



Innovation SME's products and services in natural area – good practice guide

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1. Theoretical framework of analysis

Innovation is a central topic in the enterprises birth and development processes, regardless of their size. The great product innovation often explains the birth and development of industrial sectors; the technological innovations often stimulate new ways of buying and consuming products and new forms of communicating with customers. Furthermore, irrespective of the sector they belong to, the most successful businesses frequently share a constant attention to innovation and the ability to continuously develop new and original products and strategies.

It is interesting to notice that, with the passing of time, the innovation concept has become broader and broader compared to the Shumpeter's "creative destruction" one. Nowadays, in fact, it also covers aspects that are not exclusively limited to the product field. Referring to the innovation concept, we have more and more gone over the traditional dichotomies "product innovation" vs "process innovation", "radical innovation" vs "incremental innovation". Furthermore, we talk about innovation also as far as business behaviors and strategy are concerned.

This kind of approach has widespread in the last decades, concerning management disciplines too and giving birth to a branch of studies dealing with "strategic innovation". In line with what the authors who refer to this branch of research affirm (Coda, a national author, highlights the concept of "entrepreneurial synthesis"; Markides, an international author, uses the concept of "strategic innovation"), in this research work too the concept of innovation is not limited only to the product improvement or to the productive process, but extends also to the broader sphere of the whole business model. In this sense, strategic innovation can be characterised by different elements:

-  **What:** the changes correlated to the product's material and immaterial characteristics and with what is offered in the broader sense.
-  **Who:** the specification of new targets of clients not sufficiently served by the competition, the identification of new needs to be fulfilled or simply of original ways of fulfilling these needs.
-  **How:** the rethinking of the ways of carrying out and of managing external communication, human resources, commercial channels and, more in the large, processes for the management of the resources and skills portfolio, which are at the base of competitive success.

The described theme is particularly important in the business strategy studies because this way of considering innovation is evident in the way each enterprise interprets and adapts itself to the external environment. Consequently, the strategic

innovation turns out to be fundamental for the business success. Furthermore, it is often a common element in companies that are characterized, even in different fields, by a significantly higher level of performance in relation to the competitors.

Another interesting aspect refers to successful and innovative companies: even if the strategic innovation has an element (what, who or how) which is decisive for its introduction, the new model of business takes place in the whole and the innovation extends to the other elements.

In such context it is certainly important to be able to develop a series of thoughts and ideas in order to orient the development of operators and, more in the large, of the entire protected natural areas territories, following the innovation path. As a matter of fact, innovation in the entrepreneurial model helps businesses and territories obtaining positive results in the short period. Furthermore, through the creation of the conditions for a continuous use and an effective renewal, innovation helps businesses giving continuity to their development model.

2. Research method and case selection

Deepening the innovation topic and trying to find ideas useful to help the development of a sustainable entrepreneurship in protected natural areas means understanding the conditions that can support the birth and development of enterprises and innovative entrepreneurial models, as well as identifying the critical aspects that could hinder their development.

The recommended methodology for the realization of this research is particularly correct in order to fulfill this objective, since it suggests:

- I. To focus our attention on some sectors that must be coherent with a sustainable development idea of protected natural areas;
- II. To select, in each of these sectors, some cases to be analyzed both at a local and at a national level, aiming at deepening how the entrepreneurial experiences were started, what common characteristics they have assumed with time, what difficulties the entrepreneurs had to face, what factors have been decisive during the development path.

In reference to the indications about the sectors to focus our analysis on and to the choice of the activity field of the selected enterprises, in the present work some hypothesis have been made:

✚ **Tourism activities:** we focused on activities dealing with different kinds of services offered to visitors, selecting among these the most relevant ones that can be proposed in a nature mountain context. We therefore selected:

- I. One hotel
- II. One restaurant
- III. One mountain refuge
- IV. One agritourism
- V. One “albergo diffuso”

✚ **SME development:** we focused our attention on businesses and associations providing services for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises:

- I. Different kinds of associative services
- II. Commercial services and services for the brand valorization
- III. Technical training services
- IV. Management training services

✚ **Natural Environment:** we focused on activities sharing the offer of products and services strictly linked to the natural environment:

- I. A nature guide cooperative
- II. A photography course tour operator
- III. A farm producing wine and oil
- IV. An activity managing museums and expositions in the territory of a natural park
- V. A farm producing and selling flowers and plants

✚ **Built heritage:** instead of limiting our research to the strict concept of built heritage, we went further and expand this concept to tradition and territorial values in order to be able to analyze:

- I. One wood manufacturing activity

- II. A small local cheese production
- III. The artistic-cultural activity in a redecorated fort
- IV. A business producing wine
- V. A business producing cold cuts
- VI. A business producing cheeses

In addition to the dimension of the activity field of the studied businesses, the sample construction has taken into account a series of other basic principles in order to assure the presence of interesting learning occasions:

- ✚ **Include at least some examples of “entrepreneurial excellence”**. That is, companies that have been able to really stand out in their field with wide-ranging and innovative practices (all the better if such examples can be reproduced in the reference natural area). This will enrich the learning processes and will get the message across that it is possible to think about more ambitious projects.
- ✚ **Deepen knowledge about the reference territory**, including a significant number of “internal” cases. This has the objective of understanding the distinctive features of the entrepreneurial context where development policies will be triggered and to give enough visibility to the project in progress.
- ✚ **Focus on companies that can develop products and systems for what they offer which are coherent with the concept of sustainable development in protected natural areas**. This prevents losing energy by analyzing cases which, though interesting for the entrepreneurial development process, don't have elements for replicability inside a natural area.
- ✚ **Do not exclude companies working in contexts that, even if not inside a protected natural area, are in geographical areas with analogous characteristics** in terms of: i) predominance of the farming/crafts/tourism fields as opposed to the industry fields; ii) possibility of accessing financing for the investments. This allows extending the analysis to any other company in Aosta Valley that, in the analyzed fields of study, has developed particularly interesting innovative elements.
- ✚ **Include at least one case, for each of the four studied sectors, of companies not belonging to the Aosta Valley context**, with the objective of creating a larger variety in the learning process and to involve the project partners.
- ✚ **Include cases which haven't had a great success**, but that are examples of a more limited entrepreneurial pattern. This has the objective of delving into

elements that are obstacles to development and trying to overcome them. It also has the aim of verifying the economic sustainability of such entrepreneurial patterns and their possibility of lasting in time. One of the assumptions of this research is that inside protected natural areas it may be appropriate to develop, along broader entrepreneurial experiences, a “family” entrepreneurship, where the employment of family members is one of the conditions for sustainability, while at the same time contributing in this way to Gross Domestic Product, to employment and to improving services and quality of life in the area.

The comments on the whole described variables have led to the creation of a sample of 20 businesses, whose characteristics are synthetically presented in the following table (table n.1).

Table 1. Selected businesses sample.

