviewer, who may be one of five types.

1. The selector

There are two kinds of selector: the “yuppie” and the “old fox” (possibly the staff manager). Which of the two you will face depends on the size of the firm, or it may simply be random. You should relate to them in different ways.

The yuppie is usually an enthusiast of his work and of the firm; he is curious and optimist, and probably somewhat pretentious. He will like you: you are almost the same age, so he will perceive you as being similar to – but not better than – him. Because of his relative lack of experience, he takes himself as the main criterion of comparison.

The old fox, on the other hand, is often cynical and somewhat mocking: his enthusiasm has been tempered by endless disappointment. He does not enjoy selecting the staff, and wants to be done quickly and without taking chances. He likes to be sententious and hates being contradicted; of course, he has developed very good intuition, and rarely gets a wrong impression. You need to attach importance to him *without being passive*; that is, show him a strong character combined with common sense and respect.

The yuppie will look for an enthusiast of the firm; more wisely, the old fox will look for a solid personality and the right cast of mind.

2. The sector manager

Generally, you will meet him at your second interview; most often, he is your prospective boss. He is usually completely unprepared with respect to selection, and makes his decision based on superficial impressions or prejudice. He verifies the empathy that takes place between you. He also wants to verify some key characteristics on your side: that you are reasonably pleasant, that you know at least the basics of what you claim

you know, that you are a hard worker (and possibly even an intelligent one), and that your interest in the position is well-grounded and lasting. In summary, he will make sure that you are a reliable type (again, it is a matter of cast of mind).

3. The technician

This can be a variation of the previous interview, or a separate interview altogether. If you are technically prepared, this interview will be easy, but with the following risk: any technician has some small manias or prejudices on some aspect of his field; he will promptly fail you if you contradict his convictions on these points. So, you should avoid being sententious on the themes that you know to be controversial, and try to understand his position, which sometimes shows through his naïve questions. It is always a mistake to argue in favour of your opinion: firstly, you are wasting something personal and, secondly, you should allow for other people to have different ideas.

4. The unprepared interviewer

This may be any of the previous three kinds. Do not be amazed if on arriving at your interview you find that your interlocutor has lost your CV and completely forgotten who you are. Imagine that you meet the staff manager of a multinational firm: he invites you to take a seat, offers a cup of coffee, and after a few moments of silence casually asks: “I’m sorry, would you mind reminding me who you are, and the reason for our appointment?”. You should always bring a copy of your CV with you, and be prepared to change your interlocutor’s forgetfulness into an opportunity. Be extremely kind: he may be faking to test your reaction, namely, that you remain modest even though he is apparently ill-equipped.

5. *Interview at dinner*

This will not be the first interview. This procedure is popular when hiring managers, but it is sometimes applied to entry-levels as well, out of gluttony or time convenience. It is usually difficult to be relaxed on such an occasion, but you should be fine if you observe a couple of basic rules. Of course, civilities are much more extensive than in a normal interview, and you should not let yourself go with respect to food or talk. You should also avoid the opposite mistake, that of being too nervous and self-conscious about the way you hold your fork, etc. Choose a light meal, and more importantly avoid food that is difficult to eat. Avoid wine at lunch, and always try to be pleasant and friendly.

There are a number of points that you should take into consideration *before* going to a job interview.

- Learn three or four things well. Do not focus on the sequence, or it will seem like you are repeating by heart (and also because the sequence of questions will not necessarily coincide with what you have learned). These few points will constitute the basic structure of your way of thinking or perceiving a situation. Once you have this structure, you will be able to enrich it with all the details you know; they are basic points of reference that can be expanded on as necessary.

There are typical questions, on which you should be prepared. Prepare yourself on those themes without elaborating or repeating too much as you may sound as though you were repeating a lesson. When you are asked a difficult question or one which you are not prepared for, you can sometimes make a link to one of these few points, which you are sure about. Your interviewer may even note that you are evading the point, but he will probably appreciate this. Essentially, you are

showing that there are at least a few basic things that you are clear about – and this is already an achievement.

- Listen to your recorded voice. Do not wait until the day before the interview to do so, because in most cases you will not like it. Try at least a few days before the interview: at least you will get the impression that you can change it. Your first reaction will almost invariably be one of disappointment; in fact, you will be able to correct the most obvious defects in a couple of days (you may notice that your inflexion on certain words is too strong, or that what you think is a polite tone in fact sounds quite cold).

- Do not worry if you feel nervous before the interview: it is quite normal. Employers should try to find good staff for the selection task (although this seems increasingly rare) who can make candidates feel comfortable and set up a relaxed atmosphere. As a candidate, you should also contribute with a smile and a calm attitude. This will show that you can handle stress – besides, who would choose a sulky person as a future colleague?

I should also add that tension is an indispensable reaction mechanism, which makes the maximal use of your resources possible. Letting yourself go and switching to an over-relaxed attitude will denote lack of strength, and will generally cause you to make mistakes.

- The time factor. For the entrepreneur time is money, while this is not necessarily the case yet for many younger people. One hour is what a young person dedicates to going to the hairdresser, reading a novel, chatting with a friend (in the best cases). For an entrepreneur, an hour means the increase or the diminishment of his business. You should quickly integrate this view of time. You may be asking yourself the reason for this apparent hurry (the young man whom I used as an example

of the wrong cast of mind certainly asked himself this question), but to an entrepreneur, the earlier you start, the earlier you accomplish things, the earlier you reap the results. The candidate lacks the elements and the experience to see what things it is possible to accomplish, and this explains his loose use of time. The fact is that during the first phase of life the rhythm is determined by the schedule of classes and exams, of workouts and competitions; that is, it is a time for assimilation and training, which it is difficult to cut down. In the professional context the conception of time changes completely. Young graduates often take two or three years to understand this – when they do – and this is of course a loss. When you think it is possible to achieve something in a year, most times a couple of months is enough. The earlier you understand this, the earlier you enter the real competition of professional life. The market works on a first-come first-served basis.

Practical recommendations for a good interview

As a premise, let me say that the most important thing is to avoid scoring own goals. It is also not a good idea to “bluff” and hide important but inconvenient elements of your personal or professional background. Such bluffing is only allowed when you are sure that you have all the necessary requisites, and in this case it can optimize your chances of winning (this concept, sometimes referred to as *dolus bonus*, is also accepted in commerce).

However, you should never pretend a capacity that you lack: it is much better not to get the job than to get it and be found incapable of fulfilling its requirements. Also, keep in mind that, if you are facing a serious professional, lying will not get you very far.

I) Making a good first impression

“You never have a second chance to make a first impression.” The first impression you give is something that will stick to you forever (whether it is your boss, a friend, a relative, they will always remember the very first moments of your acquaintance).

The basics should be obvious: do not come late, and do not come running, with sweaty hands, which will be sure to earn you an unfavourable first impression. It is best if you are somewhat early, for during the wait you can familiarize yourself with the environment. This will mean one less problem once the interview begins; you have already “made yourself at home”, as it were.

What is more difficult is the first phase of the interview. Usually, an interview has four phases: the warm-up (which lasts approximately 2 to 3 minutes), the examination (20 min), the counter-examination on the part of the candidate (10 min) and the conclusion (4 min).

The first two phases are the most important in determining the outcome of the interview.

In one case out of three, the selector has already mentally “flunked” the candidate after the exchange of civilities, and he is unlikely to change his mind upon the more analytical evaluation of the second phase.

To make a good warm-up, you should establish a good empathic atmosphere with the selector; a smile, a quip, an observation that plays down the situation are always welcome: if the candidate is not relaxed, the selector cannot be at ease either.

Do not act too flatteringly, and make sure that the civilities are not taken too far, or the selector will think that you are being evasive, or that you are a chatterbox.

II) Working on your weaknesses

There is no use in hiding: the second phase of the interview is, essentially, an exam. The interviewer will probe your knowledge and personality, and look for any faults. Nobody is perfect, so that some fault will inevitably appear (whether we realize it or not). The question, then, is to make these weaknesses seem minor, in relation to the overall impression of the interviewer. We can do this by forestalling criticism, that is, recognizing our defects, framing them in the right perspective and compensating as far as possible. Never deny an obvious defect (“Me, aggressive? Are you crazy or what?”) or try to twist things around (“My grades are a bit low? I wasn’t studying for the grade!”). You will make a more positive impression by showing awareness and will to change: “Yes, my university studies were nothing memorable. The fact is, during the first years I was concentrating more on having fun; it was only in the last two years that I started to think seriously about my future and to have a more mature attitude. I made up for the exams I had failed, tried to raise my averages and write a good thesis. I think the results were good; most importantly, I realized that I can achieve what I want if I put enough effort into it.” Or: “No, I don’t speak a word of German. If you need a fluent speaker right away, I’m not the person you are looking for. But if English is sufficient for a start, I think I can learn enough German in six months: I wouldn’t mind spending my vacation in Germany to improve my language skills. I know I’m good at learning languages, otherwise I would not be saying this. I enjoyed Latin in school, so a modern language will not cause any problem. I have no problem with English and I learned French easily, so I know that in six months I will know enough German to communicate with my colleagues.” This is much better than saying: “No, I don’t speak German,

but if the firm organizes refresher courses, I am willing to take them”. This is insufficient, it reinforces your weakness.

In short, you can minimize the impact of your weaknesses by:

- 1 assuming that they will come out;
- 2 admitting their plausibility;
- 3 framing them in a wider perspective; and
- 4 demonstrating that you are aware of them, and have already found the antidote to the problem they may constitute.

III) Gathering information about the firm

Once the interviewer has gathered a fairly precise idea of your capacities and motivation, he will lie back on his chair, stretch and half-close his eyes. This marks the end of the second phase, after which he will turn to you with the conventional: “Good. Do you have any questions?” You are sure to spoil a good interview if you smilingly reply “No, I cannot think of anything”: the interviewer will send you to hell (circle of the slothful) or to the limbo of the personality less. Below I will enumerate some questions that help you to get useful information or to improve the impression you make. First, let me point out that this part of the interview will be determined by how well informed you are about the firm. If you have little knowledge of the firm, the discussion will be rather anonymous, which will not contribute to the impression you make (any company man thinks that his company is at the centre of the world, so that ignorance of the firm on your part may seem inadmissible). Remember that one of your objectives is to rid yourself of the image of the young graduate who knows nothing about the world of business. You will make a good impression if you say things like: “From what I know of your firm..., and with respect to this, I was

wondering...”. With this cliché, you can begin by saying what you know of the firm (in terms of its size, structure, products, changes that the firm may be undergoing) and – if you have something significant to say – your own perspective. In this way the dialogue will be “on equal terms” (candidates often assume that they are always playing a passive role): the interviewer will gather the impression that you know what you want and what you are talking about.

Finding information on large firms is not difficult; for smaller firms, you will have to turn to the specialized press or to associations in that field.

Even better, you should try to get to know someone who works in that firm. This is not easy, but it is certainly worth it: particularly in a small firm, the selector will be pleasantly surprised if you show that you know the firm well.

Now let me give you some examples of useful questions that you can ask.

- *Could you tell me more precisely what the job consists of?*

You probably already know the basic aspects of the position you are applying for, but in most cases, you do not know many details.

It is important to understand these details, because: a) you may be called for another interview with your future supervisor, and at this point you should know your role precisely, and b) you need all the elements to make your decision, if the firm finally makes you an offer.

- *What are the firm's objectives for the coming years?*

This is the kind of question that, while technical, builds an atmosphere, and gives you useful information for the following interview.

Depending on the situation, you may also ask questions of the following type.

- *What is the ideal employee for your firm? What are his values?*

This will enable you to make small adjustments to your image in relation to the key points in the answer (these are usually quite precise: “We place great importance on collaboration and respect for our colleagues”; “Here people are hard workers, they are all very proud of their technical competence”; “We like people who are young, aggressive, dynamic, ambitious”; and so on).

- *What do you like best about this company?*

This is a more subtle way of asking the preceding question, but it will build a warmer atmosphere. You may find the interviewer speaking to you like an old friend for some minutes.

In this phase, the interviewer will do his best to give the candidate a good impression of the firm and of the way its employees are treated. Leaving the candidate with a good impression is important, whether he is hired or rejected. The candidate should be given all the elements to decide whether he should accept a possible offer for that position.

IV) Three things to avoid: being naïve, posing and excessiveness

If you can sell your image well, you will also be a good seller of your firm.

Being sincere and making the interviewer understand that you can be trusted should not be confused with being naïve: you are not having a friendly conversation; you are not speaking to mum or dad or your confessor; you are speaking to a professional, with a given aim, and part of his evaluation will be based on how you pursue your aim. Typically, people who still live at home or are very close to their family make this

mistake; that is, they show that they do not know how to make the most of a good opportunity, and that they are not realistic in their view of things.

More importantly, you should avoid posing as something you are not: playing the manager at twenty-four, or generally pretending to be more than you are in order to impress the interviewer. This is most likely to cause the interviewer to gently banter you – although often you will not even notice. A variation of this attitude is the fake humbleness of the “I do as you say, but I choose when and how” type (typical of only children, of favourite children and of those who have always worked in their family business).

Also, you should avoid extremist, drastic or eccentric statements. It may be a pity, but as a fact firms like soft colours better than vivid ones, and appreciate balance more than provocation (even if it is genial). Hence, be sparing with your use of superlatives, exclamation marks and fists on the table. An interview is not a good time to be excessive, and the interviewer may get the feeling that you are making up for something lacking.

V) Showing initiative

Having analysed what you should avoid, let us look at the aspects that firms appreciate, and the image that you should give of yourself. Clearly this varies depending on the position, the firm and the interviewer; however, there is one universal requisite: *firms look for willing horses, not for great talkers.*

How do you demonstrate this quality during an interview? To begin with, you should be a hard worker, it is pointless bluffing. In any case, let us consider a few points. *Employers want people who are active, concrete and purposeful*; people who solve problems, rather than making comments or making

them worse. A simple but reliable person is better than a slack intellectual. So, to begin with you should avoid showing a plaintive, impractical or passive attitude. *Never blame your failures on someone else; never say anything that betrays a fatalist stance; avoid quibbling, being bureaucratic, and passing the buck.*

Eagerness is not always rewarded, but it is always demanded. It is better to seem a bit inaccurate than tight. If you want to enter a firm, you must carry the inscription on your forehead: “I never draw back; I can solve the problems I encounter without hassling anyone too much; I will ask for advice now and then, but then I will do the work myself immediately”.

Also: please talk! The worst thing is if the interview turns into an interrogation: the interviewer becomes nervous and asks questions that the increasingly terrorized interviewee answers with monosyllables.

A job interview never follows a fixed program: the interviewer will certainly ask some indispensable questions, but then *he is mostly interested in hearing you*: how you interact, how you position yourself, your perspective on life, your ambitions, and so on.

If you remain quiet and answer the questions without ever taking the initiative, he will gather a mediocre impression or, worse, *no impression at all*.

Hence, motivate and develop your answers, and clarify any ambiguity before being asked to. Do not fall into the opposite error – speaking too much.

Firms put great value on synthesis, that is, transmitting the greatest amount of information in the shortest time: this shows your sense of economy.

Incomprehension between the interlocutors may arise from: a) an artificial attitude on the interviewee’s part, who offers a

contradictory image of himself, and b) a gap between the language they use.

The interviewer sometimes forgets that the candidate is not familiar with the jargon that is used within the firm; the candidate, on his part, can give a bad impression if he uses strictly academic, informal or even parochial language. Using technical terms inappropriately, or stressing factors linked to your education (professors and exams) increases the gap between you and the interviewer.

Before going to an interview, you should acquaint yourself with the professional jargon of your sector (even if it is not taught in school); at least, you should have an idea of the meaning of phrases like “customer satisfaction”, “matrix structure”, “bonds”, “carrier’s risk”, “engineering”, “operations”, “trade marketing”. If you are caught off guard by some term of this kind, it is best to be bold and ask: “In the specific context of your activity, what precisely do you mean by...”.

VI) Taking the interviewer into consideration

The interviewer desires a favourable outcome for the interview as much as you do: his job is to fill that position; if you are the right person for it, he has done his job.

Thus, he is not a cold, objective examiner; you should think of him as an ally rather than an adversary.

With this in mind, it is natural that he cannot be happy with a suspicious or reticent attitude on your part: if he perceives that you are afraid, ambiguous or sly, he will – rightly, in most cases – assume that this is your attitude in all relations.

“Tough” questions are a good sign: a selector challenges only the candidates he is interested in and keeps simple, friendly interviews for those that are obviously inadequate.

VII) Non-verbal communication: clothes, gestures, voice and eyes

An interview is not made of words alone, and the interviewer will use his hearing in combination with sight and touch (hopefully he will be spared from using his sense of smell!).

Our gestures, eyes and tone of voice always work by confirming, integrating or disagreeing with what we are saying. Our way of dressing, greeting and sitting may be determinant in forming the interviewer's judgment. Nonverbal communication is more instinctive than its verbal counterpart, and hence more difficult to control. However, there are some simple points that will certainly work to our advantage.

a) *Clothing*. Be careful with combinations in general (socks, ties, etc), for they are the most immediate expression of your inner harmony. Inevitably, clothing determines your image – in the end, you *choose* the clothes you wear. The way you dress for the interview contributes to giving an impression of reliability. Casual wear will make you look immature, and you should also avoid flashy accessories, makeup and vivid colours. On the other hand, do not try to make yourself look older than you are or you may look like you have borrowed your parents' old clothes. Women are obviously freer, and elegance is greatly appreciated. Men are generally bound to the standard suit; avoid looking exceedingly formal (you will give the impression of being pernickety), unless you work in a field that places great importance on appearances (consulting, communication, banking, etc). Be careful also with *how* you wear your clothes: make sure that they fit you properly, that your tie is tight, check your collar for dandruff and your eyeglasses for grease. This is an important appointment: if you look untidy, you will rightly be considered superficial and somewhat unintelligent. In short, clothing is an important

aspect of the “theatrical” part of our life. Sometimes young people who refuse to conform to a standard that they deem unattractive choose by contradiction rather than by good taste, and end up looking worse than what they intended to criticize.

b) *Body language*. Interpersonal communication is an incredibly complex thing, and improving your efficacy at it is neither easy nor fast. Still, keep in mind that any interviewer will catch the most obvious aspects of body language. Try to control obvious signs of tension, such as trembling voice, nervous movement of the hands or a rigid position on your chair. If necessary, take a deep breath and try to relax, even if you momentarily lose your concentration. You convey a sense of closure if you cross your arms, keep your brow contracted or your fist tight. This would blatantly contradict you if you were stating that you relate well with other people. Too much gesticulation shows lack of control, but a reasonable proportion gives an impression of spontaneity. You should look your interviewer in the eyes, but not too penetratingly. While the handshake may seem a trivial point, it is still important. I personally find one hand out of five to be unpleasant to the touch, somewhat like overcooked sausage. It is not a matter of sweaty palms – this can happen to anyone – but the handshake should be firm enough to convey some vital energy. The same for the voice: it is better to be too loud by a few decibels – at least you are sure that you are being heard. Variation in the tone of voice certainly makes your conversation more enticing, even though this is not an easy technique to acquire.

Typical questions

All the questions you will be asked are aimed at gathering information on the previously mentioned points, so if a

completely unexpected question arises, before answering, ask yourself what the interviewer wants to find out. Obviously, if he asks you to give him a definition of imagination, he is not testing your knowledge of English, but your creativity and your capacity to improvise. Every interviewer has developed a personal style, but there are typical questions, which you will hear in nearly any job interview.

