Design for Business & Business for Design: 
An E-Learning Platform for Collaborative Innovation

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ABSTRACT

E-learning, knowledge sharing, creativity design and collaborative innovation are all concepts that are key elements of this case study. There is a particular focus here on the question of what role design should play in innovation. Other key topics include the role of e-learning and of long life learning. Such roles are not always easy to explain, since they differ from case to case, but Design in Italy is – and will increasingly become – a definite value and a competitive tool. Design can and must be a fundamental part of every single company’s production, communication and distribution strategy. Every e-learning platform launched by Università Telematica San Raffaele Roma’s “Design for Business & Business for Design” is intended to demonstrate that design is neither a sole interest nor an exclusive prerogative of large companies or those operating in sectors that have traditionally been design oriented. In fact, design-driven education and innovation is a basic lever for competitiveness and internationalization that is available in every sector. Creating an e-learning platform is an important way of building a designing and community identity; a significant chance to meet and a landmark not only for professionals, but also for creative people working outside established enterprises.

Keywords: Collaborative Innovation, Design Learning Industry, E-learning, Know How Toward Design Management, Knowledge Toward Specialization, Long Life Learning

INTRODUCTION

Can an E-learning platform contribute to facilitating and stimulating socio-cultural exchanges and debates in order to improve knowledge, stimulate creativity, and introduce and teach methodologies for creativity, design, business and innovation? These are some of the challenges that we are facing and here we describe how an e-learning platform designed by S. Raffaele (www.unisanraffaele.gov.it) was used in order to promote the definition, evolution and diffusion of methods that stimulate, help and manage knowledge, creativity, design and innovation.

Producing innovation through design has become vital and indispensable for a production system. In Italy, and in Milan in particular, we have many leading companies in fashion (apparel, accessories, jewellery) and design (furniture, lighting) who are able to combine an efficient managerial with a creative entrepreneurship, innovation and design. The e-learning platform provides both practical experience and

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knowledge of the project and a specific “case history”. From products to businesses, production companies have carried out significant product and process innovations within their various spheres thanks to investment, managerial capacity and market strategies, from which the product qualification and its internationalization have resulted. From products to territory, bearing in mind that the network of Lombardy areas has contributed to and still contributes to that specialization in local production and the differentiation in market terms which, by reducing competitiveness and helping integration, has contributed to the creation of a national system that has created the idea that “Made in Italy” is a national brand.

The paper is structured as follows:

1. From design thinking to innovation (and vice-versa) describes how it is important to be aware of the business potential of design, explores its potential for innovation, greater competitiveness, and improvement (the intangible factors) and compares some successful (and unsuccessful) examples, in order to identify possible methods of management, development and future synergies.

2. Design in Milan between creativity and method, describes how, in a complex city like Milan, the reclamation of abandoned areas, and their refurbishment according to sustainable criteria and parameters for the revitalization of communal spaces for everyone is not the exclusive task of town planners, architects and designers. It requires a universal creative and design effort, which is shared between public and private sectors, and is aimed at generating new perspectives and horizons for development.

3. Innovation within functions and roles; describes how design must be first culturally and then operationally completely integrated with all the other company functions, from marketing to planning, production and sales, so as to make its contribution to the creation of a company identity with shared objectives for its products.

4. Collaborative innovation describes a process of sharing innovation and creating conditions that facilitate contact and sharing, and recognizing and exploiting the results obtained.

5. Learning design thinking; considering a scheme that provides a continuous and even overlapping initiation of processes (and related projects) for the promotion of design in companies with the aim of increasing its perceived value of design, to generate a real demand for design and organize a coherent response in terms of services provided to businesses.

6. Long Life Learning; referred to generically as “new professions” or “knowledge workers” as defined by Peter Drucker, and focusing on the intensity of the exchange of knowledge generated by new professionals. Among the “knowledge workers”, the professionals assume an increasing importance of knowledge bearers with “connectives”, which can connect different fields of knowledge and specialized language.

7. Knowing how (and why) the system works; It is essential that the school is a node of a larger network, which connects the actors in the design of its territorial system. The entire territory is a “becoming school” for students, particularly those engaged in a high-intensity relationship-driven design, as is the case of Milan.

8. E-learning platform for collaborative innovation about the biggest challenge that design must deal with now is the redesigning of a new system of knowledge and alliances; a multicultural system that feeds on differences.

BACKGROUND

One hundred design schools are now operating in Italy. How many are permanent design schools? Which type are they (Public, private, university degrees, faculties, masters…)?
Where are they? When were they founded?
Game-Based Accounting Learning: The Impact of Games in Learning Introductory Accounting
www.igi-global.com/article/game-based-accounting-learning/190428?camid=4v1a

The Impact of Cloud-Based Digital Transformation on IT Service Providers: Evidence From Focus Groups
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