	Theme	Company	Business Area	Natural Area	Region
1	Tourism Activity	Hotel Bellevue	Hotel - hospitality	Gran Paradiso National Park	Aosta Valley
2	Tourism Activity	Restaurant Valnontey	Restaurant	Gran Paradiso National Park	Aosta Valley
3	Tourism Activity	Federico Chabod Refuge	Mountain refuge	Gran Paradiso National Park	Aosta Valley
4	Tourism Activity	Agriturismo Pietra Antica	Organic farm agritourism	Majella National Park	Marche
5	Tourism Activity	Sextantio	Diffuse hotel	Gran Sasso National Park	Abruzzo
6	SME Development	Consorzio Operatori Turistici Valle di Cogne	Consortium	Gran Paradiso National Park	Aosta Valley
7	SME Development	Consorzio Produttori e Tutela della DOP Fontina	Consortium		Aosta Valley
8	SME Development	Institut Agricole Régional	Education		Aosta Valley
9	SME Development	SDA Bocconi School of Management	Post-graduate education		Lombardia
10	Natural Environment	Cooperativa Habitat	Nature guides	Gran Paradiso National Park	Aosta Valley
11	Natural Environment	Associazione Mountain Photo Festival	Photography workshop	Gran Paradiso National Park	Aosta Valley
12	Natural Environment	Castello Monte Vibiano Vecchio	Olive oil and wine		Umbria

13	Natural Environment	Fondation Grand Paradis	Promotion of cultural and nature- based tourism	Gran Paradiso National Park	Aosta Valley
14	Natural Environment	Ciccolella	Flowers and plants		Puglia
15	Built Heritage	Les Amis du Bois	Wood manufacturing	Gran Paradiso National Park (near to)	Aosta Valley
16	Built Heritage	La Chèvrerie	Goat dairy farm	Gran Paradiso National Park	Aosta Valley
17	Built Heritage	Associazione Forte di Bard	Castle for exhibitions		Aosta Valley
18	Built Heritage	Les Crêtes	Wine	Gran Paradiso National Park (near to)	Aosta Valley
19	Built Heritage	Salumificio Bertolin	Cold cuts		Aosta Valley
20	Built Heritage	Carozzi Formaggi	Traditional cheese		Aosta Valley

3. Some evidences emerging from case study analysis and from the consequent in-depth examinations.

The analysis of the selected cases was mainly focused on an interview. In the majority of the cases the questions were directly asked to the entrepreneur; however, when he was not available, the interview was organized with a person having a prominent position in the business structure, who is usually involved in the decision making processes.

The interviews were, in some cases, joined to an analysis of the business website and to some data coming from secondary sources like, for instance, sector studies and databases containing business financial statements.

Following the suggested template we have tried to understand, for each business, the following points:

- How the entrepreneurial activity was started;
- The built position and the dimensions reached with the passing of the time;
- The role territory and public funds played in the building of the business model;

- The property perception of the business future developments.

The analysis exposed in the following tables (tables 2-21) summarizes all the above mentioned elements and ends with some suggestions (lesson learned) underlying the potentially more interesting aspects emerging from the studied cases.

Company name Hotel Bellevue
Location Cogne
Region Aosta Valley
Natural Area Gran Paradiso National Park
Business area Hotel-hospitality
Theme Tourism
<p>Description of the Business</p> <p>The Bellevue Hotel is an independent family run 4-star-hotel, affiliated to the Relais & Chateaux trademark. It has a 1 Michelin star restaurant. In addition to the hotel development the owners have enlarged, through the time, their activities' volume. They have opened new tourist and trade facilities in the Gran Paradiso National Park.</p> <p>The hotel is situated in the centre of Cogne, a picturesque little town surrounded by the snow-capped mountains of the Gran Paradiso National Park. The hotel guestrooms are furnished in traditional mountain style, using only the highest quality materials so as to ensure maximum comfort. A popular choice among long stay guests and families, Hotel Bellevue's chalets offer all the services of a hotel coupled with the additional privacy of an independent holiday home. Guests wishing to taste Aosta Valley excellent cuisine are quite simply spoilt for choice. The Gourmet dell'Hotel Bellevue provides an elegant atmosphere in which high levels of service and exquisitely presented gastronomic specialties guarantee a memorable dining experience. The less formal Terrazza restaurant is the ideal venue for a light lunch, whilst the Bar à Fromage is a veritable cheese-lovers paradise. The Brasserie du</p>

Bon Bec, located just outside the hotel, offers a relaxed environment in which to enjoy excellent home cooking. The Cantina Vini is home to an impressive selection of the most prestigious Italian and international wines. The Hotel also has a very romantic restaurant, Le Petit restaurant, made up of only four tables. For centuries, the waters of this valley have been known for their health inducing properties. At Hotel Bellevue's "Valheureusa" wellness center, the water is used in a number of both traditional and contemporary spa therapies. Massages, mud packs, and rituals performed using wine and milk are just some of the treatments featured on the center's extensive spa menu. Facilities include saunas, Turkish baths, a hydromassage pool, and even a small alpine lake.

Lesson learned

The Bellevue Hotel experience proves that it is possible, in natural areas too, to realize hospitality excellence models combining them with local values. First of all, the business was able to reach high levels of offered services. Secondly, it has enlarged the offer system, adding a shop selling various products and other restaurant activities. It therefore succeeded in combining the sustainability of an independent hotel structure having a limited number of rooms with a volume of business sufficient to afford the necessary investments for the development on an international scale.

Company name Restaurant Valnontey

Location Valnontey (Cogne)

Region Aosta Valley

Natural Area Gran Paradiso National Park

Business area Restaurant

Theme Tourism

Description of the Business

The bar/restaurant is set in Valnontey (Cogne), in the heart of the Gran Paradiso National Park. This family-owned restaurant serves local dishes in a homely atmosphere. The key of the success of this restaurant is the location in the Gran Paradiso National Park. The landscape and the location are the strong points. They pay particular attention to the environment protection: as the restaurant is inside the park they try to produce the least rubbish possible, to make the separate collection of rubbish and to sensitize clients on the importance of the environmental protection.

Lesson learned

The Valnontey Restaurant, as well as the other structures offering hospitality, is an example of the fact that being in a very beautiful and, therefore, attractive territory offers many opportunities for tourism field. The important element during their development is the operators ability to characterize their offer and to make customers aware of the uniqueness of their businesses.

Company name Federico Chabod Refuge

Location Valsavarenche

Region Aosta Valley

Natural Area Gran Paradiso National Park

Business area Mountain Refuge

Theme Tourism

Description of the Business

The Federico Chabod refuge (mt 2750) is situated at the foot of the north-west face of the Gran Paradiso, at the heart of the Gran Paradiso national park. The refuge is open in the springtime to cater for skiing (until mid-May) and reopens in mid-June

until mid-September during the period of traditional climbing and hiking activities. Facilities provide for every comfort. In the summer, the refuge offers hostel services with 85 beds with toilets and shower en suite. The Chabod is the starting point for the standard Gran Paradiso route, offering a spectacular view of the entire massif, and is a stop-off point for route no. 4.

The idea of establishing a refuge named after Federico Chabod was suggested in the autumn of 1966 by a group of mountaineers who were members of the Valsavarenche guide federation. The location was chosen using the mountaineers' own experience and the need to reach routes that were not easily accessible, e.g. the Becca di Montandayné, the Budden, the north-west face of the Gran Paradiso and the south face of the Herbetet. By the autumn of 1977, the initial provisional building was complete, known as the "hut". Construction work was only possible during the summer months and lasted nearly 8 years. The construction of this refuge was made possible by the financial support received from the Valle d'Aosta regional government (in addition to the financial resources of the guides). The founder guides decided to set up a partnership, the Piccolo Paradiso, founded on July 28, 1985.

The Chabod Refuge has undergone successive improvements. The "hut" has been refitted to offer winter lodging facilities, as required by legislation.