What are your strengths?

The most efficacious way of answering is by stressing our capacities that coincide with the requirements for the position. Hence, avoid putting the stress on what you like about yourself, but find the points of coincidence between your profile and the position you are applying for. Keep in mind that in many cases you will be asked to demonstrate that you indeed have those capacities through some examples in your experience.

What about your weaknesses?

The worst thing is answering in a way that suggests that you have none. This kind of answer proves that you are either unrealistic or trying to deceive your interviewer. It is much better to find a defect that is somehow tolerable or amusing, or, even better, one that the interviewer would have noticed anyway because our CV or our manners clearly betray it. Avoid self-sabotage: excess of sincerity is certainly admirable, but not too intelligent (“You know, today I seem fine, but it depends on the weather. When it’s hot I just can’t pull myself together.”).

I see you have no practical experience in this field.

Young graduates generally dislike this kind of statement. They feel like answering: “Of course I don’t, nor will I ever get any, if I don’t get a chance to begin from somewhere”. In fact, the interviewer knows perfectly well that you lack practical

experience; but he does not care, otherwise he would not have called you for an interview. He asks this question in order to probe whether you *have an idea of the requisites necessary to fulfil that role*, and whether you can provide him with some guarantee that you satisfy those requisites. So, a more correct answer is something like: “No, I have no previous experience in trade marketing. But I understand that this activity requires good analytical skills, computer skills and enough creativity to constantly come up with new ideas. I find it a challenging combination, and somehow identify with it. I have become quite familiar with many computer programs you use during my studies.”

Where do you see yourself in five/ten years from today?

Although apparently useless (a graduate hardly knows where he will be five months from today) this question is extremely popular.

Most candidates vaguely answer: “Well... I hope to learn a lot... to get to a good position – even though, you know, I’m not exactly a careerist”. Some impudently answer: “Sitting on the chair of your CEO, of course” (a prompt laugh is the only possible way out of certain failure, in this case).

In fact, if we want to score a point with this question, we need to understand what our interviewer wants to hear. Is he trying to test how loyal you will be to the firm, that is, that you will not leave the job as soon as you find a more lucrative offer? Is he trying to assess your vocation, that is, that you will not ask to be put on a different job after a short while? Is he trying to measure your ambition, or your willingness to travel? If you are unsure of the interviewer’s motive, try to answer in a way that is both vague and sensible: “Of course, I would like to make some professional achievements. I think that only these achievements can concretely justify my wider projects and

intentions. I often find that making long term projects can distract from the present action.”

Why did you apply to our company?

Here you need to pull out your knowledge of the firm, as underlined above.

Are you more of a man of thought or a man of action?

This is a trick question, that the interviewer sometimes makes when he suspects that one of these two characters is dominant in the candidate's personality. You avoid the trick by giving a balanced picture, like: “My academic endeavours in the last few years have exposed me to the more theoretical aspects of the discipline, but this is precisely what makes me eager to gain practical experience”.

A grand finale

The closing part of the interview is just as important as the opening. It often consists of the negotiation of an economic agreement and other personal needs (worksite, delay for the response, benefits, etc). If the interviewer does not mention these aspects, you should wait until you are formally offered the job. On the other hand, there are personal needs that can be put forward at this time; for example, you can ask for the response to be given to you within a certain date, if you need to make a decision by that time due to another possible employment or the deadline of a course that you would like to take.

Finally, make sure you establish a good rapport with the secretaries. Their influence is often surprisingly strong, and sometimes a bad impression on them can compromise the good impression you made on their boss. Be kind, and try to make them remember you. Some secretaries (by no means all) have excellent psychological insight. Also, they will be the filter of

your future calls and appointments: it is better to have them on your side.

Making the correct judgment

Let us now look at the interview from the perspective of the employer, and particularly at the factors that can cause erroneous judgement.

Halo effect

This is one of the most common mistakes. It consists of extending the positive or negative impression caused by one particular characteristic to the overall judgment. This may also be determined by unconscious comparison of the candidate with previously interviewed candidates. That is, the interviewer will tend to make an overall positive judgment if the previous candidate was comparatively bad, and vice versa.

Projection

This error derives from the interviewer's tendency to compare the candidate's qualities (age, looks, experience, behaviour, and so on) with his own or with those of other people he knows, and to judge all elements of difference as negative.

Stereotyped interview

When the interviewer follows a scheme that he mechanically applies to all candidates, he will be missing the peculiarities of the candidate.

Whether the candidate is applying for an operative or for a managerial position, the most important thing to assess is his cast of mind.

Secondly, his knowledge and skills. Usually interviewers invert the order of these two priorities. In fact, it is easier and

more economical to train someone with the right disposition to do a job than someone with better technical skills. Once you have discarded the candidates who do not have the appropriate cast of mind, if you need to further restrict your selection, you should concentrate on the following three aspects.

1. Professional experience. In particular, for each previous activity, you should concentrate on:

- a) previous jobs, duties and duration;
- b) the actual tasks of that position (for instance, one candidate “worked at Apple”, but what exactly was he doing? Cleaning the shop);
- c) the progression from each position to the next;
- d) the reasons for leaving that job;
- e) the reasons for time gaps between jobs (illness, travel, continuing education, etc).

2. Academic experience.

3. Relation with the family, accomplishment of national service (if applicable), state of health, psychological problems. But these last two ones, only to check if the job is not compatible with some of the candidate’s health or psychological problems; that is some job are not compatible with asthma problems for example or with back problems, or with some phobia.

JOB INTERVIEW, A POSITION TO TAKE

Hana Jungová

For as much as one can be well prepared for a job interview, one variable will always be a fundamental part of the message conveyed: the candidate's body language. While it is almost impossible to gain full control of it and to keep it especially in moments of tension that an interview typically represents, becoming aware of its role is an invaluable help to become better communicators and a useful door to self-knowledge.

It is a well-known fact that within the highly complex phenomenon of interpersonal communication, its non-verbal part plays a determining role. Clothing, gestures, tone of voice, hand movements, eye contact or position of the body all have the power to underline or contradict the message being expressed, while shaping instantly its overall meaning and impact on the addressee.

Let's imagine that one is being asked what would be their approach to a hypothetical situation of conflict with a colleague at work. "I believe that the most important thing is not to take things personally, to stay constructive and to try to get to a common solution through dialogue" will be the candidate's answer, with his or her fist banging on the table. Well-pondered words, expressing what the candidate considers right and how, perhaps, he or she would like to be able to react.

But the fist on the table points out unequivocally to someone who would struggle rather hard with anger or a tendency to prevail at all costs in a situation of conflict. As a matter of fact, when the verbal and the non-verbal level convey the opposite

meaning, the one that travels more rapidly will be the non-verbal one.

Is it about learning „how to act right “in a situation of a job interview? Not precisely. Surely one could, for instance, observe pictures, learn the explanation of the meaning of different body language aspects on a theoretical level and exercise on that basis until a flawless execution is reached (besides, rich material on the subject is easily available in books and videos). In front of the selection panel members, however, one would display a solid preparation, while a trained eye would anyway receive an image of someone who prefers not to reveal, to stay hidden behind the wall of automatic perfection.

Rather than imitating the required role to the best, the ultimate goal was to notice how does one do things in the first place and why: the usual way to shake a hand, to choose a dress, to sit on a chair when having an important conversation, where do hands or eyes go while listening and speaking. Realizing one's position is a playful way to explore one's style, to experience where it is or isn't yet in line with the way one wishes to come across.

Ultimately, a door to become aware of the underlying mindset one has when approaching the situation of a job interview, and, from there, to know what are the areas for potential development and to enhance one's chances of landing the job successfully.

Further, tips for acing one's job interview online were shared, such as: finding the right corner where to connect from, a calm, office-like, well-lit environment, while paying attention to the background of it that will show and speak for itself. Getting sound and video equipment ready beforehand, securing a powerful internet connection which is an essential pre-

condition to be able communicate well. As for the attire and body language, the same applies as for a face-to-face situation, but not everyone is familiar with technology which can make an online interview even a little bit more stressful. However... practicing with a buddy, a good friend, over Zoom can make lots of a difference!

The group of the “Now I know how!” course during the second experiential module in Italy, Marudo, Foil headquarters - May 2022



MODULE V

PROGRAMME



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The topic of the fifth module was: understanding the techniques and the logic of "Made In Italy", with the aim of gaining a useful tool for entering the professional world.

During the first day, the task assigned to the students right at the start of the whole course was taken up: how to enter the professional world as a lead, discussing the subject also in the light of lessons learnt in the training modules. The subject of how to save and manage money was then tackled by Vania Franceschelli. At the end of the first day, students engaged in a cooking workshop consisting in a team game.

The second day was dedicated to learning more about "Made in Italy" in Milan, the business capital of Italy. In the morning, students were divided into three groups, according to their field of interest, and were hosted at Luiss Lab and Istituto Marangoni. At the Luiss Lab, the students met startupper and financiers in an ecosystem aimed at fostering new entrepreneurship. At Marangoni, they learned about the world

of Fashion and the world of Design, in one of the most prestigious institutes in the world. In the afternoon, students were divided into five teams in order to try their hand at 'Milano Express', a game that took them to visit some of Milan's highlights, such as La Scala, the Cathedral or the Pinacoteca di Brera, by solving enigmas. At the end, they were received and celebrated at the city hall by the deputy mayor.

On the third day, the students discovered the value of "Made in Italy" in Piedmont. In the morning they were guests of Aurora Pen, one of the largest international luxury pen companies. In the afternoon they were received by Guido Martinetti at his Mura Mura estate where the founder of Grom Spa has created a luxury boutique with biodynamic crops.

On the fourth day, students visited one of the most prestigious factories in the world: the Ferrari factory in Maranello with a subsequent visit to the Ferrari Museum. In the afternoon they watched a film based on the life of the Ferrari founder.

On the fifth day, in the afternoon, Vito Lomele, one of the most famous serial entrepreneurs in the digital world, in particular with the million-dollar exit of his first company, JobRapido, directed a workshop aimed at steering the students' business ideas. Simultaneously, another group of young people learnt about techniques to best write a CV.

The students were then involved in a group session on 'difficult types', learning about how to manage the most typical individual problematic cases arising in working teams. The course ended with the last lecture on 'Self-knowledge.

THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE: LUISS BUSINESS SCHOOL

Andrea Zoppolato

There are two ways to play a leading role on the job market. One is **to offer oneself for jobs** advertised by companies or other organisations. The other is **to create jobs**, for oneself and for the others. This is the path of self-employment ranging from a freelancer to an entrepreneur. The distinctive feature here is not to have the employer as source of income, but the customers. In some respects, it can be said that for the self-employed, **the customer is the employer**.

Even for starting a business there are steps to complete and one has to go through a learning curve. The enterprise itself goes through a real formative process with several sequences that are typical for any new business.

For several decades, major cities have been creating suitable ecosystems to support the creation and development of new enterprises. Every business that is born, in fact, can bring new wealth, new jobs and, in general, nurtures a mentality that favours enterprise and economic growth.

Milan is the most important pole for the birth of new companies in Italy. One in four start-ups in Italy is based in the Milan region. Likewise, it is Milan where the most important hubs giving shape to start-ups are located, as well as the main venture capital companies that finance them.

One of the most important places acting as a nursery for new companies is the **Milan Luiss Hub**. Luiss is the most important private university of economics in Rome. Together

with the Bocconi in Milan, it is the leading university where the managerial classes of national companies get trained. In Milan, the Luiss has opened a hub that promotes matches between new companies and investors, with the aim of boosting already established companies, in particular.

A young person who has an entrepreneurial idea or is interested in setting up his or her own business needs to evaluate the logic of three fundamental elements: **the logic of the hub they joined, the logic of the investors and, in general, the logic of a success-oriented start-up.**

1. The Hub

Compared to other hubs that focus on start-ups in the foundation or seed phase, the Luiss Hub focuses more on the **acceleration phase**. That is, it seeks to foster the development of activities that have already been born, trying to guide them towards a rapid growth through, among others, meetings with investors to whom this phase of the growth process is interesting.

When meeting with the students, the managers of the Luiss hub showed how the fundamental factor of a hub is networking. That is precisely what a hub is for: creating the most suitable ecosystem so that those with a start-up can find everything they need for further development.

These connecting elements are, first and foremost, **other start-ups going through a similar phase**. From comparing with them, one can continuously obtain useful information on how to solve similar problems.

Service exchange partnerships can also arise; customers and co-workers can be found.

Fundamental to all this is that the hub organises events and opportunities for discussion both between the start-ups

operating in the hub and with people or companies operating externally.

Another fundamental element of a hub is to provide **opportunities to meet mentors**. The figure of a mentor is fundamental to any career path. In the case of a start-up, mentors can be successful entrepreneurs, investors in the sector or professors who teach the subject and who often act as advisors to those working in the sector. In particular, universities, including Luiss itself, can prove to be a fertile ground for prototypes and research to test innovative products or services.

Last but not least there is the role of **financiers**. Every start-up is very interested in finding investors just as investors are always on the lookout for opportunities to invest in. The Luiss Hub encourages regular meetings with investors and it also caters for closer cooperation with certain organisations. Foundations, which often intervene to support ideas with a high social impact, should not be underestimated either.

2. The Financiers

The growth process of a company goes through several phases.

1. Business idea 2. Development of a prototype 3. Testing 4. Founding the start-up 5. Obtaining resources in the market (coming from the sale of the product or service and/or capital financing) 6. Market expansion.

The process of financing a new company is preceded by the involvement of various actors, depending on the point in time where the company stands. Before or when the start-up is established, the first investors are typically friends or relatives (**family and friends**). Later, if additional capital is needed, **“business angels”**, typically private individuals who decide to put up a small part of their income to finance start-ups in their

early days, can participate in the financing. These investments range from a few thousand euros up to a maximum of several tens of thousands of euros and are mainly used to support the start-up and for testing the products and services.

When the start-up is established and when it begins to operate in the market, usually after it has already had positive feedback in terms of testing or trials in certain niches, if new funding is needed, the so-called **seed** capital is used, which provides the resources to 'seed' the start-up. Seed financing is a high-risk one and it can vary in size depending on the type and potential of the business in which it operates. For example, in the pharmaceutical sector hundreds of thousands of euros in investments can be reached, if not millions, while in e-commerce they can rather stay close to 100 or 200 thousand euros.

Once the seed phase has passed, if the company achieves its first success and meets its development objectives, the **accelerators** come into play, **early stage** financiers who intervene with financial and managerial resources to facilitate the transition from the test phase and still a limited market range to the actual production in enlarging markets.

The last stage of entry of high-risk capital is that of **venture capitals**. These are companies that gather funds by private individuals and typically intervene when the start-up is completing its establishment phase, usually within three years of its creation, demonstrating that it is a leading player in the market and that it can get markets access, including international markets. Venture capitals enter with investments usually exceeding one million euros and, in exchange for a significant share, on average around 20/30%, they invest in the company with a long-term view and with the objective of achieving an exit, i.e. to sell their share to a large group or by

listing the company in which they had invested in the stock exchange, achieving a gain of at least 10x, i.e. at least 10 times the capital invested. The logic of *the venture*, as well as that of the *seed* and the *angel*, is to **diversify investments into high-risk activities** knowing that the 10% of successful activities largely compensate for the money lost in the remaining 90% of failures. This means that the key element in choosing a business is its potential to succeed and grow. High risk must be compensated for by a great potential return.

If the business has different characteristics from those mentioned above, other possible investors can be considered. If the product is already able to generate flows, this is the best scenario: the financier is the market itself, which repays the entrepreneur with a turnover instead of shares.

In the case of such a business, it means that the risks for a financier are reduced, so debt capital, e.g. bank loans, can be used to support growth instead of risk capital, e.g. by selling shares.

Finally, there is another aspect to consider: the social impact of a company.

In the presentation to the Erasmus+ 'Now I know How!' students, the role of Foundations was also touched upon, as they often intervene to support projects with a high social impact.

In Milan, the Cariplo Foundation is a very active one, a banking foundation that provides some of the largest grants in the European private foundations segment. Every year the foundation provides grants for over 1,000 projects through numerous thematic calls for proposals. Each company can therefore attract both investors interested in economic returns, such as business *angels*, *seed and venture* capital investors,

and organisations interested in the social impact that the company can bring.

Social impact is also one of the most relevant issues in understanding the logic of a start-up.

3. The Start Up

It is fundamental to understand the logic of a start-up. It is a business logic, but it focuses on the fact that the activity is in its early stage.

To understand the logic of a start-up, the case study presented is the one of Iacopo Livia, a very young co-founder of **startup-checklist.org**, a platform that connects start-ups founded by young people with investors interested in this type of business investment. Livia's testimony is interesting as it conveys his experience of a business that finds itself in the acceleration phase already, but by working in close contact with other start-ups and investors in the field, so he can describe first-hand what their respective needs and success factors are.

In general terms, start-up logic means: focusing on the combination of two key factors that are the basis of the whole activity. **Personal motivation + the value one wants to create for the customer.** Personal motivation means that a deep motivation is required from the one who creates the business so as to guide towards entrepreneurial success. It must be strong enough to overcome problems, setbacks, to turn into tenacity to pursue one's goal. Personal motivation must be wedded to the value one wants to create for the customer.

Aspiring entrepreneurs often fall in love with their idea and their product, while losing sight of the fact that the only possible judge is the customer. Only the customer can appreciate the validity of a product or a service, so **it is crucial for entrepreneurs to focus on the customer's perceived**

value. This can lead to continuous adaptations of the imagined product and also to the development of communication and marketing techniques capable of conveying the value of the product or service to potential customers.

The logic of the start-up is to always focus on the value perceived by the customer. Everything else must be functional to this objective. Financiers included.

A typical mistake of start-ups is to drift towards the interest of financiers while losing sight of the interest of consumers. This can result in accepting investors who are dysfunctional to one's business or giving too high a share to capital providers, thus losing focus and responsibility in entrepreneurial management.



“Now I know how!” students who took part at workshop in Luiss Business School in Milan, May 2021.

Another key aspect are partners. Usually a financier invests more in the partners than in their idea or product. Winning, well-matched partners are even more of a guarantee than an excellent idea.

Another fundamental aspect is the team. A valuable team is a major for a business, especially when it is in an early stage: the implementation of an idea.

Executing the process, delivering the product are all aspects of critical importance determining the success or failure of an idea. In order to carry them out in the best possible way, it is crucial to be able to attract and train people who deliver results. Through these case studies (hub, financiers and start-up), the message we tried to convey to the young aspiring entrepreneurs is precisely this: **business is first and foremost a logic and the entrepreneur is first and foremost a mind-set**, a way of operating in the market to create value and achieve success through the well-being and satisfaction generated in the environment of reference, meaning customers, employees, lenders, partners as well as oneself.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Vania Franceschelli¹

Spending better, saving more: personal and family budget debt management

In this module, we will face certain questions and, together, will get to the answers.

For instance: what are the behaviours that enable us to save more money? What tools help you to control your expenditure?

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Is it possible to spend “better”?

What are the aspects to keep in mind when we paying back a loan in instalments?

Let’s start with the first activity which relates to planning: the personal budget.

1. Personal and family budget

International research defines a total of 4 behaviours that have a major impact on one’s wealth.

Question: would you be able to name at least one?

First strategy: family commitment

1. Involving all members

2. Appointing a person of reference

The first strategy is to involve all family members in management of financial resources. The economic situation of a family and its management concerns all members. It would therefore be desirable to involve everybody in taking decisions, while appointing a person of reference. This person will have the leading role in programming the activities of the family and implementing the choices made.

The involvement and the commitment of all family members strengthens the power of the decisions taken, it gives responsibility to everyone and provides the necessary motivational incentive for improving the control over economic resources and spending behaviours.

How much do you save each year?

Income – expenditure = saving

Income – savings = expenditure

Before outlining the second strategy it will be good to reflect upon the concept of “savings” from the psychological point of view, rather than the economic one only.

First question: how much do I save yearly?

If one cannot give a sufficiently precise answer, if one hesitates in quantifying, it means that the control over one's economic situation could be improved. Further, let's reflect on the approach adopted to estimating or calculating one's yearly savings. Most probably, one has performed the following mental operations:

1. estimating income; 2. quantifying expenditure; 3. deducting outflows from inflows, obtaining savings as a result. From the purely “arithmetic” point of view, this is a correct way to proceed. However, from the point of view of best practices in handling one's economic situation, this approach indicates that saving does not represent a priority, because its amount is calculated as a pure remainder resulting from a deduction between inflows and outflows. The priority here is therefore spending, not saving.

However, this way of proceeding shows that savings are not the priority as they are determined residually by income and expenditure. **In this sense, the psychological priority is consumption...**

From the point of view of best practices in handling one's economic situation, another operation would be appropriate: estimating income, defining a savings objective functional to satisfying one's needs and to reaching one's life objectives, so as to obtain the amount of a possible expenditure. Then, breaking the total possible expenditure amount down, in separate expenditure lines. This approach to savings

constitutes the basis of good budgeting practices. In such approach, savings play a leading role in financial planning, rather than being a pure remainder.

Strategy 2: pay first for “yourself in the future”

- 1) «Pay first for yourself in the future»: the saving**
- 2) Deduct saving from income: obtain the amount of possible expenditure as a result**
- 3) Distribute expenditure over separate lines, on the basis one's priorities**

This strategy stems from the statement according to which wealth depends more in the saving skills of families rather than on income.

In order to build a mind-set oriented to saving it is therefore appropriate, in the first place, to fix a savings goal and then to set aside the corresponding amount (before making any expenditure). This is the meaning of the first sentence: “pay first for yourself in the future”.

In so doing, your total expenditure capacity gets established, savings are deducted from the income, and one's lifestyle gets adapted to the available remaining resources. Finally, the total expenditure amount gets distributed over separate lines, on the basis of one's priorities. “Essential” expenditure lines get distinguished from the “secondary” ones.

Applying this strategy will allow you to gain more control over your economic situation and, psychologically speaking, it will bring a more serene approach to spending. There will be no stress of asking yourself each time whether this or that expenditure can be done or.

Strategy 3: automatism

In order to avoid the decision-making stress, one can set aside the amount to save, step by step:

A monthly automatic bank transfer to a separate account called “I pay for myself first”.

Another important strategy for improving self-control over your economic and financial resources is quite simple, and it consists in eliminating the "stress" of deciding on expenditures each time they are being considered: the allocation of resources to "pay for yourself first." This can be done easily by dividing resources automatically to saving targets and possible expenditure. For example, one can make an automatic monthly bank transfer to a “I pay for myself first” account.

Strategy 4: mental accountancy, $1\text{€}=1\text{€}$?

A powerful tool for improving self-control and for managing effectively possible consequences of our “spending temptations” is a psychological mechanism called “mental accountancy”.

In order to understand the meaning of “mental accountancy” let’s start by a preliminary question:

Is 1 euro identical to 1 euro?

Obviously, in economic terms, the answer is yes. However, if we see the same question from the psychological point of view, the answer can be surprising. Strictly economically speaking: yes, 1 euro is identical to 1 euro. But it is good to notice that psychologically speaking, it is not necessarily so.

The psychological mechanism of “mental accountancy” can be used to effectively generate more self-control and, as a result,

more wealth. Mental accountancy assigns a different value to money depending on the origin or destination of the money, leading to a better spending behaviour.

For instance, the spending behaviour of families varies significantly, depending on whether a certain amount of money has been won in a lottery or whether it was earned through hard work. The value of a certain amount varies according to the kind of purchase: is it a particularly important one or rather an unnecessary one? This is why “mental accountancy” can help much in training the skill of self-control over one’s economic and financial situation. This strategy consists in “giving money a name”, while distributing money in different “mental drawers”, each one linked to the origin and the destination of the money. To make this strategy even more powerful and efficient, it is good to physically distribute the money intended for different types of expenditure and objectives to separate bank accounts, each one identified with a visual “memo”.

This simple step produces surprising results. Research has confirmed that even families with low earnings and a very small savings potential can manage to reach significant goals simply by distributing money in envelopes, each one with a picture of the ultimate goal to reach. Where envelopes with pictures are absent, money goes simply to a nameless “mental drawer”.

In such case, it is more likely that impulses to spend the money prevail.

On the contrary, if the decision to spend this money and the corresponding amount of it gets compared to other choices possible, to objectives that are important in life, the results can be really a desirable, efficient one.

Control tools

A sound governance of one's economic, financial situation and assets is essential for several reasons. The first thing is simply to be aware of one's situation. **The first important tool to gain it is the balance sheet.**

The overall situation of a family, from a financial and patrimonial point of view, can be described as an outcome of all the behaviours that have been put in place in the past.

The balance sheet is the tool to record:

1) assets (the resources available to the family to pursue its objectives), grouped as follows:

- financial assets (resources broken down into means of payment and financial tools used);
- real assets (real estate and valuables);
- liabilities (the amount of family debts to other parties).

Defining the balance sheet enables you to identify the net wealth, which results from the difference between assets and liabilities. *And how is your balance sheet structured?*

The second control tool is the revenue account. The family's economic situation is defined by the revenue account, recording on an annual basis:

- income after taxes and fees plus other sources of inflow
- expenditure, made to cover the household's "operational costs" and financial commitments.

The revenue account enables you to identify the annual savings, resulting from the difference between the total of income (plus other inflow) and expenditure (plus financial commitments). Annual savings is usually a positive value but it can also be a negative one. In the latter case, expenditure exceeds income, which means that the saver's wealth decreases

because he or she is financing his or her own consumption with accumulated financial assets.

Question: Why is it recommended to define a revenue account?

First, to identify savings that can allow to satisfy various needs and to achieve one's life objectives. The savings being actually available in the revenue account represent the resources, gradually growing, that you can use in the future to meet your needs and to accomplish your projects in life. Second, it enables you to rationalise expenditure and to manage family resources more efficiently, while increasing the savings you can allocate for building your future.

Maximising savings: preparing a budget

- Food and drink, Tobacco Clothes and shoes, Fuel and energy Furniture, Home service, Health Transport, Communication, Study Free time, Culture, Games, Other goods and services = Total expenditure
- Instalments, reimbursements, debts Insurance and protection, Pension fund payments = Total Financial Commitments

It will become obvious how rationalising expenditure can potentially bring you benefit through increasing the amount of resources set aside for needs that are considered a priority. You can gain this advantage by engaging in the profitable activity of managing your revenue account: the “budgeting”.

First step to maximise savings: calculating backwards a revenue account of the past year. As a start, it is important to quantify all kinds of income and all kinds of expenditure that you had, as a “final balance” to the extent possible, illustrating all inflows and outflows of a family, on a yearly basis. In order

to do so, it would be desirable to archive all accountancy documentation on inflows (pay slips, bank statements...) and outflows (receipts, credit card statements, bills...) in separate envelopes and then to sum up all items in each envelope. The final balance serves the purpose of calculating the yearly saving. On the slide, you can see how to obtain the final balance.

Maximising savings: increasing income and inflow

The second step for maximising savings is to increase income where possible. It can be done in various ways:

- increasing the potential for generating income, for instance by working more hours, improving one's productivity, taking a second job, increasing the number of people who earn money in a family...
- increasing the capital revenue, by defining how much income should a certain amount generate, by setting aside resources with a better profitability profile, etc.
- if there are available goods, selling them in order to have new income.

Maximising savings: defining a goal

Savings € 6.000 Expenditure € 25.000

Savings € 8.000 Expenditure € 23.000

Maximising savings: doing a spending review

-300€, -200€, -150€, -1.200€, -150€= tot. 2000€

Family consumption.

And your consumption?

Once the goal of a certain amount to save is set - a better goal - it is necessary to reduce spending in a coherent manner and

to prepare a new budget. In the example on the slide, the savings goal increases from 18% to 25%, the necessary for increasing savings from 6.000 to 8.000 euro is obtained through reducing expenditure by 2.000 €, getting it from 25.000 to 23.000€.

As shown in the table, the reduction of expenditure can be done primarily in its secondary components.

The “cuts” in secondary expenditures can be done in a double way:

- a) by linear cuts of all the secondary expenditure lines, with the appropriately defined percentage or
- b) by targeted cuts per single expenditure lines, considered on a case by case basis, while recovering the money which is sufficient to obtain the desired amount to save.

This operation can take place by concentrating on avoiding “waste”. For instance, concerning the item “food and drink”, research shows that food waste can represent up to 30% of the total expenditure. It can be reduced through paying more attention while shopping, through recycling left-overs from lunches and dinners, through reducing shopping overall and through considering the expiry dates more carefully.

Concerning the item “clothes and shoes”, the reduction can be done through maintaining the quality of things we purchase, through buying things in sales or through shopping in outlets. “Fuels and energy”, here we can reduce costs of heating and cooling. For instance, it is advisable to maintain the home temperature at 18°. Each degree more means increasing the corresponding expenditure by 7%. These and other strategies can be applied in order to reach the objective that one sets in order to render one’s economic situation more stable and in order to increase the amount of resources available for financial planning.

Financial and economic resources: stabilising

How to make one's economic situation stable?

Once budgeting is done, the next step that will be appropriate is to verify how stable is the economic situation of a family.

A careful management of revenue account makes it possible to see the extent to which an economic situation stands stable. It allows to trace potential weak points, due, for instance, to certain periods of the year when expenditure and outflows get higher than inflows. Becoming aware of this allows you to put in place corrective strategies, to avoid dangerous misbalances, enables you to live with more calm, in a situation of economic stability.

Question: in your view, what aspects can be kept under control?

Let's see the steps of this important operation.

Monthly structure of a revenue account

- When will I get my income?
- When will I do my shopping?
- When will I pay my commitments?

For verifying economic stability, it will be necessary to consider that inflows and outflows can be occurring irregularly, with amounts that vary over different months.

For instance:

- when income is generated by freelance work, the amount of money earned can vary according to the period of the year, but taxes and levies must be paid in determinate months of the year (June and November);
- certain expenditure lines represent outflows that cannot be

distributed equally per month (for instance, buying furniture, appliances and services for home);

- payments and financial commitments can be concentrated in certain months of the year (for instance, a mortgage payment by semester); In order to prevent situations of economic weakness it is necessary to proceed to a precise analysis of inflows and outflows.

Defining a monthly savings structure

Family CONSUMPTION

	NET EARNINGS ADULT 1	NET EARNINGS ADULT 2	FAMILY CONSUMPTIO N	SAVINGS
TOTAL	19.500	17.550	33.800	3.250
January	1500	1350	2650	200
February	1500	1350	2650	400
March	1500	1350	2650	600
April	1500	1350	2650	800
May	1500	1350	2650	1000
June	1500	1350	2650	1200
July	1500	1350	2650	1400
August	1500	1350	4650	400
September	1500	1350	2650	200
October	1500	1350	2650	-
November	1500	1350	2650	200
December	3000	2700	2650	3.250

The revenue account in the table illustrates the situation of a family that has a positive savings value at the end of the year. However, the monthly detail of all net inflows and outflows

(expenditure + financial commitments) allows to evaluate the economic stability and one can calculate monthly savings, obtained through deducting the total expenditure (plus financial commitments) from the total income.

Monthly analysis shows an unstable situation, because the monthly structure of this revenue account shows a series of significant negative savings, more specifically in the summer, when outflows are typically higher than inflows (holidays).

This is why it is necessary to set aside a specific fund at the beginning of the year in order to cover such misbalance and to guarantee the current revenue account (400 €).

In conclusion, we have understood that:

Dedicating attention to one's financial planning and to one's expenditure is an essential factor determining one's capacity to produce wealth.

Budgeting allows for a rigorous control over inflows and outflows, while maximising savings.

2 Debt Management

Debt costs money. It also makes goods, services or experiences immediately available. But it costs money. So, it is necessary to keep certain points in mind.

What to consider before getting into debt?

- 1. How much are we borrowing?**
- 2. What risks are involved?**
- 3. What is the relation between debt and expenditure?**
- 4. How can my conditions change?**

These questions are proposed to the students and it will be useful to gather their answers on a flip-chart.

Students are then invited to go through the answers together, with a view of discovering which principles and aspects must always be kept in mind when deciding about borrowing money. The discussion shows that, on a topic that can still be distant from the daily life of many, points of view and opinions vary significantly.

When is it possible to take a loan?

3 youngsters. Who can face a debt with instalments 1.000 € for 3 years?

- Leonardo: financial assets 500 €, annual pocket money 200 €
- Sofia: financial assets 900 €, annual pocket money between 500 and 1.500 €
- Pietro: financial assets 1.000 €, annual pocket money and occasional jobs 1.500 €

One takes a debt when the yearly savings allows to pay for the instalments.

Bring out the principle/element to be kept as a point of reference at all times—we go into debt if annual savings allow to pay for the instalments.

Asking the question to the students, harvesting their answers, handling them so as to show, at the end of the discussion, why the highlighted principles are correct.

Explaining the components of a correct approach:

- if yearly savings are not sufficient, how would one pay for the instalments?

- even if one owns financial assets, it is not appropriate to use them for paying for instalments of a loan: they are not necessarily sufficient to pay for everything and the reserve available for unforeseen circumstances decreases.
- should assets be sufficient, why taking a loan, if the cost of the borrowed money tends to be higher than the yield obtained from the assets? Using financial assets, without taking a debt, allows to save a lot on interests.

Is borrowing money always an opportunity?

Who has good reasons for going into debt?

Giorgio

- Yamaha MT125 4.800 €
- Fender Stratocaster Classic Vibe 50s 380 €
- Barcellona 578 €
- Playstation 499 €

Valentina

Study leave in Cambridge 3.010 €

One borrows money in order to be able to reach important goals.

Asking questions to students, harvesting their answers in a way that shows, at the end of a shared discussion, why the highlighted principle is correct.

Reasoning leading to the correct answer:

- a debt represents a certain commitment. It is taken also for the future. Together with a debt, we face risks (and we will

outline those risks in the following slides). This is precisely why it is appropriate to go into a debt only because of a goal which is important

- We can also go into debt because we wish to own "luxury" goods (we cannot deny the pleasure of owning something highly desirable), but if doing so, the instalments must have an almost insignificant impact on our revenue account and on our savings.
- One should always remember not incur into several loans at the same time, because many small loans together lead to a financial commitment that can be identical to 1 really important one).

In fact, it happens often that families do not have enough overview of their financial commitments and that they take several consumer credit loans at the same time (such as a smartphone bought with a loan to be paid back in 24 instalments, together with a phone subscription plan or the "zero rates" credits offered by commercial chains on appliances and electronics, offers with reduced instalments for purchasing utility cars, etc.).

What are the risks linked to a debt?

These two families want to buy a scooter for 3.950 €. Who faces a higher risk? And why?

Family 1

Buys with a loan of 4.317 €, duration 3 years, 120€ to be paid monthly.

Family 2

Saves the money necessary for a purchase; savings are set to 109€ monthly, they will be able to make the purchase in 3 years' time.

Taking a debt represents a higher risk than other strategies.

Asking the question to the students, harvesting their answers, handling them so as to make it obvious why the highlighted principle/aspect is a correct one.

Why is there more risk for those who go into debt?

Over time, one may encounter situations (health, work problems and similar) when income (and savings) get reduced importantly.

What happens to those who, in order to buy something, decide to save money for it rather than going into debt?

- One's potential to save gets reduced - but there are possible solutions: extending the deadline for reaching the desired final amount or buying a smaller house within the established timeframe - the solution will not be the one initially desired, but still, the stress for the family stays manageable.

What happens to those who find themselves in difficulties, have already purchased something and are paying back in instalments?

- the instalments cannot be evaded, they constitute a commitment - there are very few possible solutions: trying to ask the bank to suspend payments for a while, to extend the deadline for repayment, looking for a new bank willing to grant a more sustainable loan while replacing the existing one,

etc.

Any intervention that you can try to put in place will not depend on you alone and will only be possible if the lender agrees to it or if a new lender is found. Until a solution is found (if it is at all possible), family stress due to the risk of serious consequences (foreclosures, protests, etc.) will be high.

How to best evaluate risks?

Who faces their debt while being well prepared?

- Chan: considers whether the monthly payment is actually sustainable, but also whether it will remain so in the coming years, while considering potential expenditures linked to his studies and summer holidays.
- Silvia: considers whether the monthly payment is actually sustainable and counts on an improvement of her professional situation in the future.

Decisions are to be considered always in the framework of one's overall economic situation and in a future perspective.

Asking the question to the students, harvesting their answers, handling them so as to make it obvious why the highlighted principle/aspect is a correct one.

The first step to reduce risk of difficulties in paying back a loan is to carefully assess the impact of the instalments on the entire economic life cycle.

Several elements should be considered: other future goals or

commitments that are already foreseeable nowadays, a potential decrease of foreseen income. This assessment needs to be done each time that one borrows money (regardless of the total amount and of the terms of the loan), but it becomes essential when the total amount of all financial commitments gets close to the maximum of one's savings potential or when the borrowed amount represents a major part of one's assets. Should the assessment not be done, would it be acceptable to take a financial commitment while considering the present situation only, relying on the mere hope that possible future difficulties will be manageable thanks to possible career advancements, job changes, etc.?

How to protect yourself?

Which of these strategies would you use? And when?

- **Emergency fund – always**
- **Unemployment insurance – when the monthly payment is considerable**
- **Life/accident insurance – when the total loan is considerable**

Asking the question to the students, harvesting their answers, handling them so as to make it obvious why the highlighted principle/aspect is a correct one.

While risks are there, what options are available to contain negative effects?

All tools mentioned are possible. Some options are particularly useful in certain cases:

- an emergency fund must always exist in order to absorb unforeseeable needs arising, it is necessary to have for any debt, regardless of total amount and duration.
- Life and accident insurance – it is necessary to increase the “basic” coverage they offer, they are essential if the borrowed amount is a substantial one (in absolute terms or relatively to the assets one owns)
Life insurance may not be necessary if the borrower does not have relatives who depend on him/her economically or heirs (e.g., singles without heirs); but a comprehensive accident coverage is essential even for them (because after an accident they remain alive, with reduced income capacity and with full financial commitments).
- Job loss insurance - useful in cases when the instalments take a large part of the monthly savings. A reduction of income can create a significant hardship for a family. Being insured can partially help.

Do risks have an impact on the interest rate?

2 friends ask you to lend them 1.000 €, how do you behave?

Laura, serious and absolutely reliable, will use the money for her study stay and will pay it back in 3 months, with a 50 € interest

Claudio, nice, braggart and fearless, wants to “go and see” Amsterdam, he likes it and wants to live there; promises to pay back in 3 months, with a 50 € interest.

And if Claudio gave you 250 € of interests?

The interest paid for a loan is always linked to the risk that the lender is taking

Asking the question to the students, harvesting their answers, handling them so as to make it obvious why the highlighted principle/aspect is a correct one.

This question is meant to directly involve the students; they own €1,000 and must decide to which of the two friends they would lend it.