In October 2001, the hut became the first European refuge to be awarded the standard UNI EN ISO 14001. The hut Federico Chabod, in partnership with the University of Turin – Department of Marketing Sciences – aware of the benefits arising by the use of the Environmental Management System, has decided to adopt environmental politics in order to obtain the qualifications:

- by means of continuous engagement and improvement.
- by implementing an Environmental Management System.

Lesson learned

Inside natural protected areas having a strict link with mountain it is necessary to consider, among the different forms of hospitality, mountain refuges. These particular kinds of structures, in fact, are essential to fully experience mountain. It clearly is a kind of offer addressing a very focused target and having management costs higher than those having the same size but set in a different area. They could therefore need to benefit, like in the case of the Chabod refuge, from investment fundings.

Company name Agriturismo Pietra Antica

Location Caramanico Terme (Pesaro)

Region Marche

Natural Area Majella National Park

Business area Organic farm/ agritourism

Theme Tourism Activity

Description of the Business

The Agriturismo Pietrantica farm house is located in Caramanico Terme (Pesaro), in the Majella National Park (740.95 km², Abruzzo, Italy). Situated at 850m a.s.l., the holiday farm "Pietrantica" has about 7 hectares of land cultivated with organic methods, including a vegetable garden. Though life in the park requires to be bound by certain rules, the owners are happy to follow them, even if this involves some sacrifice, because they are well aware of the advantages that the good condition of the protected area brings to their business. Simplicity, authenticity, peace and tranquillity are the points of strength of the farmhouse, and, aside from a few guests who go there following the "natural holiday" fad, their clients are looking for this out-of-time kind of holidays. The customers of the farmhouse are 60 percent Italian, 40 percent foreigners, principally coming from North Europe.

In the next future the owners are planning to produce honey, and to enlarge the production of their ancient variety of wheat. They see as a threat the competition of companies who get certification as organic farms/farm house from just because is fashionable, and not because they believe in the values behind this kind of business.

About a decade ago, the Agriturismo Pietrantica applied for a funding from the National park, because it was much easier to get than the European ones. At the moment they think that getting a constant financial contribution would be much better than receiving a one-off funding. Consistently with the self-sufficiency idea they try to apply to most of the aspects of their operations, they have adopted the

dual system for the collection of rainwater and water tap reducers to minimize water consumption. They also use energy-saving light bulbs, and nontoxic home-made cleaners. The holiday farm welcomes about 1,000 guests per year and they have a turnover of 30,000 euros.

Lesson learned

Agritourism in itself represents a kind of hospitality seeming to perfectly combine itself with natural areas characteristics. The Pietrantica experience shows that it is possible to try to offer customers an in-depth experience of local territory by proposing them agritourism products. Focusing on organic products is certainly one of the possible ways of characterizing the offer.

Company name Sextantio

Location Santo Stefano di Sassanio (AQ)

Region Abruzzo

Natural Area Gran Sasso National Park

Business area Albergo Diffuso

Theme Tourism Activity

Description of the Business

The Albergo Diffuso (diffuse hotel) Sextantio is located in Santo Stefano di Sessanio, inside the National Park of Gran Sasso-Monti delle Laga. Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park covers a surface area of 150,000 hectares, being one of the largest parks in Italy.

The “albergo diffuso” includes 36 guest rooms, common areas, a restaurant, conference rooms and boutiques featuring local artisan handiwork. The hotel provides its guests with a variety of leisure activities focused on the territory, and

documentary materials about the native culture. The hotel, which nowadays counts 20 employees, was opened in 2005, but the renovation works started well before in the late nineties. The idea of the “albergo diffuso” was born when Daniele Kihlgren, founder of Sextantio and sponsor of the project, bumped into this fortified town forgotten by time. Poverty and isolation during the recent past had preserved the integrity of the historic village. There were no cement constructions, no industrial warehouses, and the founder decided to transform the empty houses into a “diffuse hotel” in which guest rooms are intermingled with the houses of village residents. After consulting regional museums and existing residents over how to represent their local traditions, the Sextantio team began scouring the town and surrounding area for the everyday antiques and other raw materials that would help them re-create the simple homes once inhabited by shepherds, farmers, and artisans. The big challenge for this project was to ensure the protection of the territory, according to the principles of “authenticity” and “native identity”. In this perspective, Sextantio s.r.l. has signed a document called “Carta dei Valori” together with the chairman of the Natural Park and the major of the village.

The occupancy rate per year of the “albergo diffuso” is 20 percent. Customers are mainly couples, 30-45 years old, high income. Most guests are coming from North Europe and North America. The hotel guests are passionate of culture, outdoor sports, and they are interested in visiting a more hidden and authentic part of the country.

Sextantio has recently repeated the same formula in the Sassi di Matera area and they think that the establishment of a real estate branch would be a big opportunity for the company.

Lesson learned

Albergo diffuso is another kind of hospitality seeming to be in line with the characteristics of natural areas or of territories where it would not be convenient to build large-sized hotels. There is no better solution than building a kind of hospitality having tourists staying in already existing houses set throughout the territory being nevertheless able to guarantee them the expertise of a hotel operator. Sextantio experience highlights the importance of this kind of activity in order to improve and refurbish the structures already existing in the area and to design them for hotel activities. Nevertheless, Sextantio experience highlights some critical aspects too: it is difficult to have these structures available, since they often belong to private subjects; it is also difficult to obtain the refurbishing funds.

Company name Consorzio Operatori Turistici della Valle di Cogne
Location Cogne
Region Aosta Valley
Natural Area Gran Paradiso National Park
Business area Consortium
Theme SME development
<p>Description of the Business</p> <p>The Consorzio Operatori Turistici della Valle di Cogne (The Consortium of Cogne Valley's tour operators) aims at promoting the development of the Valley of Cogne, at coordinating the activity of the member businesses and at improving their efficiency and their productive capacity. It also contributes in the organization and realization of local events. Cogne is a small and quite isolated location. The consortium responds to the need of creating an association of different businesses in order to improve the productive capability to inspire the business idea. The aim of the consortium is to promote nature-based tourism in the Gran Paradiso park.</p>
<p>Lesson learned</p> <p>The Consortium represents the Cogne Valley Tour Operators interests and performs an important role in the territorial tourist development. It is, in fact, one of the subjects dealing with destination management at a local level and it is common knowledge that this kind of action is crucial for the tourist success of the territory. The Consortium experience is of particular interest for the variety of roles it has to carry out, since it both deals with the promotion of territory and tourism services linked to nature and, at the same time, with the direct organization of different kinds of events. It has also an active role in encouraging integration and cooperation among operators working at different levels of the tourist network.</p>

Company name Consorzio Produttori e Tutela della Fontina DOP
Location Aosta
Region Aosta Valley
Natural Area
Business area Consortium
Theme SME development
<p>Description of the Business</p> <p>Set up in 1957, initially as the Fontina Producers' Consortium and later as Producers Consortium and DOP Fontina Safeguarding Body, it superintends the production and marketing of Fontina and sees to the branding of those cheeses which meet the Fontina production regulations.</p>
<p>Lesson learned</p> <p>The Consorzio Produttori e Tutela della Fontina DOP (Consortium of Fontina DOP cheese producers and protection) is a very interesting experience since it should represent the technical method to aggregate a series of small operators of the food farming supply chain. It should also guarantee them, on the one hand, a higher bargaining power and, on the other hand, some commercial and brand protection competences that they are hardly able to develop by themselves.</p> <p>This is an interesting experience since it could be transferred, with the necessary changes, to many other sectors where the operator presence is very fragmented. Nevertheless, it shows that it is of fundamental importance for the consortium success to provide it with the necessary competences to reach the expected results.</p>

Company name	Institut Agricole Régional
Location	Aosta
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	
Business area	
Theme	SME development
Description of the Business	<p>The Regional Institute for Agriculture (IAR) promotes education and professional training in the agricultural sector. It also deals with the growing of its own agricultural farm and with the development of applied research. The close connection between Education, Farm and Research gives IAR the opportunity to join theory and practice and to obtain rewarding results. That connection gave birth to some of the best Aosta Valley wines. Besides production, they pay particular attention to ampelographic collection and to vineyards, where they do clonal selection.</p> <p>Many Aosta Valley autochthonous grape varieties are grown in the selection fields. These grapes were salvaged from old vineyards following a patient research work. Some of these grapes are among the new suggestions IAR wants to present in the next years. Besides grapevine and wine research, IAR also deals with other Aosta Valley agriculture sectors: meadows and mountain pastures, fruits and milk, environment and economics, mechanics and meteorology. IAR obviously produces and studies the Fontina, one of the Aosta Valley gastronomic glories.</p> <p>The IAR training mainly aims at training farmers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redirect the production quality • apply production methods compatible with landscape conservation and improvement, with environmental protection and with hygiene and animals wellbeing • have the necessary competencies to manage an economically profitable farm. <p>The IAR trains forest entrepreneurs and people dealing with forest activities to apply forest management practices in order to improve the economical, ecological and</p>

social forest functions.

Professional training is financed by:

European Social Fund (ESF), State and Regions (Regional Operative Program), Autonomous Region of Aosta Valley (Title III Regional Law 32/2007).

Furthermore, applying the 2007-2013 Rural Development Program and other regional rural laws, the IAR carries out training activities promoted by the Regional Government.

Lesson learned

The Institut Agricole Regional experience is very relevant as far as the technical training is concerned. It proves that it is of high importance to strengthen the acquired competences and to adjust them to the continuous knowledge evolutions. It is particularly relevant to give a cultural contribution to territorial development strengthening the respect for technical and operative professions. The IAR also contributes to the preservation of this kind of competences that have always had a great importance in the new businesses start-up processes.

Company name SDA Bocconi School of Management

Location Milan

Region Lombardia

Natural Area

Business area post-graduate/post-experience training

Theme SME Development

Description of the Business

Founded in 1971 by Università Bocconi, SDA Bocconi School of Management was the first management school in Italy and today enjoys international recognition as a

leading management school, with a turnover of more than 40 million euros. SDA Bocconi works in a very competitive international environment, operating on the following fronts of education: executive courses, tailor-made courses, specialist master degrees and MBA programmes.

SDA Bocconi programmes address people from all over the world with working experience. Research plays a crucial role in the process of generating, developing, and bringing up to date the knowledge that is at the heart of educational activities. The aim of SDA Bocconi is to bring international developments in science and academic culture into contact with the real needs of those involved in management in businesses, and in financial and public institutions.

The school was established in Milan, right next to the Bocconi University main building, also because most faculty members are in common. In addition to that, the facilities of the Bocconi campus, which are shared with the school of management, represent an environmental asset which is critical to the business. Milan was in any case the best place for the school. In fact, the city represents a credible and trustworthy centre for managerial contents. Often nicknamed as the "moral capital of Italy", Milan is the 10th most important centre for business and finance in Europe, with its economy being the world's 26th richest by purchasing power.

From the beginning, the school was designed keeping in mind the need of the Italian companies of a post-experience quality education for their employees. The key to success of the school is probably the capability to develop specific content for small and medium enterprises, and a big opportunity for SDA Bocconi would be shifting from a strictly commercial relationship with companies to a more continuative and collaborative logic of partnership.

Lesson learned

The Bocconi University Business School activity gives us the possibility to reflect on business management education, particularly as far as small and medium sized enterprises are concerned.

First of all, we can consider the variety of products that can be built for participants, who can attend the following kinds of courses:

- On catalogue courses (1-2 days duration);
- Master programs (1 year duration);
- Ad-hoc programs built on their needs;
- Initiatives of specific contents or privileging cross-functional contents.

Secondly, we should focus on how a management training activity has to refer to a national and international field in order to actually reach excellence levels. It is undoubtedly difficult to combine this necessity with the natural areas context.

Company name	Cooperativa Habitat
Location	Aosta
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	Gran Paradiso National Park
Business area	Nature guides
Theme	Natural Environment
Description of the Business	HABITAT is a cooperative society operating on the sector of nature based tourism and of environmental education.
Lesson learned	If we consider the tourism services that can be proposed in natural areas, the Habitat cooperative experience is of undoubted interest. Thanks to the wise mediation of the guides, people can experience the territory appreciating its deepest characteristics. They can participate to environmental education activities that are specific for different visitor targets. Furthermore, Habitat is a cooperative, a society form that is an alternative way of aggregating partners sharing a common project.

Company name	Associazione Mountain Photo festival
Location	Aosta
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	Gran Paradiso National Park
Business area	photography courses
Theme	Natural Environment
Description of the Business	<p>The Mountain Photo Festival Association was founded in order to allow people who, because of their passion, job or simply curiosity live mountain and photography, to meet in occasion of the homonymous Festival.</p> <p>The main activities and projects revolve around the Mountain Photo Festival, a photography event dedicated to the world mountains, to their peoples and cultures. The aim of the association is well summarized in its slogan "open your mountains", which is an invitation to cultural exchange as far as the mountain topics, all over the world, are concerned.</p> <p>The association also carries out the "Mountain Photo School" project, a series of training initiatives aiming at offering photography lovers some courses enabling them to improve their competences. There are different course levels in order to satisfy both beginners and experts' needs.</p> <p>Some teachers belonging to the association also periodically organize a series of workshops named "Come and take pictures of the flora and fauna plunging into Aosta Valley uncontaminated nature". During these workshops participants can take pictures of the most interesting areas of the Gran Paradiso National Park and of the Mont Avic Natural Park. The workshop is made up of a theoretical part and of practical ones.</p>
Lesson learned	<p>The experience of the little tour operating activity carried out in the field of a tourist and resident people addressed photography course offer is very original. Furthermore, it shows that it is possible, although being a small-sized enterprise, to</p>

develop an innovative business. The Association experience shows as well that it is necessary, to step from a small activity to a wider entrepreneurship project, to improve competences and management abilities.

Company name Azienda Monte Vibiano Vecchio

Location Marsciano (Perugia)

Region Umbria

Natural Area

Business area winery and oil production

Theme Natural Environment

Description of the Business

The Castello Monte Vibiano Vecchio Winery is located in Marsciano, a few kilometres away from Perugia, along the ancient royal road leading to Rome. The “Castello di Monte Vibiano”, which means Mount Vibiano Castle, is the symbol of the homonymous ancient village, dating back to the I century b.C. The castle overlooks the Mercatello Valley below, close to Marsciano. The building still keeps its unspoiled charm and originality.

Fasola Bologna Family farm is actually located there, it spreads all around Umbrian hills for about 500 hectares. In 1998 Andrea Fasola Bologna and his son Lorenzo, leaded off a new productive project keeping the family tradition with the aim of creating an outstanding product in the modern oenological sector.