Reasonably, students should prefer Laura (she is more reliable, serious, more likely to keep her promises); it will be more difficult to lend money to Claudio with the same conditions offered by Laura (why should they risk their own money, if not because they simply like him? What will he be doing in Amsterdam? What if he decides to stay there? What guarantees do we have that he will pay the money back?).

The most prudent attitude gets shared with the class. New conditions for the loan to Claudio are proposed, with higher interest rates.

In this case, the option of getting back more money might be, for some, the trade-off for the risk taken; if not, one can try to make a hypothesis of even higher figures, until someone is willing to lend the money to Claudio.

Explaining that lenders apply exactly the same criteria as students in the discussion.

Explaining that loans without a guarantee have much higher rates than mortgages (which have the guarantee); that mortgages covering almost all the price for buying a property have higher spreads (rates) than those that cover only a part of the price.



Vania Franceschelli and the “Now I know how!” students at Foil headquarters

Conclusion

When do you borrow money?

- When there are immediate goals to be achieved
- When you want to achieve important goals
- When annual savings make it possible to pay the instalments

- Is there a risk in taking on a loan?

Yes, the risk is greater than when using other strategies; to reduce the consequences it is always necessary to adopt appropriate forms of protection

- Is there a relationship between indebtedness and propensity to consume?

The greater the propensity to consume, the greater the propensity to get into debt

-What should one be aware of when getting into debt?
Always also consider possible changes to your repayment plan.

The rate paid for a loan is always linked to the risk the lender assumes.

Recall the answers given initially on the flipchart and check whether anything has changed (highlight what has turned out to be correct, what is partially correct and what is outdated by what emerged in the course of the discussion of these slides). Pointing out how some students, once they have followed the reasoning, might have changed their mind on what they initially claimed.

By the way:

Ask your family what strategy they have in place to manage their budget and control their debt situation. With this short module, we wanted to make you aware of virtuous behavior in managing income and expenditure and prepare you to control your financial stability. Reflections? Questions?

THE ITALIAN SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE: THE MARANGONI INSTITUTE (FASHION AND DESIGN)

Andrea Zoppolato

Fashion and Design are two key sectors of Made in Italy. They encapsulate the characteristics of the highest Italian culture: **craftsmanship and focus on beauty**. The two are also sectors that manage to attract numerous top players on an international level. They are attracted by both business and the training institutes. Perhaps the most important one is the world-famous Marangoni. Famous above all for fashion, where some of the greatest Italian stylists such as Dolce and Gabbana were trained (the couple met when studying there). A few years ago, Marangoni opened a vanguard design training for young people opened in the heart of Milan.

We wanted the students of the Erasmus+ course 'Now I know how!' to experience a typical school day, in contact with teachers and attending workshops where they could work hands-on.

What distinguishes fashion and design from other sectors? And what is special about visiting one of Italy's top-level schools?

The meeting: The Marangoni Institute introduce itself

Marangoni can be found in several places. Florence, London, Paris, Dubai and Miami centres have been opened over time in addition to the headquarters located in Milan. It offers numerous basic and master's courses. The school is remarkable

not only because it offers training but also because it strives to provide many job opportunities, both inside the institute, by transforming students into teachers, which was indeed the case for many current staff, and outside the institute, thanks to its partnership with numerous brands.

Fashion: the key success factors

They explain us at Marangoni how, at corporate level, the basic determining factor is **Brand Reputation**: a brand can be creative but it must be able to stand out by creating an identity. Fashion is practically a synonym for reputation and it shows clearly how each product is closely linked to its brand. **One buys the reputation**: the wearer of a brand knows that that brand is perceived on the market in a certain way.

One wears the perception. That is why the reputation factor goes hand in hand with that of identity. Every successful brand place itself on the market with a perceived identity to which the customer somehow wants to belong. Every brand project onto the customer the image of a certain type of woman or a certain type of man. It is to this projected image and, above all, to the image perceived by the market, that every company must be totally faithful. Not only in the type of production but also in the various forms of communication and, in particular, of product presentation on the market. The content of advertising and the means chosen to carry it out count too, but not only: the fashion shows, the flag stores, the testimonials, the stars, video material, every single collaborator must convey this identity that becomes a brand reputation.

Fashion in Italy has gone through two phases. Until the 1980s, Italy was above all a land of tailors, of clothing craftsmen who knew how to make beautifully made clothes. Tailors who, however, remained largely in the shadows. **It was**

the craft phase of Italian fashion, a phase one in which brand reputation did not yet exist but production was largely driven by the word-of-mouth of individual customers.

Since the 1980s, **Italian fashion has become a global superstar**. It was thanks to designers who turned their products into brands: each brand projected an image of a person to whom people around the world wanted to belong. Brands that became global, perceived worldwide unequivocally, through the personality of the designers together with every tool that later became customary in the marketing of the industry. The chic woman by Armani, the ambitious one by Prada, the transgressive one by Versace, the popular one by Dolce and Gabbana or the open-minded one by Benetton. A variety of ways to reach a worldwide audience by using testimonials: models, cinema, sports or music stars as well as social influencers, nowadays. All consistent with the brand reputation that one wants to build and defend at all costs.

There are different types of fashion. The highest in target and production is '**Haute Couture**'. The lowest is 'Pret a Porter'. Haute Culture', as the name suggests, represents the highest form of production, so much so that it aims to being a **real art form**. The aim is to allow the wearer to elevate, to valorise himself/herself. Production, therefore, seeks to transform the garment into a cultural product, into an art form that seeks to bring beauty to the person wearing it.

The main factor is quality, and somehow the customer contributes directly or indirectly to push for ever higher levels of beauty and perfection. The cost factor is reduced to an almost accessory element. **Beauty and quality** are, on the contrary, the dominant factors in this segment where the individual tailoring of clothes often leads to the creation of unique artworks and tailor-made products for the customer. At

the opposite level, there is '**Pret a porter**', the ready-to-wear. A close relative of street fashion, it is in this case 'ready-made' fashion where the designer is no longer an inspirer of trends but a researcher, capable of anticipating and highlighting trends that are spreading. In this vein, in addition to the natural orientation towards beauty and perfection, there is one fundamental skill: sensitivity, which, combined with the spirit of observation, enables the designer to create products in line with the tastes of a large number of buyers.

In this case, speed of production, economies of scale and price are factors that come into play as main priorities for product success.

Just like the aspect of product functionality, which can perhaps represent the link with the other great sector of Made in Italy craftsmanship: design.

Design: the key factors for success

Design could be defined as '**functional art**'. It is an art form because, as the word says, it acts at the level of form, seeking to propose ever higher levels of beauty, harmony and perfection.

But unlike a work of art that must only please the user, design must also be functional, it must be perceived as useful by the customer. Whereas a painting hangs on the wall to be admired, a watch or a chair is bought to be used.

This means that while every work of art competes solely on the level of appreciation by its audience, in the case of design the aesthetic aspect is only one component.

If a watch is beautiful but functions badly, it is unlikely to succeed on the market. The same applies to a chair that is uncomfortable or a piece of furniture that breaks too easily.

The designer, therefore, takes the best of the Italian craftsmanship tradition, precisely in order to achieve the best in production not only from an aesthetic point of view.

The good designer must **become a master in the knowledge of materials to be used and the technology contained in the realisation of the product.**

Like Haute Culture, design is based on an interaction with the customer, all the more so for unique objects or those of limited production and high value.

A moment of the workshop at the Marangoni Institute in Milan



CASE STUDY

“THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE WELL-MADE” MANIFATTURA AURORA: CESARE VERONA

edit by Pamela Bernabei



Cesare Verona

Talking about Aurora is like celebrating one of those "all-Italian" Made in Italy stories that are becoming increasingly rare and all the more precious. The programme foresees a guided visit to the Aurora Factory and the adjacent Museum of Sign and Writing.

Before we start, we are welcomed in the large courtyard of its headquarters, where we are entertained for about twenty minutes by Cesare Verona, President and CEO of

Aurora Pens and Cavaliere del Lavoro (an honour awarded by the President of the Republic to personalities from the world of manufacturing who, thanks to their activity and social

commitment, have contributed significantly to promoting the national economy and improving the country's living conditions).

Aurora was founded in 1919 in the centre of Turin, in front of the Cathedral, but during World War II, 1943, the factory suffered damage. Cesare Verona tells us that “immediately after the world war, the headquarters were transferred to an old facility located north of Turin, where we find ourselves now; today we have an extension of about 10 000 m², 7 000 of which are indoors.”

Indeed, when the students arrive at the entrance of the factory they are surprised to find themselves in an area outside of Turin, such a peripheral context is completely unexpected. Yet there is a reason: “The Manufacture is located near the Abbey of San Giacomo di Stura, the oldest existing Benedictine abbey in the territory of Turin: a place where pilgrims on the Via Francigena, heading for Compostela or Jerusalem, used to be welcomed. A sacred place where wayfarers could find peace and respite. Today, it is still a place of inspiration and meditation: we like the idea of being a manufacture in a context where attention to people is paid, to what is being done and how, it plays a fundamental, distinctive role”.

Cesare Verona explains to us that Aurora is the first Italian company that produced a fountain pen, that it is an independent manufacture that has been run since the 1950s by his family - now in its fourth generation - **and boasts 100% manual and Made in Italy production**, directly made in Italy at all stages, from design to finished product.

“For us, Made in Italy is a value which is consistent with our DNA, it is not a habit we put on because it helps us to make sales, but because it is a habit that has always belonged to us. In Italy, there is a *genius loci*, that's why I have not chosen to

relocate abroad and I have never engaged in the price battle that so many have pursued, for us the Made in Italy is an immense added value. We have always kept the entire supply chain Italian,” he explains, “not out of some sense of regionalism or nationalism, but because we know that the Italian creativity and craftsmanship that still make the difference are nourished by a constant daily relationship with the territory and the people who live in it, with the history and artistic wonders that we Italians are lucky enough to 'breathe' every day. This is why we have a unique sense of beauty, which is fuelled by harmony and balance but also by technique and refinement”.

And at this point, the inevitable question comes up as to what the future of the pen might be in the age of digitalisation. The answer does not take long to come, like a river flooding:

“On the one hand, we pass on handmade craftsmanship, but we have been attentive to pursuing an inclusive strategy that also takes technology into consideration. And you will see this by visiting the Manifattura Aurora.

On the other hand, we have been focusing on *emotions*, on the product and on the way to tell the story of this item, which clearly remains a niche. After all, we are playing at home: Italy is an excellent ambassador of *savoir-faire* and craftsmanship, of *Beauty and Well-Made*.

We produce a product that is connected to the value of the human being. The '*stilus*' object, the one you hold in your hand with the aim of leaving a mark, be it a pencil or a pen, relates to human morphology. In fact, recent scientific studies confirm that the use of writing turns on different neuronal zones in our brain, favouring comprehension and memorisation. I am convinced that countries that have abandoned it, like Finland, choosing to use only tablets in schools, will pay for cognitive

deficits in two or three generations. We have succeeded in making the fountain pen a contemporary object towards which people channel their purchasing desires. Last year we sold twice as much ink than the year before. This means that the public is buying our fountain pens and has actually been using them rather than to keep them in a closet!”

A student from Bulgaria asks if there are young people working here and how the company passes on know-how and expertise? Cesare Verona is prompt in his answer:

“My mantra is: knowledge within the company, experience within the people. About sixty craftsmen work in Aurora Penne. We push for their intellectual growth, also proposing experiences abroad and flanking the youngest with the most knowledgeable craftsmen, who have the *savoir-faire* gained through years of experience in their hands and in their hearts”. And in fact, during our visit to the factory, it was a young woman who explained everything to us in great detail, very talented and with a knowledge that reveals the transmission of value and expertise from generation to generation that Cesare Verona was talking about, and not only that: the pride of working in Aurora could be felt in her movements, in the passion with which she explained and in the attention she paid to every detail.

But, why locate a museum of writing right here, next to the Manifattura, in the suburbs, far from the centre of Turin. How did the idea come up?

“The Workshop of Scripture is not a company museum, but a museum that talks about the sign of Man.

The idea was to tell children, students, designers, architects and collectors about the evolution of the sign in the human history, from its origins to the present day. Naturally, it is also

intended for collectors and pen lovers and you can also see the products of our competitors here.

Probably, my upbringing also has something to do with it, when I was young, I had the great opportunity to travel and



breath different cultures and societies. I therefore found a way to respect all our history, including the one of others.

To date, 'Workshop of Scripture' has already had more than 25.000 visitors, it is a special and cross-cutting museum where you can learn about history, immerse yourself in crafts, discover high craftsmanship, and rediscover that the notion of the Beautiful and the Well-made - as I said before - that so many non-Italians are jealous about, but which Italians sometimes tend to forget.

Our family has made a very important investment, to which we have added the support of the Piedmont Region, the European Union and private individuals which have allowed us to develop on a path of inclusion of local entities, unique in its kind”.

He explains that the Aurora factory has become an increasingly important venue thanks also to the Workshop of Scripture museum.

He explains how it has been attracting many associations in the district and how it has been helping to bring greater focus on this area. In fact, the Abbey has gone through a period of decay in the past, and now a project to restore its historical heritage has been restarted.

History and innovation walking hand in hand to revitalise a heritage site that seemed bound to be forgotten.

This too is an expression of the most authentic Made in Italy.... of the *Beautiful and the Well-Made*.

FERRARI!

Hana Jungová



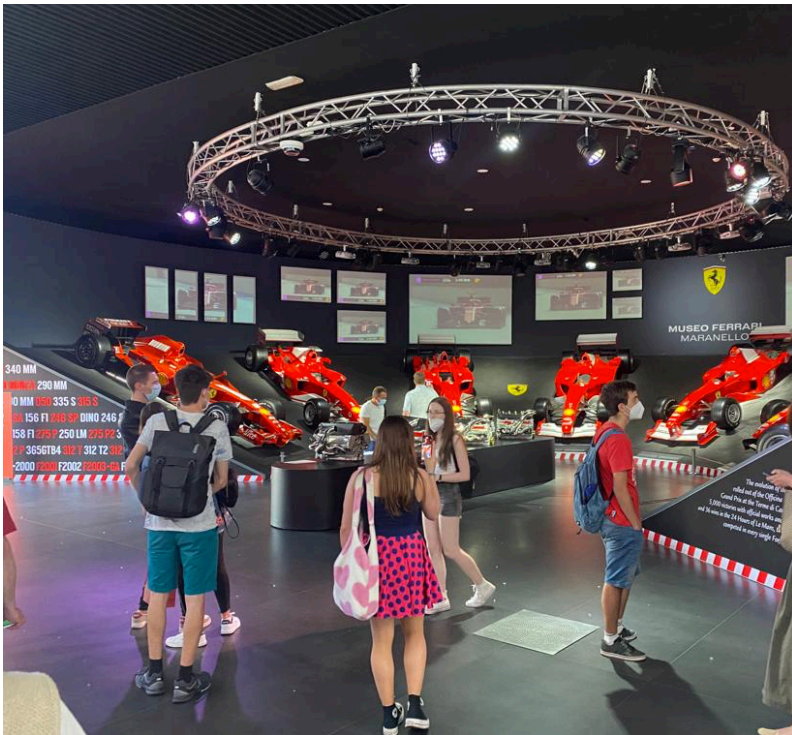
Entering the headquarters of Ferrari feels like entering a temple: there is a certain atmosphere of noble secrecy, perfect organization shines at every corner, cleanliness, sense of purpose, civic mindedness, and functionality at every step one takes. But above all, stunning is the sense of ownership and commitment by Ferrari workers, starting with our guide, whose fantastic *romagnolo* accent, sweetly felt here and there through the perfect English, reminded us of the place in Italy we were in on this day: Maranello, Emilia Romagna. And again: she was not a common guide, or one particularly good

at reciting 'her lesson': you could feel her genuine enthusiasm and sense of loyalty.

Our Erasmus+ group had a special treatment: being escorted with a bus through the factory premises which are normally not accessible to public. A quick group photograph in front of the entrance, in itself an artwork, dating back to 1947 and then off through streets, facilities, factory buildings designed by world leading architects like Renzo Piano, Massimiliano Fuksas, Jean Nouvel, Marco Visconti to name a few.

Here and there, the characteristic engine sound in your ears:

Our students at the Ferrari museum





Our students during the pit-stop competition

all heads in the bus start turning lefts or right together, speechless, to admire Ferraris coming out of the factory. Not only red ones, but also white, yellow or blue ones (soon, a thorough, highly structured discussion takes off on each one's preferences for when we buy one ourselves), each of them for a carefully selected owner. Yes, because a part from the waiting list, in order to be able to buy one of the most incredible cars on the planet, becoming a Ferrari owner is even subject to strict selection criteria, as we are told by our guide who reacts enthusiastically to all of our questions, including the most curious ones.

The museum allows to admire a wide range of historical models of the Prancing horse and it is interesting to see their

style evolve through decades. It is not a “car”. We all agree. It is an artwork, and this was one of the dreams and underlying values for Enzo Ferrari to make come true, together with the one of helping technological development through research on the engines for his cars. And many, many of those artworks are, believe it or not, tailor-made, personalized, not limited edition but unique piece. The paramount of sophistication.

Perhaps the moment enjoyed the most by all of us was a pit-stop competition: our Erasmus+ group was divided in teams of 3, various nationalities, students, teachers, tutors all mixed up, who together had to change a tire as if during a true race, while their time was being taken.

None of us has ever done it before and many hesitated, yet the exercise was hilarious. Once again, the winning team turned out to be the most united one, whose members managed to flexibly, smoothly, with very few words reciprocally complement each other, through quickly identifying the skills available and their most convenient dynamics.

All the more interesting comparing what we have seen with our eyes with one more cinelogy session: conducted in the afternoon on the basis of the movie “Ferrari” dedicated precisely to Enzo Ferrari’s life.

CASE STUDY

VITO LOMELE (Founder JobRapido, Fisco Zen)

interview by Andrea Zoppolato

We could define him as one of the few examples of **serial entrepreneurs** in Italy. Serial entrepreneurs, meaning that they do not stop at their first company, but build more than one from scratch.

He says that "the game of creating a company from scratch is precisely what he loves".

Like a game, he founded JobRapido, a website that helps people to find a job.

He built it when he didn't have one himself and the websites available at that time did not seem good enough to help him. What was first a self-help website turned into a company that achieved the success of being sold on the market, making 'the friends who had invested in it at the beginning, even more friendly in the end'.

It is indeed one of the major achievements in the recent history of digital companies in Italy.

He is currently devoting himself to a new creature: 'FiscoZen'. This apparent oxymoron, fisco and zen, is the company's mission: to eliminate the obstacles linked to taxation and bureaucracy for millions of Italian VAT registered companies. To give those who start a business a leg up.

With his serial experiences, Vito Lomele wanted to share with the course participants the key factors in the life of an entrepreneur.

1. Training: what are the important things to learn?

Vito Lomele graduated in engineering. Then he became a digital entrepreneur. In light of his experience, what was important to learn?

“I believe that in my case **less academic training** would have been sufficient. Whereas what was decisive was hands-on experience.”. He explains that what enabled him to turn his knowledge into a business was having had so much experience before setting up on his own.

“One of the most important factors were my Erasmus stays. I started travelling to study abroad and that took me to assimilate different cultures, such as German, Swedish, Lithuanian. Working in an international environment, changing jobs frequently, allowed me to learn a lot. **I suggest everyone to try various things before choosing a path**”.

2. Business Leader (Entrepreneur) and manager: differences

In every company, there are two leadership figures. The entrepreneur and the manager. Sometimes, especially in the early stages, both figures merge in one person. But as business grows, they tend to split in two different people. What are the differences between the two figures? And is it a condition or a consequence of personal characteristics?

“The fundamental difference stems from the fact that an entrepreneur has the ownership of the business. This gives rise to a different set of attitudes and behaviours than the ones of a manager.

Ownership allows you to make bolder choices and to fully align personal interests with those of the company. In a certain sense, the entrepreneur can be more genuine because he is in a position to do so.

When you don't own the company, you have to be able to mediate more complex interests, it is less easy for you to become fully aligned with the company.” Acting one way or the other is not a consequence of the position held. On the contrary, it is the way people are, people with an equal talent and ambition, that leads to choosing one role over the other. In fact, it is a question of two different and complementary skills: “The management of something existing or the creation of something dramatically new. Two skills that depend on two different kinds of talent. Depending on which one you have, inevitably you end up on one side or the other. Those who seek freedom and that desire to express themselves are bound to end up in self-employment. Those who get greater satisfaction in managing and harmonising different interests may become successful managers in the company of others.”

“Substantial differences can also be traced in lifestyle. I see entrepreneurs leading a **less conventional**, out-of-the-ordinary lifestyle. Whereas I see managers choosing lifestyles that celebrate the status quo and tradition. I am not making a value judgement.

Thankfully, there are both categories! Both contribute to the success of companies, at different stages of their life cycle.”

3. One of the success factors is teamwork: what are its secrets from the entrepreneur's point of view?

“I believe that the key element for a successful team is that **the team members are ideologically homogeneous**. It means that all the people in the team share the same moral values.

In my companies, I look for people who have clarity about their life project (be it big or small) and who can achieve it by working with us. If you align people's aspirations with their role in the company, those people will naturally succeed.

For the same reason, I don't believe in motivating people by pampering with rewards and benefits. **I prefer to recruit people who are intrinsically motivated** because they can do the work they love. That's how the magic happens.

When you put together a team of people like that, there is harmony in the air, because everyone is pursuing compatible goals. You create an environment that attracts other like-minded people.

The organisation becomes like a tribe, with a very strong culture. You can love it or hate it, but there is no ambiguity. A homogeneous team is able to decide and act quickly.

Even when a decision turns out to be wrong, it is easier to react to the failure, because everyone believed in that decision. You fall down together and get back up together.

I love spending my days in such an environment and I try to recreate it in every new venture.”

4. The business plan: most relevant factors?

At the beginning of every business there is a business idea and a business plan. A plan for starting and developing the business to make it successful. What are the most important factors in a business plan?

“Hidden in every business idea, there are certain factors that make a difference. If those factors work, the idea will succeed. If they do not work, the idea will fail, even in the hands of the most skilled entrepreneur. It would be like going against the laws of nature. In this case, against the laws of the market.

The problem is that the factors critical to the success of a business are not clear at the beginning.

Typically, the entrepreneur falls in love with his idea. He becomes convinced that the world is in great need of his product. He devotes enormous energy to realising his product

and goes to market too late, only to discover perhaps that the market does not have that need.

So, **the main factor in preparing a business plan is to ask yourself what can go wrong.** The business plan is basically a list of your doubts. A good business plan should explain in what order you intend to address these doubts, in the shortest possible time and in the most economical way. Once the main doubts have been overcome, your business idea has proven to be working. At that point you can start thinking big.”

5. Key points for making a company successful

“There are two: **the market and the team.** The company can never be successful if there is no market for your product. That is why, as I said before, it is important to get a market as soon as possible and spend as little money as possible.

Once the business idea has a market, the team will make the difference between success and failure. As I said, the hallmark of a great team is sharing the same values.

People who identify with the project and naturally work well together. This is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one. Because, of course, professional skills are also needed.

The professional skills necessary for the success of a company change over its life cycle. It is not necessarily true that people who make an extraordinary contribution in the initial phase are the ones who will be able to contribute as much in later stages, too. Typically, when the team is small, technical skills are more important. When the company grows, managerial skills are needed in addition to the technical skills. Those who were key players in the initial phase do not necessarily feel comfortable in the subsequent stages.

It is the entrepreneur's task to continuously ensure that the team is not an obstacle to growth.

This requires evolving the roles of employees as the company grows, but also acquiring new employees with skills that are absent in the company.

The principle is always the same: **to align the life project of each with the best role they can play in the company”.**

6. From success to existential success: what is the relationship?

“The entrepreneur deeply identifies with the project. **The existential and professional dimensions’ merge.** On the one hand because the entrepreneur takes up the intellectual challenge. For him, success or failure of the business idea is an assessment of his own abilities.

On the other hand, let us not hide it, because the economic impact is important: having created a successful business can drastically improve your economic condition. The mere possibility that this turnaround could happen drives you to extraordinary efforts, at the limits of your physical endurance and health.

These emotions are more extreme in the first entrepreneurial experience, precisely because everything that happens, happens to you for the first time.

Nevertheless, for me, this state of mind for me has remained in later on as well. Only, now I can recognise these emotions and experience them with more serenity. The euphoria of success and the fear of failure are two ever-present voices in my inner dialogue.

They give me energy, a sense of existence, they make me feel alive.

In general, I believe that giving ourselves a purpose, contributing in some way to the world, is essential for anyone in order to live a fulfilling life.”

7. The story that impressed me the most, among the students I met

“I was struck by the story of a 16-year-old girl from Bulgaria [ndr. Adriana Ullah, page 227], who loves to make jewellery and is exploring the idea of selling it online.

In her story, there are emotions and inner conflicts of every entrepreneur: a great passion to create something out of nothing, a sense of perfectionism, whereby one is never quite ready to go out, the desire to prove to the world that one is worthwhile, genuinely as one is, the fear of rejection and failure, existential doubt. And finally, the determination: **‘In any case, I will try’**. These were her last words when we said goodbye.”

Vito Lomele and Adriana during “Now I know how!” course in Marudo



CASE STUDY

KNOW I KNOW HOW!

Adriana Ullah, 16 years old

Once Adriana finished the course, she was able in September 2022 to launch her own business producing and selling jewellery, presenting her collection at a major trade fair of her region. Here, her story.

When I joined the project, “Now I know how!”, I was really lost. I was having a dream about my own shop. I was thinking about all the ways that I can do what I want but there was no way out of those thoughts. I was thinking too much. Then my teacher Mrs Venkova, told me about this project. A project that would teach me how to start and find the best way out. When the first module started, I was really scared. That was my first time so far away from home. There were so many people and that didn't help my social anxiety. But I got used quickly to speaking English only. I improved my English skills. But that's only one among many other things. Borgo Lizori in Campello sul Clitunno is an amazing place. We were able to see the heart of Made in Italy. Mr Tonino [ndr. the blacksmith of Borgo Lizori] showed us his amazing art, Cristina led our lectures with her unforgettable energy, passion and emotion. She inspired us with her every word. And each subsequent lecture was more interesting than the previous one.

The most unforgettable moment for me was when we went to Assisi. Or more precisely in TUUM. The brand owner did not only welcome us but talked about the values behind his

business. In that moment, I recognized him and said to myself, I want to be able to talk like that about my own business one day. The craziest thing about the whole day was that out of all thirty participants from different countries, I won the raffle that was organized. And the owner gave me his most iconic ring. I will never forget that moment.

Unfortunately, this one week full of emotions has come to an end and we had to go home. However, the muscle fever from hiking in the mountains with Hana came home with us. Also, unforgettable. Then the online modules started. To be honest, I can't remember much but there was a certain guy [ndr Guido Martinetti] there who had started with a small real ice cream business and after that he created his winery, his little paradise cut off from the rest of the world. The small paradise Mura Mura, which we had the opportunity to see during our second trip to Italy. This was also the thing that inspired me the most in the second module in Italy. The determination and the combativeness of this man, I believe that his personal story, which he shared with us, touched the hearts of all of us and left a deep mark on our minds and souls. A lot happened in this module. From the beginning of this module, I felt the warmth of people we had not seen for more than half a year. As soon as we got off the bus, I saw Ivana's charming smile and I hugged Alessandro, whose energy never seems to run out, and whose positive thinking cheered me up when I was stressed. The sportsmanship of all of us showed itself in the fruit cutting competition and even for those who placed themselves in third place (out of three).

I believe that my team won because we stuck together, and that helped us with the group tasks in the following days. The last day was even more interesting than the one when we visited Ferrari. Our last guest lecturer dealt with business

development [ndr. Vito Lomele]. At last, I dared to speak. I talked a lot, about things that I would not have been able to even think before this project started. The man was standing there looking at me. We both knew one thing. I was ready to begin my own business. Another thing happened during this lecture. My most valuable teacher, Mrs. Nikolaeva [ndr. Black Sea Center Director], wrote a sentence in my notebook. A sentence I will never forget. I then had the most wonderful conversation with her, which showed me that I could actually do something in my hometown. She was my inspiration for the following things that I was able to accomplish this year.

There was also another lecture that impressed me, and I didn't leave it aside. The one about how to control our finances. And, actually, our lecturer was right. Every time I decide to spend money I see her face and spend less! This was of great help to me when back to work here in Bulgaria. Now, as I write this, I remember everything and I apologize for everything that I might have forgotten previously.

I created a whole new collection before our guests came from the Czech Republic and Italy to visit Dobrich. I did a photo shoot of my jewelry, I made a page and a business card. I created my own brand in 1 week. When we arrived in Balchik and I felt the aroma of the Black Sea, I knew I was home. Then I saw Alessandro and Hana and something inside me jumped! It was so nice! Unfortunately, I spent only one day with the teachers and I didn't get to see my friends from the project, but I think we all wanted to see Luca [ndr. student from Italy] and feel the positive energy that emanates from him or to talk with Antonio [ndr. student from Czechia] about some interesting topics, like our national history, after which we would feel really satisfied. On the other hand, the exhibition of Zhana's

wonderful photos and the film by George brought us back to Italy, so we could take stock of everything that happened.



A new adventure awaited us the next day. I was about to present my business at the exhibition in Dobrich. Of course, after such a tiring day before, we fell asleep, but thanks to our teachers, we managed to arrive on time. I was very nervous and even with Iveta by my side I still felt a bit alone.

I sorted everything but something was still wrong. I started freaking out and then Alessandro walked in

through the door, followed by Pamela and the other teachers. Suddenly all the tension evaporated. At least until I saw a camera and a microphone in front of me, but I believe I did well.

The day turned into a lot of sales that really helped my business to go forward. Now I have my first customers' orders. And even if I'm only at the beginning, I am going headlong forward and nothing can stop me. *(Photo: Adriana at the Dobrich Fair 2022 with teachers Alessandro Venturini and Ivana Svagrova).*

MADE IN ITALY: MILAN, THE ICON OF EXCELLENCE AND ITALIAN STYLE

Andrea Zoppolato

It is the most international city in Italy. In the country, it is considered to be **“the showcase of Made in Italy”**, for its ability to promote the best of Italian products and culture to the international public.

The ability to showcase excellence made Milan **a global benchmark in several areas**: it hosts the world's most famous opera house (La Scala), it is one of the international headquarters of Fashion and Design, areas for which it organizes the world's most famous multiple-sites event (Fuorisalone), it ranks among the cities with the highest number of starred chefs in the world, and it is also a football capital, the only one in Europe to boast two Champions League winning teams.

It is also the **“moral capital” of Italy**, pioneer in producing new culture (recognized to be the capital of music) and an economic driving force: the country's stock exchange is located here, with more than a quarter of Italian companies operating on its area.

Finally, the main multinational companies operating in Italy have chosen Milan as the general headquarters of their business.

All these examples of success share a common determining factor: **Milan's forever ability to attract the best in every field and to know how to capitalise on it in an extraordinary way.**

1. Milan: the strength of the past at the service of the present

A look at Milan's history reveals one feature that makes it unique among the great European cities. It has actually been conquered by all the major continental cultures of Europe. It was founded by the Celts who left it with the first typically northern European mark, it subsequently surrendered the Romans and served as Imperial Capital for almost a century. Later on, it was occupied by the Lombards coming from the lands of southern Sweden (Scandia) and it became one of the most flourishing centres of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire. After a parenthesis as one of the richest independent city-states of the continent, it was dominated by the Spanish, the Austrians and the French.

Charles V of Habsburg and Francis I of Lorraine, the two most powerful men of their time, fought for a long time to take Milan into their hands.

Napoleon was in love with the city and elected it as the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, while for the Habsburgs it was second to none with the only exception of Vienna, imperial capital. **No other city that has assimilated so intensely all the major European cultures.** But the distinguishing characteristic of Milan is that no incoming culture has erased traces of the previous one. Far from it. Every culture coming to the city added a mark, **reinforcing Milan's identity.**

This is Milan's history, but also its present. The main feature is precisely this: **to be able to metabolise cultural diversity and to capitalise on it.** Not a coincidence if the inhabitant of Milan is called 'meneghino', name of the typical Milanese carnival character. Meneghino was the 'Sunday servant', who served his master even on festive days, to round up. **Being able to serve excellence is the great talent of Milan,** city that

welcomes with open arms anyone who wants to achieve their best or to leave their genius in this city able to find in its residents the skills necessary for transforming ideas into reality.

From Leonardo da Vinci to Giorgio Armani, the list of non-Milanese personalities who have done their best in Milan is almost endless.

Because in Milan, it does not matter where you come from, what counts is what you do.

These premises are fundamental in order to understand the relevance of Milan for the Made in Italy brand: it is the city that manages to attract great minds because **it favours the transition from an idea to the implementation**, to its manifestation, through cooperation and help of an ecosystem put at the service of it.

So, Milan tends genetically to concreteness, which helps to implement ideas, but it is actually more than that. The extraordinary strength shows even more when something has already been done: this city has the ability promote excellence, unique in Italy and very rare in Europe. This explains why it is called a 'showcase' city. Music of high quality exported all over the world, the opera and the fairs and events like the Fashion Weeks or Design Weeks that transform the city into a theatre stage with public from all over the world.

We wanted to convey this mind-set of Milan in the right way and thought that having the students to visit the city in a conventional, passive way was not coherent. In this city, everyone is called to become a protagonist and to support the ideas of others as well, so we felt it was our duty to introduce Milan with a project in line with Milan. And so, the 'Milano Express' was born.

2. Milano Express: discovering Milan's treasures in the driving seat

“Milano Express” derives its name from a TV format where more or less known celebrities travel to distant countries and once there, they must overcome survival tests to win a prize. Unlike the TV format, Milan is certainly not a place where people's lives could be in danger or where people must work hard to reach some basic goods or services. On the contrary, it is a place that offers unique top-class attractions, most of which are concentrated in a relatively small area, like the historic centre that can be explored on foot inside out. From the TV format, it was decided to reproduce the title and **the idea of stop-over challenges** in a foreign land. Many of the course participants are young people coming from abroad or visiting Milan for the first time. But for the rest, it was decided to set-up a new format, with the aim of involving young people as much as possible in the challenge of discovering some of Milan's treasures, testing their cleverness and creativity in passing the various tests.

The challenge consisted of various sequential stops in symbolic venues, Milanese highlights. To be able to proceed from one venue to another, teams of students had to pass a test linked to it. Let's take a brief look at the stops and what they represented from Milan and the Made in Italy as a whole.

3. The challenges of the “Milano Express” and their link with Made in Italy

The starting point of Milano Express was the **Sforzesco Castle**. Milan is one of the few major cities in Europe to have a large castle located in the centre of the town. The castle is an important symbol of Milan's history, in particular of its golden era when it was a city-state and when, thanks to its wealth and

enlightened lords, it managed to attract some of the best minds of that time. For decades, the great Leonardo da Vinci worked in the castle at the court of Ludovico the Moor, who, in exchange, let him completely free, not that usual at the time, and who provided him with the necessary living. In those years, he did some of his greatest masterpieces, of which several traces remain in Milan, such as the Navigli, the largest project of its kind on the continent, or the Last Supper, one of the most famous paintings in the world.

From a place representing a symbol of great Italian culture, the challenge brings the students to the next stop over: **Pinacoteca di Brera**. Through the history of art, the Pinacoteca presents the evolution of artistic production from the times of the Castle until more recent times. The test the students had to pass was the following: guessing the author and the title of images chosen among famous artworks kept in the Pinacoteca, from Hayez to Caravaggio, under the supervision of James Bradburne, the Anglo-Canadian director of the entire Brera complex.

Passing the first tests plunged the students into the great history of art that has always imbued the Made in Italy brand, the following challenge took them to the point of confluence of great artistic beauty with that of commerce. In the heart of Milan, the famous **Quadrilatero della Moda** (Fashion Quadrilateral) is located: on four iconic streets, shops of all major international fashion brands can be found. The task for students was to take a selfie in front of a shop window on a list of the renowned Made in Italy brands in a sector famous all over the world.

Milan's main monument is located just a few steps away from Made in Italy flagship stores. The distance that separates the streets of the quadrilateral from the Cathedral is literally a few

hundred meters, and the **Milan Cathedral** was the next stop of Milano Express.

The Cathedral is not only the symbol of Milan, it also boasts several more world records: it is the largest Gothic cathedral in the world and the building with the highest number of statues. Not only.

On top of the Cathedral there is also a Golden Madonnina to whom Milan's most popular traditional song is dedicated: *Oh, mia Bela Madunina*. A song in Milanese dialect that must not be easy to sing for anyone who does not master *milanese*, let alone for foreign students! Actually, the test consisted precisely in this: singing the ‘anthem of Milan’ accompanied by an accordion, played by the Italian group of the Erasmus+ course ‘Now I know how!’ And it was not just the anthem of Milan, but a reference to another great Italian phenomenon born in Milan: the opera.

Once the anthem of Milan has been sung, the next task was to reach La Scala, the most famous opera house in the world, located just around the corner passing through Galleria Emanuele II, the “parlour” of Milan.

At the end of the 19th century and for most of the 20th century, **La Scala** hosted premieres of operas that were to become famous worldwide: works of the greatest Italian authors and composers. Works so extraordinary as to make Italian become the official language of world opera. To this day, all opera houses in the world stage mostly operas sung in Italian. All this was born precisely at La Scala, the venue where young people had to guess which of the great composers of the past had the honour to be presented at La Scala.

This brought us to the final stop. The conclusion could not have been elsewhere but at ‘the mayor’s house’, i.e. in the **City Hall of Milan**, located directly opposite La Scala,

symbolically separated from it by the statue of Leonardo da Vinci. The City Hall as a stop for conclusion shows the importance of politics in Italy. Politics that has always been reaching its best when it was able to serve citizens and to cooperate with the private sector on the realization of great projects.

In Milan, politics has often acted as a fertiliser for the work of the private. Not only that, few people know that some of the most important political projects in Italy, and among the most important ones in Europe, were born in Milan.

This is because in addition to the fundamental aspect of concreteness, Milan, and the Made in Italy brand, attach great importance to the creative moment of ideation. In politics as well as business and art, of course, Milan being the cradle of two of the most impactful artistic movements of the 20th century in Europe: Futurism, at the beginning of the century, and Arte Povera after the Second World War.



The group of the "Now I know how! course at the City Hall of Milan with the vice-mayor A. Scavuzzo, at the end of the "Milano Express" contest.