The new Castello Monte Vibiano Vecchio Winery started its activity with the 2003 grape harvest, under the care of the oenologists Attilio Pagli and Valentino Ciarla. It only produces wine coming from self-grown grapes in about 40 hectares of vineyards. It produces about 250-300.000 wine bottles per year. The vineyards are located in the high and middle hills close to the winery. The grown grapes are

mainly red ones: Sangiovese chiefly, together with Merlot, Sagrantino, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Syrah. White grape Vineyards, despite being less present, do not enjoy less care. The business deals with two typical grape varieties of the region, Trebbiano and Grechetto, together with the Sauvignon Blanc. The Winery is also specialized in the production of extra virgin olive oil. This activity has always come along with the business tradition.

Olive trees spread all around hill grounds for about 50 hectares. They are located near the vineyards. The natural habitat is particularly good for both cultivations due to the agronomical and the climate conditions.

A very appreciated extra virgin olive oil is the result of the cultivation of these olives. This oil is offered in first and business classes of the biggest world airlines.

Lesson learned

The Monte Vibiano Vecchio farm experience is a great example of a clear integration of environmental considerations as a business development tool. Their marketing strategy is based on the promotion of the environment added value given to products: a small volume production of wine sold at high values because it was from a zero carbon accredited producer, and produced organically.

Company name	Fondation Grand Paradis
Location	Cogne
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	Gran Paradiso National Park
Business area	nature-based and cultural tourism promotion
Theme	Natural environment
Description of the Business	

The Grand Paradis Foundation's (FGP) general mission is the promotion and development of both nature and culture based tourism in the area that comprises the Aosta Valley municipalities within the Gran Paradiso National Park jurisdiction. Its aim is to promote, develop, coordinate and manage the network of locations of natural or cultural interest and the local museums with the institutional support of the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region. Moreover the Grand Paradis Foundation contributes to the enhancement of tourist and entrepreneurial experiences and realities in the area in particular by carrying out specific projects which create suitable conditions for the achievement of the aforementioned aims.

Within the framework of the above competencies the Grand Paradis Foundation puts itself forward as the experimental laboratory of a new policy model for the shared management of services which are of collective interest and has the aim of actively contributing to the definition and strengthening of strategies and policies regarding the development of tourism both at a local and regional level.

Fondation Grand Paradis was created to enhance and convey the natural and cultural peculiarities of the Aosta Valley area within the Gran Paradiso National Park jurisdiction.

The three valleys of the Gran Paradiso within the Aosta Valley have an exceptional heritage, that stretches over a vast mountainous area, going from the valley bottom to the Grand Paradiso's 4,061m. It is a unique and protected area since 1922, the year when it was established as Italy's first National Park.

The aim of Fondation Grand Paradis is to make this environment's rich and varied fauna and flora known and respected, thanks to the Park visitor centres, the information points and the Alpine Botanical Garden Paradisia.

This territory is also characterized by its culture and traditions: medieval castles, traditional rural buildings and areas imbued with local culture and history are enhanced through eco-museums, exhibition centres, guided visits and didactic activities. The objective is to develop a new sensibility towards nature and to revive local culture by creating temporary exhibitions and themed events throughout the whole year.

Fondation Grand Paradis brings together and represents the different stakeholders from the three valleys: the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region, the Gran Paradiso National Park body, the Municipalities and the Mountain Community, in order to create cultural and nature-based services which are integrated into the territory.

Partners: Aosta Valley Autonomous Region, Gran Paradiso National Park, the Grand Paradis Mountain Community, the municipalities of Aymavilles, Cogne, Introd, Rhêmes-Saint-Georges, Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, Valsavarenche, Villeneuve and the Gran Paradiso National Park Professional Guide Association.

Sites managed by Fondation Grand Paradis:

- Gran Paradiso National Park visitor centres of Cogne, Rhêmes-Notre-Dame and Valsavarenche
- Paradisia Alpine Botanical Garden of Valnontey (Cogne)
- Maison Gérard-Dayné of Cogne
- Alpinart Exhibition Centre of Cogne
- Maison Bruil of Introd
- Introd Castle
- Maison Musée Jean-Paul II , Les Combes (Introd)
- Maison Pellissier, Rhêmes-Saint-Georges
- Châtel-Argent , Villeneuve

Lesson learned

The Foundation promotes and manages culture and nature-related sites inside the Natural Park.

Balancing the different stakeholders' interests, the Foundation aims at creating a culture and nature-related tourist product, offering tourists an opportunity to experience the territory.

By the management of its network of sites (with public funds) the Foundation increases the turnover and enhances the activities of the satellite industries in the municipalities within the Gran Paradiso National Park jurisdiction.

Company name Ciccolella

Location Molfetta, Bari

Region Puglia

Natural Area Tavoliere delle Puglie

Business area flowers and plants

Theme Natural environment

Description of the Business

Ciccolella Spa is located in Molfetta (Bari). It is one of the biggest firms in Europe in the field of production and distribution of cut flowers and potted plants. Ciccolella is specialized in the production of protected crops of rose and anthurium and offers the most complete range of floral products. With 40 years of experience in the field, Ciccolella currently has about 100 hectares of greenhouses at its production sites in Italy, and it has companies in the Netherlands highly specialized in the sale and distribution of garden products throughout the European continent.

All the three production sites are located in the “Tavoliere delle Puglie”, a wide plain situated in southern Italy, which is now intensively cultivated.

The Ciccolella family business started in the '60s, when they decided to expand their cultivation of vegetables by adding roses and chrysanthemums, trying to take advantage from the proximity of the Molfetta cemetery. The flower business continued to grow until the sons decided to start trading flowers in foreign markets. In 2004 the company signed an agreement with Edison for greenhouse energy supply, with the aim of saving energy and minimizing costs, in a logic of respect for the environment.

In 2007 the company was quoted on the Italian stock exchange: it was the first flower company worldwide to be listed. Nowadays Ciccolella is a multinational firm, counting 1,800 employees and a turnover of about 500 million Euros, but production and company values are still strictly linked to the land where everything started. In fact, Puglia is the family homeland; climate and ground are ideal for growing flowers, otherwise they wouldn't have started with the flower business.

Although there were several flower growers in the area, the Ciccolella family was able to escape from the traditional logics of distribution in their field, and create a firm that sells flowers all over Europe, even if being a large group of societies inevitably leads to the difficult task of conciliating everyone's needs and demands.

Lesson learned

The Ciccolella experience is relevant from a double point of view. First of all, as far as the origin of the business idea is concerned: it proves that it is possible to maintain the link with local products, although looking for a supposed higher profitability choosing some businesses (flowers) instead of other ones (vegetables). Secondly, as far as the development path dimensions are concerned: it demonstrates that, sometimes, we can build quite ambitious growth paths reaching

stock exchange quotation and conquering foreign markets. Nevertheless, to reach these goals, it is necessary to go over an exclusively local dimension (the production takes place partly out from the territory of origin; competences and employees partly come from the exterior; the business is linked to international businesses).

Company name	Les Amis du Bois
Location	Introd
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	Gran Paradiso National Park
Business area	wood manufacturing
Theme	Built heritage
Description of the Business	<p>Les Amis du Bois (the friends of wood) is a small company producing wooden objects and carvings typical of local tradition. The workshop, housed in a classical Aosta Valley building made up of stone and wood, is set 16 km far from Aosta, in the hamlet of Villes Dessus in the village of Introd. What makes this business unique is the fact that they carry out an ancient tradition, trying not to change it by using the same kinds of wood. They use the wooden waste materials to heat the shop and the workshop. They are aware of the importance of the Internet in order to reach and attract customers and they have a very updated website.</p>
Lesson learned	<p>Traditional Handcraft manufacturing realized by this small-sized business is an example of territorial tradition valorization and of the possibility to guarantee a job</p>

opportunity to the involved people. It is worth evaluating how the business will be able, in the next years, to enlarge its sphere of activity, even thanks to the website they are more and more improving.