The creative and functional public private partnership, the passage from an idea and its implementation, from imagination to concreteness, from Milanese to strangers, from local identity to foreign cultures, from past to the future, this is in short, **the magic formula for success of Milan and of the Made in Italy brand in the world.**



A team of the "Now I know how!" course at the Teatro "Alla Scala" during the Milano Express contest.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Pamela Bernabei



When leading a team or being in a group setting at work, in school, at sport, etc., it is important to be able to have good relationships with co-workers and colleagues, so as to make the working day more peaceful, and to achieve goals with as few problems as possible.

So, in my work, both as CEO and as consultant or trainer, I give a lot of consideration to what is known as conflict culture. The aim is to recognise precursory signs of a possible conflict early, so that we have employees and colleagues available who can handle them, and so as to introduce simple terms for newcomers to avoid them.

Of course, conflicts are always there, and in my experience, I have always tried to manage them in order to make improvements. But there are conflicts that can arise because of a matter of like and dislike at the skin solely, so not on a very rational level, but on an emotional one. And to manage these you have to be prepared with counterstrategies, because the emotional factor is very difficult to manage rationally, it is practically impossible. The only way is to be prepared with behavioural patterns that can help manage the first emotional impact as smoothly as possible.

There are the ante-facts, or possible precursory signs of a dynamic that may later turn out to be problematic between the team components.

Among these signs I have chosen one for this short presentation: **dealing with potential offenders who apply tactics aimed at stimulating conflict. There are conflict hirelings.** In particular, in this short paper I will outline a training exercise that I regularly do as a consultant in companies, with the aim of enabling an environment where these **tactics to stimulate conflict get immediately exposed or dealt with and the offenders realise that there is no chance to succeed.** The exercise was subsequently proposed during some Erasmus+ training courses, with much benefit.

Unfortunately, no matter how hard we try, in almost every working environment you find people who are unprofessional, negative and characterized by an aggressive attitude towards other people around.

It has happened to all of us to have to work with difficult people: bosses, colleagues, secretaries, customers, fellow students. The difficult types can be in any role. They often make our 'life' impossible, but first we have to understand

whether they always act this way or whether the person in question is simply having a bad day.

What happens, though, if we are forced to see them every day?

What do we do if the difficult guy is a person on whom our job depends? Or a school peer, a team-mate?

We can try to recognise difficult types and learn how to deal with them to our advantage.

In the picture opening this chapter, there are some difficult people, can you recognise any of your friends and colleagues? Hostile aggressive, the detonator, the unreliable, the I-know-it-all, the pessimist, the superman, the complainer...

In the half-day training of the last module of the “Now I Know How!” course, students did a team work on this topic.

They were divided into groups of four or five students, and were each given cards with a very brief description of the strategies of the difficult types and cards on which they had to write the counter-strategy in order to deal with them functionally.

In short, they had to write down how they would behave if they were faced with tactics by certain difficult types who intend to create a conflict.

Then each group made a brief presentation of the counter-strategies to adopt, comparing them with the ones of other groups. All this generated a lively and fruitful exchange of ideas, leading, in many cases, even to original solutions.

In fact, the outline given both in the description of strategies and in the description of possible counter-strategies constitutes a starting point that participants complement with their own considerations and pieces of experience.

This is a way to exchange many notions in a convivial manner, while enriching one another.

Some typologies:

The aggressive

One of the most common characteristics of aggressive people is their pleasure in making the other person lose control, so that they feel entitled to respond likewise. By engaging in this behaviour they manage to put the other person in a position of weakness. What do do?



The detonator

The detonator: is defined by bursts of anger, they seem to barely control it; these outbursts may occur during conversations and discussions that seem to begin on a friendly tone. How to handle the situation?

The Sniper

The sniper: it is a finer one. Behind a facade of friendship, he/she will hit you with gratuitous attacks and insinuations, not very funny mockery and not very subtle allusions.

These verbal attacks are accompanied by non-verbal signals of playfulness and friendship so any retaliation can be interpreted by others as an aggressive act, as if yours was an attack and not a defence! What to do?



The complainer

The complainer complains all the time but never does anything to change things.

The worse of all the difficult types, according to most experienced people who already manage a team, and also in my experience, is the complainer.

We all have something to complain about, so this type could create a network, a network effect that makes the working environment difficult. How many times have you walked into a room and felt like a wall from the people inside or from the audience waiting to hear you? Now, that is the network effect I am talking about.



How to behave in order to manage this situation?

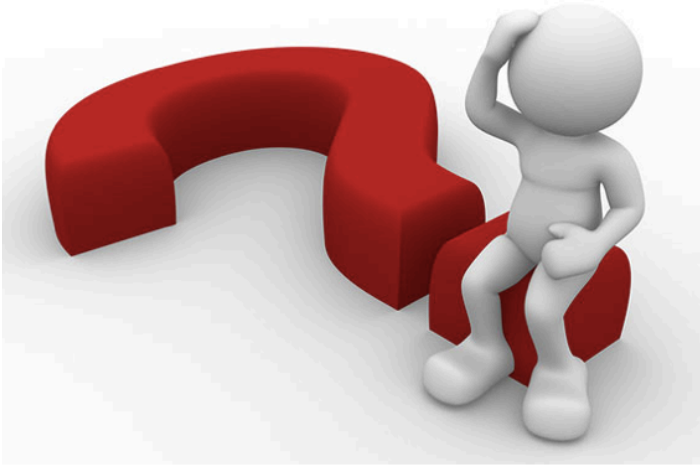
Three considerations

1. Through the way interaction took place in this group work, the students first of all saw how forces were really distributed inside the group and interacted to assert their opinion and to reach a unanimous counter-strategy definition (there were of course instances of disagreement within the group, the important thing was to collaborate interactively to find a solution acceptable to all group members).
2. Working within the group, moreover it was easy to understand for each component which types are most troublesome and which are irrelevant.
3. In the confrontation between groups they then exercised their ability to expose, their dialectical skills and exchange of viewpoints.

But above all, at the end of the day – which is usually very hilarious – I explain that the purpose of this work is not to categorise our colleagues, co-workers, friends and relatives one by one, but to analyse ourselves and to try to understand whether we belong to one or more of these categories, so that we can work on them.

As soon as I ask the question: “which one of these difficult types are you?” 10 very long seconds of silence, during which students realise that for the whole duration of the team work... they were actually talking about themselves.

Which one am I?



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HOW TO WRITE A CV

Hana Jungová

Looking for a job is a phase that most of us will be going through at a certain point.

But how to land a job interview opportunity in the first place? Usually, we will be writing a CV for the purpose: together with a cover letter sent along to accompany the CV, it will be our first contact with a potential employer, in which we give a “snapshot” of who we are as a person, as a colleague, what we can do and what is our workstyle. A well-prepared CV will highlight what we can bring on board to the company where we wish to start working: it serves the purpose of “marketing” ourselves and taking a position among the pool of other applicants.

We wish to display our background, qualifications, experience, skills and achievements, but above all **how they relate to a specific demand by a company or an organization**. There is a no “one size fits all” recipe for a successful CV, but certain aspects will be common to all situations, whether we are replying to a published job vacancy, an advertisement, or whether we aim at sharing our CV on a platform where to search for a generic job position.

For a first idea, one can use a wealth of online resources. One of the most frequently used in Europe is the Europass, <https://europa.eu/europass/en/create-europass-cv>, tool that will be handy for jobseekers, but also when looking for a training or volunteering opportunity. Most importantly, it will show beginners how to build a CV taking them by the hand, in step by step, showing what kind of information to include and

how to structure it, with a range of options for choosing the preferred style. Further, Europass will offer the possibility to store and save your CVs in 29 languages, reaching international audience easily, and to share them with potential employers on platforms such as EURES, European cooperation network for employment services, https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/index_en, reuniting over 4000 registered employers offering about 3 000 000 different jobs. Quite a precious option of maximizing one's chances of success through enlarging potential audience.

Deciding about the overall style of one's CV requires certain choices. Before making them, it is good to take time to read the job advertisement thoroughly, to identify the most important features that the potential employer is looking for. For a *“loyal and efficient assistant with good IT skills”* a soberer CV format will be suitable, while a *“creative and innovative graphic designer”* might want to showcase his/her qualities more boldly, perhaps through a tailor-made format rather than a standardized one, if he is free to choose.

A hiring manager to whom we will be writing will perhaps be flooded with CVs of many applicants: our goal will therefore be to provide a document structured over not more than 1-2 pages, easy to process, but meeting the goal of “ringing the bell” at the same time, to raise the interest of meeting us and to learn more.

Especially for young applicants who might not yet have a long history of qualifications or work experience to tell, **being able to select the most relevant points and to convey them clearly** is already a precious skill that one might want to display in the framework of the application process. One's CV can also be accompanied by annexes including for instance references from previous jobs, never to be omitted specifically

if required, or with a list of publications which can be appropriate for instance when applying for academia related jobs, public relations or media positions.

In any kind of CV, we wish to provide personal details where to actually be reached. Highlighted in a separate section or in a header, name and surname, phone (preferably including the international prefix) are a must, just like our e-mail address. Mentioning postal address can sometimes be redundant nowadays or somewhat clutter this CV section, whereas birth date, nationality and picture, unless explicitly required by the format or a job vacancy advertised, will depend on customs and practices of the country where we are applying. There are great differences between, for instance, Europe and the USA, but situations can differ substantially even in companies or organisations across Europe: in Belgium, France or Germany it is going to be common to include a passport size photograph in the upper right corner of your CV, in the UK and the US, photographs are to be avoided because of the equal opportunities legislation (a picture could reveal your race and age). **It is important to be updated on practices and customs in the country where we apply and to adhere to them.**

A personal profile will follow in certain CV formats: a short paragraph with roughly 4-5 lines of freely sentences where you briefly tell who you are and why you are applying. In Europe, this will typically be object of your motivation letter/cover letter sent along with the CV, benefitting perhaps from the possibility to write slightly longer than just 5 lines. **Motivation and the most relevant skills and achievements relevant for the job are the most important points to convey.** It is good to fit in a piece of factual information to support your statements, such as: *"I am a loyal, friendly and hardworking*

IT customer service operator with a passion for providing a flawless service under pressure. In my current role, I have been resolving 65 issues a day on average, dealing with customers' enquiries and complaints face-to face, over the phone and via email." Striking the right tone is the main challenge: here again, the key is matching customs and practices of the recruiter, while remaining genuine in the message conveyed. In some countries, recruiters do not appreciate boasting (it can frequently be the case in Europe, especially Central and Eastern), the tone of your presentation should stick to positive and factual statements about yourself, but still with an underlying tone of proportionate modesty. Elsewhere, you need to display your accomplishments more loudly and statements such as "*outstanding communicator*" or "*excellent meeting manager*" will be perfectly acceptable if not even desirable. For making things right, it is useful to read through the company's communication on their website, media accounts or press contributions, trace how they like to convey themselves and fine-tune one's personal style accordingly.

Two sections will always follow in any CV: work experience and qualifications. For work experience, it is appropriate to mention the dates (from-to) as well as the name of the employer, the job title and responsibilities held. It is great to have worked at Prada, but in what role? This will be an essential piece of information. One can also consider to briefly accompany each entry with a particular piece of accomplishment relevant for a given situation, with even numbers, amounts, money values or percentages. For example: "2020-2022, Team leader at Lufthansa, coached and trained five new employees", or, for a fashion designer "responsible for 3 award-winning collections for an international

production”. One can certainly stay sober and modest in expressing accomplishments, however, a punch of self-confidence will do: there is a substantial difference between *“Tending bar on busy nights and weekends”* and *“acting as primary bartender during peak weekend and evening hours”*. There where one applies as a fresh graduate with no particular work experience, summer jobs or occasional jobs will help to show the skills one has. One tends to undervalue them sometimes, but even occasional gardening for neighbours can be relevant in certain cases, perhaps with a bit of a formulation effort:

2018 - Gardening services in neighbourhood

Mow, edge and trim lawns from early spring to mid-fall.

Client base grew from 2 homes to 10 in 6 months.

For educational background, the structure will more or less be the same as the one of work experience: reverse chronological order, dates, the name of the school and achievements, where they deserve a particular attention. For instance: *1996-2001, Catholic University Leuven, MA in Chemistry, Final thesis: “Role of nicotine in oxidative stress”, 100% with distinction.* Summer courses or vocational training followed can help to integrate this section, even if one’s qualifications list is not yet particularly long.

The section dedicated to personal/professional skills and competencies can look tricky at first: on one hand, online CV builders tend to offer a ready-made list of soft skills from which to pick those that apply to the candidate and are relevant to the job. On the other hand, the risk here is to remain too standardised, almost up to the point to convey a cliché rather than a useful piece of information. Mentioning a factual achievement accomplished thanks to the chosen skill is a good solution: *“communication and public speaking skills”* can be

specified with an achievement such as “*I moderated discussion panels at the company’s yearly staff event*”, “*stress resistance and flexibility*” explained through, for example, “*catered for regular intercontinental flight arrangements for business trips of a team of 20, solving last-minute issues*”. On the hard skills front, all depends on the specific job, but language skills will be important for almost all of them. One should include the languages mastered, (including the mother tongue) together with the level achieved through the appropriate evaluation framework, such as CEFR or others.

Once the CV is ready and spell-checked, it is good to wait 1 night before sending, to gain the necessary distance and fresh eyes for a revision. Finally, apparent details such as saving and sending the document containing one’s CV are of tremendous importance. One’s CV file, regardless of whether it is attached to an email containing a cover letter or uploaded to the company’s portal, should not be saved with a too generic reference such as “CVjobdef.doc”, unless we want a hurried HR specialist to mix it up with someone else’s. Files with the applicant’s name are easier to track and manage, less likely to be lost. Fitting first and last name in the reference is best: “*Brendan-Pashley-CV.pdf*” can work just well. Especially when applying for a job vacancy in a large company or organisation, including the job number or title can definitely be a good idea: “*job n. 34567-Pashley-CV*”. For sending or uploading, it is important to use a professional account: high school nicknames or terms of endearment are to be avoided, just like long sequences of trouble characters and numbers. We do not wish to be too familiar not too anonymous, but professional.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISES OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Pamela Bernabei

These few pages are addressed for those young people who wish to respond professionally to the needs that companies, entrepreneurs, public bodies or institutions often have.

In fact, anybody who works in a given segment of service production, knows how many needs there are and has experienced the tremendous difficulties that one encounters when looking for staff able to cover certain specific functions. I would like to make a few suggestions, tips that can be useful *to enter the world of work well and in a driving seat.*

The point is this: knowing how to provide a service rewarded by the employer - it could even be a state administration or a trade union - with money, respect and career.

So, I am not referring to a specific technical background here, because this can be acquired in any office, factory or enterprise.

What I am referring to is a *personality technique*, a *savoir-faire* consisting in a service-oriented mind set in the workplace; a personality technique where the essential and determining factor is the person himself/herself.

From my experience, I can say that there are many truly skilful and smart young people out there, however, they sometimes lack calibration so as to fit with the needs of the job market, suiting the kind of service requirements that are compensated with money and career progression.

It is about learning, in practical terms, how to enter the world

of work as leaders, in order to become responsible, to gain great appreciation in a company or factory where one works, so as to be able to move from one job to another afterwards, while being paid better and better.

The youngsters will learn the following: the higher the quality of contribution in their workplace, the greater the reward they gain in return, in all respects. Through a given employment, the young person reaches a high level of dignity, economic autonomy and, should they so wish, even leadership.

1. Economic footing

An individual should always verify his or her position, in terms of constructing a personal space of economic autonomy. This is often more important than many other factors of our existence – body, family, friends, intelligence, etc.

This individual economic footing represents personal freedom, personal autonomy: it gives you the right to be as you choose. An individual who is not economically independent is always limited in a number of ways, so that an economic basis is a fundamental condition for existential leadership.

With “economic footing” I am not referring to your bank balance (this is already an effect), but rather to the context of work, the place where you make your earnings, the place that grants a certain continuity of income, the small mine from which you extract your daily share of wealth. It is the activity that you are good at.

Essentially, *specific know-how* is what constitutes an economic basis. It is fundamental to control and maintain this point: we can only depart from it once we have constituted another equally solid one.

The “economic footing” I am referring to is constituted by education and the set of skills that enable an individual to make

profitable activities. It constitutes man's principle of freedom. In ultimate analysis, I am referring to an economy of the personality.

In this sense, the money in your bank account does not constitute an economic footing: you may have money, but if you lack the capacity of reinvesting it, sooner or later you will lose it. So, the key question is: **what am I able to do?**

Let me now enumerate the factors that I deem indispensable for creating an economic footing.

1) *An academic qualification.* In some fields (like architecture, engineering, medicine, etc.) a university degree is necessary.

2) *Knowing at least two foreign languages.*

3) *Using digital knowledge in an intelligent manner*

4) *Specialization in a field of interest.* This need not necessarily coincide with the definitive field of your aim: it is a specific application with constant gain and renovation.

5) *Being able to speak in public.* This immediately boosts your image.

I believe these five conditions to be fundamental in constructing an economic base. They should dictate the constituting elements for a pedagogy that really prepares the student to enter the professional world with the proper attitude – that is, not as parasites, but as competitors who enter the scene in order to fulfil their ambitions, and pass from one job to the next, from one firm to the other, as their lives evolve.

2. Legal freedom

Young people live and work in a very complex society; traps lurk around any corner and he has to make his way through many legal vicissitudes. They should always act in a way that is considered correct and legal; in the professional context,

they should always refrain from carrying out illegal activities, which determine the loss of an important freedom.

It may happen that a person acts illegally out of ignorance of the local regulations: he may be acting in good faith, but ignorance of the law is not an accepted excuse. Examining the legal setting is an essential step before beginning an activity in any field. If you buy a home from a real estate agency that goes bankrupt shortly thereafter, you become an abettor of the agency's failure to refund their creditors. At this point you may be brought to trial, the estate you bought may even be confiscated in order to refund banks or other creditors. In both cases, you have been acting in good faith, but find yourself in an illegal situation.

We can summarize by saying that, *while economic autonomy constitutes the dignity of independent existence, legality gives the right to act in the social context.*

You will succeed only if you have the technical (educational, professional) premises for the activity you carry out and respect for all local regulations.

Today practically all sectors are saturated with legal constraints; many times, giving up is better than getting involved in legal controversies.

There are cases in which it makes sense to enter legal controversy, particularly when someone casts doubt on your professionalism, which in fact means threatening your existential dignity. In this case, you need to defend your social and professional credibility.

However, you should not think that being in the right will automatically enable you to win the lawsuit. Lawsuits are like a sports game. The person who begins the lawsuit throws in the ball, after which the two teams play with it and both try to win the game. The ball cannot say much for itself: it is only

the excuse for one of the two teams to *demonstrate* that they are in the right. It has nothing to do with being in the right or in the wrong: that's an optional.

You should keep this in mind when you begin a lawsuit and choose the team that will represent your position in the judiciary dialectic. Remember that you will be the ball around which others will speak, bluff and argue – independently from the reality of the situation.

Today legality is worth more than money, and you must stay on the watch, because a small fault can send you to prison or destroy all your work.

It is important to evaluate where you stand regarding the law as well as fiscal and insurance systems – not out of moral concern, but just to evaluate the difficulties.

In any situation, you need to consider whether the law is on your side or not. If it is, you can use it to defend yourself from any attack – it is easy to be sued by people who apparently have no interest in your business, but act out of love, jealousy, envy, or dislike.

These are the factors that tend to set things in motion; the economic consequences are proportional.

3. Supporting individuals

Here I am referring particularly to the individuals that give you “economic and legal guarantees in your professional activity.”

You should cultivate these professional relationships, so that they feel important and motivated to do their best. I am not referring to your collaborators; rather, the consultants, the highly specialized professionals with whom you interact.