Company name	La Chèvrerie
Location	Valsavarenche
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	Gran Paradiso National Park
Business area	goat dairy farm
Theme	built heritage
Description of the Business	
<p>La Chèvrerie is a family-run goat dairy farm set in Valsavarenche, in the territory of the Gran Paradiso National Park. Anna Rotella, the owner, breeds 54 goats and produces and sells goat cheeses and eggs. Being in the National Park, the air and the grass are less polluted. Here the cattle is fine and produces good milk that makes them able to produce quality cheese.</p>	
Lesson learned	
<p>The Chèvrerie goat cheese production is a further example of valorization of handcraft competences present in the territory. These competences can offer a job opportunity and some profit to the managers of the activity, that contributes in enriching the territory in the whole. However, this kind of activity is bound to remain a small-sized business.</p>	

Company name	Associazione Forte di Bard
Location	Bard
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	
Business area	castle
Theme	built heritage
Description of the Business	
<p>Almost intact from the moment of its construction, the Fortress of Bard represents one of the best examples of early 1800 military strongholds. The Fortress of Bard is made up of 3 main defense stations positioned at different levels upon a high imposing rock spur, the lowest at 400m above ground and the highest at 467m. Thanks to the restoration of this magnificent fortress and the various territories connected to it, the entire fortress compound together with the village of Bard has now become the leading cultural centre of the Western Alps, offering innovative exhibition spaces and services dedicated to the spread of culture combined with high quality accommodation and hospitality facilities.</p>	
Lesson learned	
<p>The Forte di Bard experience, though being located outside the Gran Paradiso National Park area, is very important with reference to the development possibilities of tourist and cultural activities and to the success conditions of these actions. The Fort requalification investment was very well conducted and the structure is perfect for hosting expositions, events and a series of other activities. However, the so far reached results make us reflect on two fundamental questions. First of all we should reflect on the fact that, in one territory, the artistic-built heritage has to reach a certain level to become the reason for organizing a trip and, therefore, to be able to attract tourists; otherwise, it is necessary to content oneself with a less ambitious objective and focus on increasing the satisfaction of in loco tourists. Secondly, we should consider how it is difficult developing and promoting activities in the artistic-</p>	

cultural field in a territory like Aosta Valley, having a history and people vocation of a different nature, more sensitive to environment and mountain.

Company name	Les Crêtes
Location	Aymavilles
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	Gran Paradiso National Park
Business area	winery
Theme	built heritage

Description of the Business

With 25 hectares (62 acres) of grapes dedicated to wine production, Les Crêtes is the largest privately held vineyard and winery operation in the Aosta Valley. The Aosta Valley, located in northwest Italy, is Italy's smallest and least populated region. It is an alpine valley with grape growing conditions typically associated with mountain elevations.

Close to Mont Blanc and surrounded on three sides by the Italian, French and Swiss Alps, it is a beautiful and unique part of Italy. Les Crêtes vineyards are planted in both indigenous vinifera varieties (Petite Arvine, Petit Rouge, Fumin, Mayolet, Cornalin), as well as the more traditional vinifera varieties (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Syrah, Muscat) which are also well adapted to the region's climate and soil conditions. Les Crêtes vineyards are located along the Aosta Valley's Dora Baltea river and are distributed among vineyard blocks in six different villages; Saint Pierre, Aymavilles, Gressan, Sarre, Aosta and Saint Christophe. Plant densities in the vineyards range from 7,000 to 8,000 vines per hectare. Because the Charrères believe great wines always start with quality grapes, vineyard management at Les Crêtes is firmly based on a meticulous agronomic management system. Spraying to

control diseases is kept to a minimum to protect the regions delicate terroir and to follow the new E.U. rural policies for preserving mountainous areas. The soils that have developed over the centuries on the glacial morain hillsides around Aymaville are composed of a mixture of sand and calcareous rocks. Les Crêtes vineyards are located at relatively high mountain elevations (600 to 1,000 m. /1,970 to 3,280 ft.), and due to the high elevation climatic conditions, the harvests at Les Crêtes often begin in late autumn. This gives the grapes time to ripen while exposed to a wide variation in day and night temperatures, a natural process which adds to the unique aromatic character and flavour profile of the resulting wines.

Les Crête's Winemaking: Les Crêtes produces about 230,000 bottles annually (19,200 cases). The winery, the heart of the estate, is located in the scenic Aymavilles area of the Aosta Valley. Visitors to the winery can view the 16th Century Côteau la Tour tower which stands high above the surrounding vineyards and is the symbol of Les Crêtes and its line of quality crafted wines.

Lesson learned

Les Crêtes winery is an example of business continuity from generation to generation, with a gradual enlargement of the farming products, until focusing, in recent times, on wine production. They have, like other producers, tried to focus on some autochthonous grape varieties and to strengthen the link with the territory they are located in. Unlike many others, they succeeded in creating excellent quality products and, above all, in building their own firm. Furthermore, they have developed other commercial and communication skills that have led their products to be sold in 15 foreign countries. Finally, some of their products were awarded at a national level.

Company name	Salumificio Bertolin
Location	Arnad
Region	Aosta Valley
Natural Area	

Business area cold cuts

Theme built heritage

Description of the Business

The Salumificio Maison Bertolin is situated in Arnad, a little Aosta Valley village of 1300 inhabitants. Founded in 1957, the Maison Bertolin is today a modern factory and an important reference point of Aosta Valley gastronomy. Maison Bertolin products are synonyms of genuineness, because they are the result of traditional recipes; the quality of the raw materials involved in the productions makes them unique and, above all, excellent. The expertise, the passion and the attention for an always evolving market allowed Maison Bertolin to diversify its production. Today, as well as the famous Lard d'Arnad DOP, the jewel of the Arnad factory, around thirty high-quality varieties of salami are produced and sold.

Lesson learned

Among the Aosta Valley cold cuts producers the Maison Bertolin experience is very important for the following reasons:

- They were able to valorize the local gastronomic culture and to well select some products for their clients;
- They have succeeded in creating and promoting their own firm outside local borders too;
- They have built a very beautiful business that can host groups of visitors and tourists who can admire the different cold cult production phases. At the end of the tour visitors can directly buy products at the factory outlet.

Company name Carozzi Formaggi

Location Pasturo, Valsassina (LC)

Region	Lombardia
Natural Area	
Business area	traditional cheeses
Theme	Built Heritage
Description of the Business	
<p>Carozzi Formaggi Srl is located in Pasturo, a small town situated at 650m a.s.l.. In a new plant of 2.000 square meters, the firm core business is the aging of traditional cheese of Valsassina. The company has now 15 employees, and a turnover of about 9 million Euros. The company sells its products to large scale distribution (40%), wholesalers (45%) and directly to restaurants and food shops (15%).</p> <p>Situated in the Alps of Lombardy, in the northern Italy, Valsassina is a valley where dairy production is a pillar of the local economy. New producers of cheese still apply all the traditional rules they have learned from their fathers to obtain high quality cheeses such as Taleggio DOP, a square-shaped cheese of ancient origins, with uniform and compact paste and thin crust.</p> <p>At the beginning Carozzi Formaggi was a cheese trade company, founded by Aldo Carozzi, who had previously gained experience as a salesman in a local cheese company. In 1970, he decided to open the first seasoning plant in Ballabio (Lecco) and became a producer, in order to avoid depending too much on suppliers, and to better control the quality of the products he sold. In 2000 the company inaugurated the new plant of Pasturo.</p> <p>The company is strictly connected with the territory, so that they could not imagine starting somewhere else. Carozzi Formaggi identifies itself with the charm, the tradition and the craftsmanship that distinguish Valsassina cheeses and people. The use of genuine milk, which comes from livestock grazing on mountain meadows, with clean air and water, makes the landscape a distinctive element of their business.</p> <p>Given the reduction in the consumption of cheeses in Valsassina that has occurred in recent years, a big opportunity for Carozzi Formaggi would be to spread the awareness and enhance the image of their top quality cheeses outside Valsassina and abroad, in order to increase sales and avoid the price competition of large scale distribution. About that, they think that “Consorzio</p>	

del Taleggio” could be more helpful in supporting export sales, which are very complex to manage.

Carozzi Formaggi has recently obtained the International Food Standard and the Food BRC Certification in order to ensure the quality of its products and processes at a European level.

Lesson learned

The Carozzi Formaggi business is not located in a protected natural area; however, it is set in Valsassina, a very beautiful valley from a nature point of view. This business shows that it is possible to exploit the link with territory and tradition to realize a product like cheese and become a reference point for some local products sold in some northern Italy regions. The Carozzi experience also proves how is less natural and, therefore, more difficult, trying to take a dimensional leap. This would mean, in fact, changing from direct sales to large-scale retail trade; in other words, this means not limiting the business to realize local products (that have a kept down number of customers) and enlarging the range of offered products.

ANNEX A.1

Interviews

RESTAURANT VALNONTEY	
Bar restaurant set in Valnontey (Cogne), in the heart of the Gran Paradiso National Park. This family-owned restaurant serves local dishes in a homely atmosphere.	
Meeting with Joelle Cunéaz, one of the owners of the business	
1. How long has the business been operating?	The business was started in 1943.
2. How many employees?	A part from 2 partners (my mother and me), we have four employees who work full-time with us during the off season, while in the high season we have got 10 full-time employees.
3. Who has established the business?	The business was established by my great uncle Efisio Perret.
4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?	He had traveled around the world and he had already managed two hotels; he was a far-seeing person and had foreseen that, starting a business in Valnontey, inside the Gran Paradiso National Park, would be a success.
5. What made you select this location?	Because it is inside the Gran Paradiso National Park.
6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?	No, I don't think it would work if located somewhere else.
7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?	The landscape and the location are our strong points.
8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?	See question 7.
9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?	I think that, for us, the biggest opportunities are the regional fundings for restructuring the buildings and for buying the equipment we need.
10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?	I think that, a part from the economical crisis, the greatest threats are the taxes, that are becoming higher and higher, as well as the price of the employees.
11. Did the business have state help to start?	Actually I don't know, it was started too many years ago.
12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates?	
13. Did you find getting help or support easy?	
14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy?	
15. What help would improve your business now?	I think that we seriously need a reduction of the tax burden
16. Do you have an environmental management?	We pay particular attention to the environment protection; as we are in the park we try to produce the least rubbish possible, we make the separate collection of rubbish and try to sensitize our clients on the importance of the environmental protection.
17. How many customers/visitors do you have?	During the low season we have got a maximum of 20 people per day, while in the high season the maximum number of customers is 200.

18. What kind of customers do you have?

Our customers are families/couples/singles who like nature and tranquillity. In June, July and September we have a lot of foreign customers eating at our restaurant. Luckily we also have a consolidated local clientele.

19. What is your turnover? No data available

20. the address of an internet site

no internet site

21. please include some electronic photos



22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview

The Restaurant Valnontey is a business handed down from generation to generation; nowadays it is only opened in summer (usually from May until the end of October), as it is the highest tourist season. Therefore, during the rest of the year, the owners maintain themselves through other jobs, but they still carry on the family restaurant. They have a loyal clientele made up of both tourists and local people, so they are very known for their genuine products and for the homely atmosphere of the restaurant.

AGRITURISMO PIETRANTICA

The Agriturismo Pietrantica farm house is located in Caramanico Terme (Pesaro), in the MAJELLA NATIONAL PARK. Situated at 850m of altitude, the holiday farm "Pietrantica" has about 7 hectares of land cultivated with organic methods, including a vegetable garden.

BACKGROUND

The Majella National Park (Parco Nazionale della Majella, 740.95 km²), established in 1991, is located in the region Abruzzo, Italy. The park is centered around the Majella massif, whose highest peak is Monte Amaro (2,793 m). In the park there are more than 2,100 plant species (about one third of the Italian flora), and are more than 150 animal species. The park contains about 500 kilometers of Hiking trails through the mountains, cave paintings in Grotta S. Angelo and Grotta del Cavallone (the latter being one of the deepest caves in Europe open to the public).

1. How long has the business been operating?

The farm was founded a long time ago by my father in law, "nonno Paolino", who still is the pillar of the business. In 1996 the farm was transferred to my husband, who became the owner it in 2001. Over the years we have restored the farmhouse and started to welcome guests. We knew nothing, and we had to learn everything. The Italian Farmers Confederation (CIA) was very helpful in advising us and we started to offer meals as well.

2. How many employees?

We are 3 people working in the farmhouse.

<p>3. Who has established the business? See answer 1.</p>
<p>4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea? We don't want to be a hotel, we want to welcome people to our simple life. We avoid TVs in the rooms, there is no signal for mobile phones.</p>
<p>5. What made you select this location? When I saw this place for the first time I had sort of an intuition, and when my husband asked me if I really wanted to live here, in the middle of nothing, I said yes. I felt that this small village, near to the "eremi" and inside the Natural Park, was a very resourceful place.</p>
<p>6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else? I think that it should work everywhere. Especially in these times of crisis, we should teach young people the self-sufficiency economy.</p>
<p>7. Is the landscape important to your business operation? Yes, it is the most important thing.</p>
<p>8. Do you think there is something unique about your business? Simplicity and authenticity. Peace and tranquility. Taking a step back to our origins. For example, I bake bread by myself, using an ancient variety of wheat that we cultivate in our land, even if it yields much less than a standard wheat. My bread is very good, and when people ask me to buy it, I say I'd rather offer it.</p>
<p>9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business? We are planning to have bees and produce honey, and to enlarge our wheat production.</p>
<p>10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success? Many companies, certified as organic farms, take the European incentives and use them to produce industrially. Many hotels call themselves agritourism just because it is fashionable. These companies can be a threat to our work.</p>
<p>11. Did the business have state help to start? We got a funding from the national park. The amount was lower than the European funding, but it was easier to get, and we think we did the right choice.</p>
<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? It was a little time consuming. There were no restrictions.</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy? It was easy enough..</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? See answer 12.</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? I think that for this kind of activity it would be better to get a constant financial contribution (eg monthly) rather than one-off contributions.</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? We have adopted the dual system for the collection of rainwater and we have installed water tap reducers to minimize water consumption. In addition, all light bulbs are energy saving, and we use only natural and nontoxic cleaners made by us.</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? I don't know. Maybe 1,000.</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? 60% Italian, 40% foreigners from Holland, Germany, UK, North America. 15% of our guests end up here just because agritourism is fashionable, but the rest of them are really interested in this kind of holiday. This is why they always come back, despite the financial crisis.</p>

19. What is your turnover?

About 30,000 €

20. the address of an internet site

<http://www.agripietrantica.com/>

21. please include some electronic photos



22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview

Though life in the park requires to be bound by certain rules, the owners are happy to follow them, even if this involves some sacrifice, because they are well aware of the advantages that the good condition of the protected area brings to their business. The owners have bravely continued and expanded the family business, creating an oasis of tranquility, outside of time, where self-sufficiency and barter between neighbors find new value. Certified as organic producers, they believe their methods of cultivation go well beyond “organic”, being totally natural.