Young people cannot do everything on their own, and they often need the contribution of other intelligent people who have specific knowledge of a certain field.

These supporting individuals are few, a leader may need five or so – a lawyer, an accountant, an architect, a journalist, a psychologist, a doctor. In short, they are people with social credibility, maturity and the characteristic of being useful in certain situations. They are people who are active on the social level.

We all need someone else at a critical moment. These people can help for an individual strategy.

Ready for “Milano Express”! (page 231)



SELF -KNOWLEDGE

Pamela Bernabei

This was the last session of the course, a final touch to the many experiences we have had together over the past nine months.

Listening to peers, teachers, entrepreneurs, their personalities, their attitudes when facing success, confronting challenges or dealing with co-workers or developing relations in the market, all this inevitably triggered personal considerations in the inner self of the students.

Stimuli were many, many experiences had touched the sensitiveness of those who wished to delve more into the personal: what is my passion? Will I be able to? Is the attitude I have towards my peers the right one? What are my strengths? Do I react well when faced with difficulties? What are my values? How do I see myself and how do others see me? Am I capable of working in a group? Do I adapt or do I oppose? Do I know how to confront others? Do I know how to recognise my limits?

Of course, answering these questions was not the purpose of this course, and moreover there are courses available with well-qualified professionals.

But a little help could not be omitted for young people to begin to 'get to know themselves' by asking questions in a critical manner.

The suggestions that follow are only meant to be an opener to learning about self-assessment, which everyone will then handle as they see fit, on their own, with a professional, a teacher or a family member.

The sequence of questions below is used in Switzerland for the training of CEOs and managers who need to lead teams or groups of people in different contexts.¹ Once again, as in the case of the SMART goals, the challenge is to use a tool, typical of qualified professional training, in the context of a group of young students, while adapting it, obviously, to such a context. Why not give it a try? Young people always surprise us by their curiosity to learn.

We gave each of the participants a small notebook.

In this notebook, we invited the participants to write answers while critically questioning themselves on certain points. For each of these points, we asked them to try to write down two or three examples and to try to tell a concrete situation in which they found themselves with respect to the point to be discussed.

On the first page, we asked them to:

1. analyse one's strengths and weaknesses

Knowing oneself also means being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses. But one cannot stop at a mere list. The resulting list is a tool to assess one's competences (personal, professional, social, etc.), what one is capable of doing and what one is not, and to stimulate development of options as a result.

In addition to a self-assessment, it is good to compare oneself with others (friends, relatives, superiors, collaborators, etc.). From both of these evaluations it is possible to draw several useful lessons for personal development.

¹ S. Menzi e R. M. Züger, *Conoscenza di sé – competenza di base di leadership, Basi teoriche e metodi*, 2012 compendio Bildungsmedien AG, Zurigo.IFC.

Then we asked to turn the page and to write on a new one:

2. self-image and the blind spot.

How do I see myself? Each of us has an idea of how we would like to be and the effect we would like to have on others. This obviously also influences our self-perception and we often insist on seeing ourselves as we think we are. Through our behaviour we want to ensure that the image we have of ourselves has the same impression on others.

And how do others see me? Very often the image we have of ourselves and the image others have of us do not coincide at all. There are behaviours of which we are hardly aware, but which others perceive very clearly: known to others and unknown to us. These are called 'blind spots' and are often mentioned behind our backs; when we learn about them, we are very surprised (and also hurt) and we think: 'but I am not like that', 'but do I really behave like that'?

We asked students to write down how they see and regard themselves, and then to describe a situation in which they were amazed at a remark, opinion or judgement about themselves because they did not see themselves that way (i.e. the blind spot). This time we gave a few extra minutes to write.

Then we asked to turn the page and write on a new one:

3. what are the limits of endurance

In simple terms, what stresses us? Triggers can be *physical* (noise, cold heat, bright light, hunger, thirst, insomnia etc.), *psychological* (performance anxiety, fears, monotonous work, impatience, disappointments, hostility etc.) or *social* (rejection by others, loneliness, quarrels, competitiveness etc.). The purpose of asking this question is first of all to understand and

assess the immediate effects of this stress and then to address its causes, overcome it, reduce it or process it through paths that the person may decide to take, as he or she sees fit. At this educational juncture, the aim is only to detect it and that is why we have asked to describe one or two situations.

Then, again on a new page, we invited:

4. to describe some typical and recurring behaviour

Especially in this case, rather than a list, the exercise consisted in describing these behaviours by means of situations and examples that actually occurred. The intention was to link these repetitive behaviours to the motivational system that provokes them and which then causes them to become stereotyped: need for attention, security, recognition, revenge, fulfilment etc. In this way one tries to identify the personal reason that drives one to behave in a certain way.

Once again, they turned the page and on a new one asked to:

5. describe reactions when facing frustration

How do we take disappointment? How do we react? Do we shut down, do we get angry, do we face it straight away, do we ponder the situation and take action later? Do we ask for help? The way we react helps us to understand our tendency to learn from our mistakes, and to calmly accept a defeat on the one hand; on the other, it helps us to understand how we act when faced with new challenges: the less likely we are to fall into frustration, the more able we will be to continue growing.

Having finished writing on this point, on a new page we asked:

6. Describe your values and attitudes

Here again we invited to come up with two or three examples. The reason for this point is not so much - again - to have a list of values. But to bring about an understanding that each of us judges something 'good and right' based on a value system that ultimately lays down rules for individual decision-making and behaviour.

And based on these values, what are the resulting attitudes? Non-conformist idealist, order-loving conformist? The active realist or the resigned etc.? This point was a little more complex because it required more time to make the connection between values and consequent attitudes. A connection that turned out not to be at all obvious.

Finally, we asked to turn the page for one last time and on a new one again to illustrate:

7. Methods for taking decisions

Clearly, this point is also connected with the value system described above. Do I decide on my own, do I rely totally on someone's advice? Do I listen to everyone and then decide for myself, do I let others decide? Furthermore, the way we make decisions not only reveals our will, but also indicates what our priorities are.

Throughout the exercise, there was never a comment or intervention from the teacher other than to briefly explain the steps of the exercise. Once the writing was finished, students were asked to close the exercise book and there was no comment or explanation.

It was a personal experience, entirely their own, for them to learn to ask questions about themselves.

We just told to try to read it again in 10 days or 6 months or one year later... Any surprise? What changed after a while? Anything new? Better or worse? Still the same? How much has one grown?

We hope that participants will keep this notebook for a little bit, to reopen it and compare it with what they accomplishing in their own lives, to update it, to re-read it, to smile at some passages with tenderness.

A small notebook intended to become a toolbox accompanying them at least at the start of their journey of growth.



**The floor to
“Now I know how!”
students**

THE FLOOR TO “NOW I KNOW HOW!” STUDENTS

Selected contributions by the students summarizing the experience for all

Luca, 18 years old (IT)

The Erasmus+ course was, first of all, an opportunity to confirm what is my talent (objectively speaking). In the area of social relations, I have a natural ability to interact, animate new and heterogeneous groups. This is exactly what happened during the two experiential modules, to the point that I started to consider public relations and/or human resources management as a potential subject for my studies.

It was a thread that I followed through the various training sessions I could attend thanks to this Erasmus+ project. I have paid particular attention to aspects of personal, social and business psychology as they appeared in the film “The Devil Wears Prada” for instance, or the one about the life of Enzo Ferrari, or in talks with entrepreneurs and visits in companies, in lectures on the job interview and body language.

The lesson on the apprentice leader made me decide to do an internship while studying, in my father's company.

I took a very active part in the cooking workshop (cooking is one of my passions) and the masonry workshop, and I am convinced that for jewellery or catering, the Made in Italy brand confirms that you need technique and passion for succeeding in anything.



Lessons during the 2nd experiential module in Foil Headquarters, May '22

Cinology surprised me in a good way. I consider it to be a very useful tool, especially for young people. Participating in this Erasmus+ project was like a journey of self-discovery and discovery of the world we live in: getting to know the mentality of successful entrepreneurs we met, feeling it also in the way they communicated with us; seeing the different reactions of young people of other nationalities to the same kind of adventure, understanding one's own limits and shortcomings; learning how to set realistic and measurable goals; learning to work as a team... these are all pieces of my educational experience, the most enriching and comprehensive one I have had so far.

I was impressed how business, art, culture and territory are interconnected, we had many examples of it in the experiential



At the Duomo stop-over challenge, during the Milano Express

modules: the TUUM jewels in Assisi, top quality wines by Cantine Lunelli inside the Carapace sculpture in Montefalco or Mura Mura in the Piedmont hills, the automotive district surrounding the Ferrari factory, Milan and fashion, Milan and design. Turning a strongly local product, like olive groves or vineyards, into an international one, transferring the elegance, the modernity or the history typical to a given city into a garment or piece of furniture: these are 'recipes' for entrepreneurial success that I will not forget. The most important lesson for life in this Erasmus+ project was, for me, the way it was organised: a unique project in this area, lots of care for details was invested in logistical arrangements such as our food, schedules, travelling. There was time to study and time to socialize, sessions of theory alternated with sessions of practice, individual work with group work. I will try to follow-

up on this in my daily life, to keep the way of reconciling many interests, organising many events, coordinating people of different backgrounds. I will try to include this approach in my future studies and work.

I advertised and promoted this Erasmus+ project at school among teachers, schoolmates and friends.

Antonio, 16 years old (CZ)

On the whole, I had an amazing time, especially during the on-site modules. In just a handful of days I discovered Italian jewels (even literally) that I will hardly ever forget. Including the wonderful Spoleto valley and the magnificent Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi. But above all dynamic, adaptable, constantly evolving jewels, with that masterful touch that many have tried, in vain, to imitate, being always attentive to the needs of customers: Italian entrepreneurial excellences. The engine of each of them is passion, quality, innovative ideas, and the pouring of the soul into the product, to the point of leaving a part of themselves in each of their creations. I believe that the representatives of the "Made in Italy" we visited fully embody these principles. As for Made in Italy, it is important to clarify that although it represents a source of pride for Italians, it sometimes evokes frustration. The miraculous story of Enzo Ferrari is, in fact, miraculous. Often it is not possible to emerge in the entrepreneurial field, with Italy occupying lower positions in the "ease of doing business" rankings. The reason we don't hear about the "Made in Denmark" (a country with much better rankings) lies in the fact that Italy has a historical and cultural richness that beats almost everyone. However, this does not mean that the problems that afflict our country should be ignored.

Another aspect we worked on during the project was self-analysis and self-improvement. In my opinion it was a key chapter. We often mistakenly believe that we know ourselves perfectly, and that it is not necessary to organize our priorities and ideas, because deep down we know what we want. However, sometimes it can be very useful to stop and reflect for a moment on which path to take. Having "smart" goals is essential to go far, whatever the field. The bread and butter of a good goal, and of a great number of pillars of human happiness, lies in reaching the right balance between two or more extremes. We dealt with this, among other things, in the theoretical lessons, which in my opinion were just as important as the practical ones. Because it is of little use to be able to assert oneself on the job market if you do not first know, at least in general terms, how our species behaves.

Our students with Alessandro Venturini, visiting Rome during the first experiential module, October 2021



Finally, I would like to acknowledge how lucky I have been to have shared this experience with so many wonderful people, to whom I extend my sincere thanks. Thank you also to all



Our students at the entrance of Ferrari museum, May 2022

those who, with so much effort and work, made this beautiful project possible.

Francesco M., 19 years old (IT)

I find cinelogy very instructive, like the one that was carried out during the in-person module in Lizori, for instance. It was full of insights, I could see how it was framed to complement other topics in the online module in December, such as the apprentice leader, the job interview, body language. With reference to this last aspect, I found the meeting with the jeweller in Assisi extremely fruitful. Among other things, it was a proof of the fact that *clothes can make the man*, in my opinion. Generally speaking, live talks with entrepreneurs I met thanks to this Erasmus+ project (the biographies of the founders, the variety of company stories that were illustrated), taught me to watch out regarding one point, I tend to "*rush for achievement*", which is counterproductive for learning entrepreneurial skills, I think, both on a personal and a professional level. I intend to follow-up responsibly on this aspect.

The stories of young entrepreneurs in the online modules, the fact that I had to measure myself with individual planning as per *S.M.A.R.T. goals*, *Specific, Measurable, Accepted, Realistic, Timely* (another concrete example of take-aways from the online modules), as well as the expert advice for planning and managing personal finances (last experiential module), were a decisive factor of change in my way of approaching things, and all this made me grow significantly in terms of pragmatism and realism. In parallel with my studies and my university exams, I have now been expanding a lot the concert activity and my sources of income have therefore also

been growing, I now have more potential partners and a greater choice of venues, I developed a network at the university: *the Erasmus+ course has taught me the openness to others*. One of the key themes behind all the successful entrepreneurial stories and the entrepreneurs that I have encountered in the project is their sense of apprenticeship: a kind of humility, adaptability, ability to choose the right teachers and mentors, continuous technical up-skilling, passion, ambition, coherence of lifestyle, the path to success step by step, without skipping a single stage... It is one of the ever-topical secrets of the Made in Italy and it has been true since the artisan workshops of the 13th century. It also explains the fortunes brands such as Ferrari, international and timeless ones. For a meaningful personal and professional training of young people, this is an essential element.



Our students during the cooking workshop in Lizori, September 2021

Eliška, 16 years old (CZ)

We, Czech students, as well as students of two other countries, have participated in the Erasmus + project since September 2021. When I think about it, I try to recall all those experiences. The first thing that comes to my mind is how it all ended so quickly. It was nine months that gave me a different view of the world, opened new paths.

What still surprises me is how much is possible to learn, how many new things I have never thought about. This experience is new.

Completely different from our daily lives and the thinking of us, our parents, our friends. And this is the first reason why I would recommend this project, it is an opportunity to get to know yourself. It will help you find out what you want from life and how you feel in your own world. And the environment helped this experience a lot :) Italian nature, culture, cuisine... What does it actually mean Italy and what is the "Made in Italy".

I love getting to know new countries, people and, I fell in love with Italy even more, if at all possible. When I talk about people, I mainly think of stories and dreams that I have learned during both stays and also the online modules. You will learn that everything has a price, every successful company has a long way behind, entrepreneurs will share their mistakes with you and broaden your horizons incredibly.

Andrea, 21 years old (IT)

If there is another opportunity, I would like to attend the photography workshop next time, both because it corresponds to a new field of interest of mine (along with engineering and

music) and because it is useful as such, as a tool to get to know yourself better, as some of the classmates told me.

The topics of the first online module were particularly useful and interesting to me, namely: everyday habits, body language, and the job interview, which I also associated with the movie “The Devil Wears Prada”.

When meeting the various entrepreneurs, I had a confirmation that it is important to nurture a variety of interests (from art to history), for the sake of developing one's own personality.

In other words, nurturing an eclectic curiosity. It certainly corresponds to the way I am.

I trust that further developments of this Erasmus+ project will help me to enhance the ability to relate to others, beyond being somewhat reserved, which is typical for me.



Our students at Brera Academy during one of the stop-over challenges of the Milano Express, with the Director of the Academy Prof. J. Bradburne

I found the story of the jeweller we met in Assisi exceptional, to the point that I wanted to follow both meetings with him, one after the other (the Erasmus+ group was divided in two parts on this occasion for logistical reasons): it was an enriching experience on several levels, the look he had captured my attention but also his creativity, the ability to work as part of a team, the ideas that triggered his new ongoing business projects, the way he relates to his collaborators but also how he interacted with us, young Erasmus+ guests.

Thanks to this Erasmus+ project, I have noticed a clear improvement in my interpersonal skills, I am now more open, more self-confident in dealing with others, more extroverted, and I consider all this to be one of the best results of this experience on a personal level.

I intend to finalize the bachelor's degree in engineering in summer 2022, and the visit to 'Ferrari' (an exciting experience, to say the least!) provided me the idea to specialise in the automotive sector (racing, more specifically), with the ambition of eventually building a career in this area, too.

Among the many input offered by the visit to 'Ferrari', a particularly significant one concerns the vocation, typical of Made in Italy, to realise tailor-made products, be they clothes or top-quality cars.

The ambition to create unique items, to sell the sense of primacy, to emphasise customer's personality, desires, to make one's own brand great and inimitable by putting oneself at the service of others, these are some of the essentials that allowed me to understand aspects of entrepreneurial psychology, such as knowing how to listen to others, how to accommodate their need to be unique, how to enhance one's technical skills through aesthetic taste, how to strive for perfection and for continuous improvement.

Eva, 17 years old (CZ)

Erasmus+ was, for instance, an excellent opportunity to practice both Italian and English outside school, to use them to communicate with people.

Among the lessons that I liked the most I include the cinelogy. I alone would never have had the ideas of the trainer or others, and the fact of confronting myself with another point of view was very interesting and useful for me. It enriched me.

I definitely preferred the experiential part of the training to the virtual one: maybe it is more due to the fact that being at the computer tires me.

The visit to Assisi was beautiful, since in addition to the visit of the TUUM company, there was all the part dedicated to the city. Among the entrepreneurs, the one I liked the most was



Visiting Turin's Museum of Writing at Aurora Pen Manufactory, May '22

Marfuga's, because he also talked about his private life and his family.

In his case, the business seemed an interest among others. Somehow his interview was the most personal one.

I am interested in medicine, and in addition to it there has always been a part of my soul that had the dream of becoming an entrepreneur in the field of pastry. Thanks to what I have done so far, I realized that entrepreneurship is probably not for me.

Andrei, 19 years old (IT)

The Erasmus+ course was important for me in improving interpersonal skills: it was an opportunity to socialise and I enjoyed it, I was happy to be in a new environment, to meet new peers of different nationalities, to make new friends, to practice my English, to share experiences, to gather a number of ideas from all this.

Thanks to the course I also had the opportunity to explore my interests and to play with talent in practical, manual activities, I took active part in masonry and cooking workshops and I could feel the desire grow for knowledge, acquisition of technical skills, apprenticeship. I felt the wish for gaining experience.

The type of visits (companies, artistic sites), topics discussed in the classroom, as well as the overall international context of the project made me interested in previously neglected subjects such as foreign languages, but also literature (because of history and art which are connected to it).

Cinology was a very helpful tool to understand important aspects of one's own personality, especially for topics touching upon the sphere of feelings and young people.



*Learning how to take care of our habitat,
with Lizori blacksmith Mastro Tony*

Taking part in the Erasmus+ Course was key for the progress I made as a person, above all: I gained greater self-confidence, I clearly enhanced my interpersonal skills, I now have a more active and collaborative approach in a team, more openness to knowledge.

The tests on S.M.A.R.T. objectives delivered during the lecture on financial

management were fundamental for me in taking a more concrete approach to my own projects in life, as well as the importance of learning, of apprenticeship and lifestyle (such as cultivating a variety of interests).

The quality of the locations chosen for the experiential modules (rich in art and craftsmanship), the opportunity to take part in the workshops, visiting companies throughout all stages of the production cycle, these were all factors that steered me towards engaging in crafts for the future: a life goal that the Erasmus+ course helped me to shape.

Hana, 16 years old (CZ)

I went to Erasmus to get new experiences, learn new things, meet new people, learn how to interact with them and, of course, also learn languages. It all came true for me.

This Erasmus was a project that in a certain way will change your thinking about the meaning of life and how you want to live it. Do you want to feel good about yourself or just survive? I think the answer is clear. And this Erasmus showed us how to do it.

It's important to find motivation and desire in yourself, because everything goes much better with passion. And even small steps on the way to your destination count. Personally, I've started working to get as close as possible to my dream profession.

Now I know that although I am young, I have a lot of options and I want to feel good about doing something to achieve my goal. And that means I'm doing something for myself, too.

You don't know how satisfying it is to know that I've moved on a bit, I've been working and I haven't been procrastinating. And, of course, we must also remember our health, because this is also the key to success.

What's better after a hard day's work than going for a walk in the countryside?

In nature, in addition to the rest, we can also find a lot of inspiration, which in turn will help us in our development. Nature offers us a lot of gifts and if we are thrifty, we can happily use them. For both our business and our psychological health.

In any case, the sun pours energy into our veins every day to give us the strength to be a little closer to our goal.



Walk through nature in Umbria, September 2021

There are only a few things in the world that can't be taken away from you. And one of them is your knowledge. This Erasmus has been emphasizing this from the very beginning, and I was only too glad. We should try to get information from all sorts of sources, care in depth and not be afraid of the extra knowledge. These are the ones that can be most useful to us in business, as they make us find our own way and be original in the market.

The Erasmus team was also mindful of the practical side of things, which I certainly have to appreciate.

We have had meetings with very successful people who have allowed us to look into their world and consult anything with them. Just imagine what it's like to be standing in the resort of the founder of one of the most exclusive ice cream parlours, or next to a Ferrari, listening to the story of its birth! Among other

things, the lectures were interspersed with visits to a variety of cities

or other entertainment programs. So, we certainly didn't get bored! This Erasmus was a very thoughtful project that gave us the space to grow personally, gave us new incentives, but also developed our existing ideas. Everything took place in wonderful places in Italy, where the food is incredibly good and the people around you are nice. Simply: you won't want to leave such an educational project!

Francesco F., 18 years old (IT)

I have greatly enjoyed all the training sessions I have followed, I felt involved, it was a great opportunity to open one's mind and learn how to relate to different people and other mentalities, a stimulus to improve one's basic culture and get to know oneself, a school of passion for one's craft and of the



“Now I know how” students with Cesare Verona, Aurora Pen CEO



“Now I know How!” students with Guido Martinetti, at Mura Mura

importance of constantly improve one’s technique, a stimulus to take care of one’s lifestyle.

Seemingly unrelated moments of the training turned out to actually be closely intertwined (for example, the metal design and masonry workshops where I enrolled on the one hand, and the lecture of history of art on Giotto on the other). I was particularly impressed by some of these moments: I can say that I treasured every detail of the meeting with the jeweller in Assisi, where I was struck, in a good way, by the style with which he introduced himself, from his image to the tone of voice, his business story from the initial intuition up to having built a company with 400 showrooms in Italy and 50 in the rest of the world, employing so many people and relying on so many artisans and so many young people; the ability to take even stagnation and crisis (the 2020 lockdown) as an

opportunity to shape a new business; the ability to team up with his collaborators. From meeting a person *like him you understand that we are not just moulds*”.

Not a day goes by in his daily life without treasuring some of the lessons learnt from the Erasmus+ course, be it when studying or taking the first steps in the professional world, in his relationships with others or in his day to day routine.

At the opening of the course, participants were invited to draw from the various training sessions they would have had (including direct acquaintance with entrepreneurs, visits to companies, cities of art) what are the distinctive features of the “Made in Italy” brand, intended as a universal model of savoir-

faire and know-how.

Of these, I admit that 'selling a value' rang the bell for me.

Although it seemed to be the most difficult element to understand and identify in abstract terms, at the conclusion of the modules, it was one of the most important lessons learnt from this wonderful experience.

The importance of lifestyle, for example, stands at the very basis of a project like the ‘Mura Mura’



Leisure time at Foil headquarters

winery, which produces and sells not only wine, food or accommodation, but above all the love of one's roots and territory, as well as the aesthetic taste, beauty, culture. The same goes for the exclusive wines by Tenute-Lunelli in Montefalco, they are fruit of an inseparable relation between art and craftsmanship, there is the luxury of the great Carapace sculpture inside which the cellars are located, as if encapsulated in it, or the latest model of Lamborghini, another Made in Italy jewel, exhibited in these very spaces to the international public.

Likewise, owning a Ferrari has a meaning which is to underline one's own primacy through top level technology and elegance, to emphasize one's uniqueness. In short, it makes you feel like a world champion. And owning a TUUM jewel is about sharing a spiritual value, a message of brotherhood and peace, it is about choosing to return to the origins of the



human soul. Choosing the Marfuga oil represents a certain style of consuming, with great attention to quality, a superior one and extremely sophisticated one even in details, such as food, daily life. The '*value of values*', common to all the different types of products, is the value of the other person, of the consumer, the customer, the buyer, who is made feel more important than the product itself: it is an approach, an attitude that the course was able to convey in a masterly manner and that will represent a guide, a beacon, for me in all my professional activities.

Zhana, 22 years old (BG)

I applied for the Erasmus + program "Now I know how" because I really wanted to meet young and motivated people from other countries who mutually inspire each other, immersed in the atmosphere of one of the most creative places in Europe - Italy.

However, the program exceeded my expectations. I learned a lot, not only about business, but also about life - THANK YOU!

Although the online training modules were well organized,



Cooking workshop during the 2nd experiential module - May 2022

I enjoyed attending the on-site ones so much more, because of the energy that not only the participants in the program brought, but also the places we stayed in and the inspiring personalities we had the opportunity to meet.



Lizori was like a fairy tale and Milan city full of opportunities but they were not the only places we visited.

Each destination and city we've been, it has enriched my experience.

I am very impressed by the variety of activities through which the organizers made this complex subject interesting and easy



Our students at the Vittorio Emanuele II Gallery in Milan, May 2022

to understand. Undoubtedly, my favorite lectures were the stories of those who have already succeeded in life. The passion with which they work touched me so much that sometimes I shed tears. Each of their personalities inspired courage in me, because I realized that great success is ALWAYS preceded by many failures.

I learned to look at difficulties not as problems, but as challenges, that can only make me stronger. Another lesson: The comfort zone is the enemy number one to personal development.

The brand "Made in Italy" will remain in my mind as a symbol of beauty, quality and love. It also made me look for inspiration for my business, not abroad, but in Bulgaria, my homeland. That is why I will place the *Bulgarian Rose Oil*

(unique natural Bulgarian product) at the center of my business.

In my opinion, one of the most effective ways to learn new skills and to acquire knowledge is when you encounter different points of view, and when peoples way of thinking is connected to the roots of their culture – it's even more valuable. In this regard, the team assignments put me in the role of a different piece of the puzzle called teamwork, which is the basis of successful work. I was also reminded how important the role daily habits is for the overall success, and last but not least, the program gifted me with many new valuable friendships that I believe will last.

In conclusion, I want to say that for this one year, I looked forward to each subsequent day of the program, I happily remembered the past days and experienced the present one with pleasure. Thank you for the invaluable experience and opportunities provided. I am happy to be part of this Erasmus+ program.

Andreea, 18 anni (IT)

I am usually very critical of my peers, including at school back home. I consider them superficial and interested only in appearances, and I was surprised and impressed by the qualities of boys and girls, Italian and foreign alike, whom I met thanks to the Erasmus+ project. I managed to socialise by overcoming to a degree my introverted nature, especially through practical activities and social events. The diversity of the Erasmus+ group stimulated me to improve the knowledge of the English language and I wish to deepen exchanges further. The themes tackled through the cinelogy were extremely interesting, the classroom discussion after the



During the photography workshop in Lizori, September 2021

projection of *The Devil Wears Prada* was very useful: when you have a goal like the one of the main character, you have to know how to provisionally adapt in order not to waste opportunities. Similarly, I have a favourable opinion on the photography workshop, this session was one of the strongest and most meaningful so far, for its introspective focus and self-analysis that I did not expect to have and that I found very interesting.

When meeting the jeweller in Assisi - I shall stress that it made me think a lot - I was particularly struck by the second intuitive idea he told us about, the new business project that was born during lockdown: it proves that even in the worst moments of crisis there can be a breakthrough.

I definitely appreciated the presentation on service psychology by a girl just a few years older than me: when things get



Our students visiting the Basilica of Assisi, September 2021

explained by someone who is practically your age, they get always even more accessible.

In the second part of the course, the most amazing experience in terms of personal growth, open-mindedness, new ways of relating to others and to the world of work, was meeting the Ferrari employee who guided the company museum tour for us.

She told us the history of Ferrari, of its founders and creators and she spoke of success and records of the entire Ferrari world with so much passion, competence, emotional engagement, ability to convey enthusiasm, admiration and pride to work there! I was convinced that she must be a member of the Ferrari family, a relative! When I realised that this was not the case, a whole new dimension opened up for me: this is the way how

you collaborate with the company you work for, this is how you work in a project you are part of.

This experience allowed me to make the right connections with aspects of service psychology that were repeatedly touched upon during the course. And, from a practical and personal point of view, I clearly improved my study and internship performance: at the end of my internship, for example, I obtained the highest mark and I was the best intern of the group. Result of the added value I learnt, being able to take up challenges (beyond the assigned tasks) that a given context presents, being able to manage situations and to deal with problems as if the context, where I occasionally work, was ‘my own’, and being able to foresee and satisfy the needs and desires of other people.

Ester, 17 years old (CZ)

Erasmus+ brought me, first of all, new experiences, such as meeting the Bulgarian students. I have felt that our cultures are more similar than I previously thought. I have also much appreciated social moments, such as eating together, being able to chat together in a relaxing atmosphere.

I appreciated the variety of the training: the fact that the lectures and talks were of various different kinds and that they were given by different people. One thing is if someone talks about experiences on a theoretical level, but a much better thing is talking to someone who has lived those experiences in the first person.

In general terms, I preferred experiential learning to the online one. In the virtual learning, I really liked the polls, because they forced us to participate, we saw the results of this participation.

Among the best activities I certainly include the walk in nature, and not only for the obvious reason of the beauty of the place: the most important was the relationship that through the walk we attempted to establish with nature. I liked that the importance of this connection was emphasized, I felt it a lot, it remained inside me as a living experience.

Assisi is beautiful, it inspired me a lot. In my opinion, the explanation of the guide in the basilica helped a lot to understand.

Overall, I have learned that if you work hard, nothing is impossible. That dedication can be a road to success. On this point, the guided visit to the Marfuga company was perhaps the most precious for me. Maybe it's because I love olive oil, but I liked having been there, in the company, where oil is produced, and then, beyond the sight, the sense of smell and taste were also involved ... it was an experience with all the



Czech Students introducing “Now I know how!” course to the audience at the Italian Institute of Culture in Praga, December 2022



The group of Bulgarian students in Lizori – September 2021

senses, and this made it unforgettable. I feel I could have spoken more during the training: perhaps, trainers could have forced me more, calling by name, so I would have had no way of escaping!

Compared to when I enrolled to the project “Now I know how!”, I have changed the vision of my studies. I had long thought that I would dedicate myself to law, but now I would like to study production at the FAMU (the faculty of Cinematography and Television of the Academy of Dramatic Arts). So, I also see my future work linked to film production.

Georgi, 22 years old (BG)

I come to this Erasmus program hoping to expand my entrepreneurial skills, but I could not image how much I would actually receive from it.

Both experiential modules, the one in the beautiful hamlet of Lizori and the one in Milan, were very memorable. I got to experience Italy through its cuisine, beautiful sites as well as music. Meeting successful people with businesses build on

principles, principles discussed in great detail in lectures, strengthened the meaning of the phrase “Create with love and passion!” in my mind.

I found that the combination of being aware of one’s cultural background, of acquiring knowledge and entrepreneurial flexibility, together with the drive to create something truly different and unique, represents a perfect recipe for success. However, the pursuit of mere gain would be pointless, it would lead to failure. It’s like a paradox. Striving to be successful but at the same time, if gain is your main goal, you’ll fail.

I guess that the saying is true. The secret ingredient to a truly perfect recipe is love.

Valeria, 18 years old (IT)

Among activities I had so far thanks to this Erasmus+ project, the most astonishing and useful one for me was the photography workshop: it opened up a whole new world. I was amazed by seeing the unsuspected inner reality represented in



At Mura Mura, Piedmont - May 2022

photographs, I could be understood beyond the limits of an image I had of myself initially, prior to this experience. I had the possibility to discover myself more closely through this tool, and I saw how it can be beneficial to self-knowledge and development. This workshop made me aware of a very important inner dimension that I have yet to explore. I have gained more



Czech students and their teacher in Borgo Lizori, September 2021

self-confidence (during the module, I could clearly socialise more easily and integrate better in the whole group as a result of this workshop) and I hope that I will take part again.

There are clear connections between aspects explored in this workshop and in other training sessions, such as the virtual lecture on body language and the job interview.

In general, I consider that the Erasmus+ course was comprehensive on all levels: culture, art, lifestyle, getting involved, interaction with other cultures, lessons learnt from the stories of great entrepreneurs and from the miracle of small



Our students at Marfuga Company, tasting olive oil with CEO Gradassi - September 2021

local companies that managed to go international (it shows that it is possible to create a great business from where you are).

I greatly appreciated the visits to companies (the genius of the founder of TUUM, the art and elegance of Cantine Lunelli del Carapace, the passion and wisdom at the Marfuga oil mill).

On these occasions, I also caught the connection with the subject of service psychology we had in lectures, through details that truly amazed me: such as in Assisi when a TUUM jewel given as a gift to a randomly picked young member of the Erasmus+ group or at the Marfuga company, where its CEO offered a tasting (I would never have expected from them such gestures and I would perhaps never consider doing it myself, if I were in their shoes, yet it certainly makes such a difference).

Compared to when I was in my early teens, I now feel a stronger desire to leave a mark with my activity in this life, in

this society. This desire was inspired by the great example of Made in Italy.

Participating in this Erasmus+ Course is a life-changing experience: in your relationship with yourself, with others and with your projects. With regard to the first aspect, inner enrichment has been ongoing for me for months thanks to the cinelogy 'The Devil Wears Prada'. The criterion for choosing friends, attachments romantic relationships, for one's relationship with family, is whether they really help to grow or not. I learnt that if a friend or a lover, for example, pretends that you keep being like them, if it is ultimately not acceptable for them that you "take off", if they prefer that you stay average rather than becoming successful, then these relationships do not promise much. Certain pieces of advice, a kind of moralising, emotional blackmail is what can bring you down.



A lecture for our students on how to enter in the professional world - May 2022



Team working during the 2nd experiential module, May 2022

In choosing whom to share with and whom to trust, you always need this 'compass'. I still think about it and it has changed the way I share my life plans with others. The film on Enzo Ferrari's biography and legacy was also very useful for me: like a call to always take a critical look when mainstream culture describes a public figure. It is enough to visit 'Ferrari' to realise that we are often told stories that try to demean, or downplay someone.

It is important to always refer to the relevant sources, not to allow oneself to be influenced, it is good to research and to use your own judgement.

Cinology is a terrific instrument for putting oneself in the game, analysing, getting to the heart of problems: a very suitable tool to make youngsters reflect and grow. It was stimulating to learn about school systems different from ours, other cultures, and other ways of approaching the world of work.

I greatly appreciated the lecture of the expert who explained how to better manage personal finances: thanks to her, I started to become more pragmatic and responsible in organising my life, both for now and in future perspective.

After finishing the course and after high school exams, I decided to go to University and I enrolled in the Faculty of Computer Engineering, which opens up good occupational prospects. In Florence, city where you can breathe beauty, elegance, art: the most suitable context to continue cultivating all other interests I have. After all, the link between territory, culture and enterprise is among the cornerstones of the Made in Italy brand and it became clearer to me through the variety of experiences I had thanks to this project. A school like Istituto Marangoni could only be born in a place like Milan. Take a look at the Cathedral: it is already a distinguished brand in itself, just as Istituto Marangoni taught us a brand should be!



During the workshop at the Marangoni Institute in Milano, May 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROJECT SUMMARY	3
PRESENTATION <i>Alessandro Venturini</i>	7
INTRODUCTION <i>Hana Jungová</i>	11
WHAT ARE THE MAIN IDEAS ON WHICH THIS PROJECT IS BASED? <i>Cristina Cecconi</i>	13
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS <i>Pamela Bernabei</i>	17

MODULE I

PROGRAMME	21
THE 12 POINTS OF SERVICE PSYCHOLOGY OF MADE IN ITALY <i>C. Cecconi</i>	25
DAILY LIFE: THE REASON WHY IT MATTERS <i>H. Jungová</i>	39
THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE GOOD <i>Paolo Bianchi</i>	43
CINELOGY <i>C. Cecconi</i>	49
THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA <i>H. Jungová</i>	55
PHOTOGRAPHIC SELF-PORTRAIT <i>Barbara Bernabei</i>	59
HOW TO ENTER IN THE JOB MARKET SUCCESSFULLY?	69
TRADITION, INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, MARFUGA OIL <i>H. Jungová</i>	79
CULTURE AND ENTERPRISE IN ASSISI TUUM JEWELLERY <i>H. Jungová</i>	83

PRODUCING AND SELLING WINE IN A SCULPTURE LUNELLI TENUTE <i>H. Jungová</i>	87
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MODULES II, III, IV

PROGRAMME	91
THE APPRENTICE LEADER <i>Nellie Gospodinova</i>	95
STARTING FROM SCRATCH: THE KEY FACTORS <i>A. Zoppolato</i>	99
A GOOD GOAL IS SMART! <i>P. Bernabei</i>	111
FROM SCRATCH TO SUCCESS. CASE STUDY ALESSANDRO FRACASSI (MUTUIONLINE SPA) <i>interview by A. Zoppolato</i>	115
FROM SCRATCH TO SUCCESS. CASE STUDY GUIDO MARTINETTI (GROM SPA AND MURA MURA) <i>interview by A. Zoppolato</i>	123
CASE STUDY. MUSIC: FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION ENRICO SAVERIO PAGANO <i>interview by A. Zoppolato</i>	129
CASE STUDY. MY FIRST BUSINESS ACTIVITY WHILE STILL GOING TO SCHOOL: ARIANNA POZZI <i>interview by A. Zoppolato</i>	133
GOING TO A JOB INTERVIEW. <i>P. Bernabei</i>	137
JOB INTERVIEW, A POSITION TO TAKE <i>H. Jungová</i>	163

MODULE V

PROGRAMME	169
THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE: LUISS BUSINESS SCHOOL <i>A. Zoppolato</i>	171
FINANCIAL LITERACY <i>Vania Franceschelli</i>	179
THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE: THE MARANGONI INSTITUTE (FASHION AND DESIGN) <i>A. Zoppolato</i>	203
CASE STUDY. “THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE WELL MADE” MANIFATTURA AURORA: CESARE VERONA <i>edit by P. Bernabei</i>	209
FERRARI! <i>H. Jungová</i>	215
CASE STUDY: VITO LOMELE (JOBRAPIDO, FISCOZEN) <i>interview by A. Zoppolato</i>	219
CASE STUDY: NOW I KNOW HOW! <i>Adriana Hullah</i>	227
MADE IN ITALY: MILAN, THE ICON OF EXCELLENCE AND ITALIAN STYLE <i>A. Zoppolato</i>	231
DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE <i>P. Bernabei</i>	239
HOW TO WRITE A CV <i>H. Jungová</i>	245
THREE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISES OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE <i>P. Bernabei</i>	251
SELF-KNOWLEDGE <i>P. Bernabei</i>	257

THE FLOOR TO “NOW I KNOW HOW!” STUDENTS	265
TABLE OF CONTENTS	301

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