SEXTANTIO

The Albergo Diffuso Sextantio is located in Santo Stefano di Sessanio, inside the National Park of Gran Sasso-Monti delle Laga. The structure includes 36 guest rooms, common areas, a restaurant, conference rooms and boutiques featuring local artisan handiwork. The hotel provides its guests with a variety of leisure activities focused on the territory, and documentary materials about the native culture. The poverty and isolation of these places during the recent past have preserved the integrity of this historic village. This particular condition has led to the philosophy and inspirational principle of the resort. The final objective is to avoid the lost of the territorial identity of tourist destination.

BACKGROUND

Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park covers a surface area of 150,000 hectares. It is one of the largest parks in Italy. It offers a number of proposals, itineraries and visits for every season thanks to the

richness of its habitats, its massifs, and thanks to the charming historical-architectonical evidences it preserves. The Park consists of three mountain groups: Gran Sasso d'Italia chain, Laga massif, and Gemelli Mountains. The Park is also characterized by the presence of the highest peak of the Apennines, Corno Grande (2,912 meters). On this chain there is the one and only glacier of the Apennines, the so-called Calderone, which is also the southernmost glacier in Europe.

1. How long has the business been operating?

The hotel was opened in 2005, but the renovation works started well before in the latest nineties.

2. How many employees?

In the hotel base there are 20 employees.

3. Who has established the business?

The founder is Daniele Kihlgren, creator of the whole project.

4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?

On the day he discovered Santo Stefano di Sessanio, the nearly abandoned Italian town that would change his life, Daniele Kihlgren was lost. The fortified town seemed forgotten by time. "There were no cement constructions, no industrial warehouses, none of the Swiss-style tourist chalets which blight so many historic Abruzzese towns", Daniele says. "All that remained was the stone village." It was a stone village with virtually no residents. It takes vision to look at a dying town and think, "This would make a great hotel." Daniele saw an opportunity to preserve Santo Stefano, revive its peasant heritage, and breathe new life into the local economy through a novel technique: transforming the empty houses into an albergo diffuso, a "diffuse hotel" in which guest rooms are intermingled with the houses of village residents. He rounded up funding and founded a company—called "Sextantio" after Santo Stefano's ancient name.

5. What made you select this location?

See answer 4.

6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?

In 2009 Sextantio repeated the same formula in the Sassi di Matera area, and we believe that this project can be applied to all villages in the central and southern Italy, belonging to minor heritage.

7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?

The landscape is absolutely critical to the business. To ensure the protection of the territory, according to the principles of "authenticity" and "native identity", the chairman of the natural park, the mayor of the village and the director of Sextantio s.r.l. have signed a document, the "Carta dei valori per Santo Stefano di Sessanio". This "value list", the first of its kind in the history of urbanism in Italy, is meant to preserve the evocative relationship between historic village and its agricultural landscape.

8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?

The point of the project is to keep everything as authentic as possible. The Sextantio team consulted regional museums on local traditions before scouring the town and surrounding area for the everyday antiques and other raw materials that would help them re-create the simple homes once inhabited by shepherds, farmers, and artisans. Sextantio also consult with existing residents over how best to represent their local traditions in everything from the home furnishings to the recipes in the restaurant.

9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?





A big opportunity would be the establishment of a real estate branch: we would apply the same principle to renovate buildings to be sold to private citizens.

10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?

New constructions can be a big threat to the business, together with the possibility of a mass tourism flow.



11. Did the business have state help to start?

No, the project was financed by private funds.

<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates?</p> <p>-</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy?</p> <p>-</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy?</p> <p>-</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? It would be easier if we could get public funds or incentives.</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management?</p> <p>-</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? Occupancy rate is 20% per year.</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? Our customers are mainly couples, 30-45 years old, high income. We have many guests coming from North Europe and North America. Our clients are passionate of culture and outdoors sports, and they are interested in visiting a more hidden and authentic part of our country.</p>
<p>19. What is your turnover?</p> <p>-</p>
<p>20. the address of an internet site http://www.sextantio.it/</p>
<p>21. please include some electronic photos</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;">     </div>
<p>22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview The "diffuse hotel" of Daniel Kihlgren has arisen a lot of interest for the innovativeness of the project, so that Kihlgren has been nicknamed "the man who saves the villages". Impressed by the artistic potential of the site, Kihlgren has tracked down one by one the old owners of the abandoned houses, and made them an offer. Most of the owner accepted to sell, because they</p>

had nothing to lose. In 2001, 75% of the buildings were abandoned, while at the end of 2008 there were already 120 inhabitants, about 30 businesses and over 7,300 visitors per year in 5 accommodation facilities. In this way a virtually abandoned village has gone back to life.

LES AMIS DU BOIS	
<p>Les amis du bois (the friends of wood) is a small company producing wooden objects and carvings typical of local tradition. The workshop, housed in a classical Aosta Valley building made up of stone and wood, is set 16 km far from Aosta, in the hamlet of Villes Dessus in the village of Introd.</p> <p>Meeting with Corrado Brunet, one of the owners of the business</p>	
1. How long has the business been operating?	We started our business in 1974.
2. How many employees?	We are three full time employees (working partners)
3. Who has established the business?	I started the business with my two partners, Fusinaz and Ollier.
4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea?	We were already keen on wood manufacturing and we decided to stop working as employees to start our own business.
5. What made you select this location?	We decided to locate our business in Introd because I'm the owner of this building, so I decided to transform it into our workshop and shop.
6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?	I think that having our business located in a municipality whose territory is partly inside the Gran Paradiso National Park jurisdiction is important. However, I think that few people are aware of the existence of the park, therefore I think that our business would work also if it was located somewhere else.
7. Is the landscape important to your business operation?	See question n. 6
8. Do you think there is something unique about your business?	I think that what makes our business unique is the fact that we carry out an ancient tradition and we try not to change it by using the same kinds of wood.
9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business?	I think that the best opportunity for our business is the possibility to participate, thanks to the help of IVAT (Aosta Valley Institute of Traditional Craftmanship), to national and international fairs. Fairs are a very important tool to have our products known and sold out of Aosta Valley.
10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success?	I think that the only threat to the future of our business is the fact that young people are not keen in craftsmanship anymore and, therefore, I fear that we won't find somebody to carry it on.
11. Did the business have state help to start?	Yes, we benefited from regional fundings for the business start up.
12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates?	It was easy and, of course, it restricts the way of operating of our business.
13. Did you find getting help or support easy?	Yes.
14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy?	No, I don't think so.

<p>15. What help would improve your business now? I think that nowadays, for such a business like ours, bureaucracy is too complicated. We spend half of our time in filling into forms and queueing to submit them and, sometimes, it is hard to understand what we are supposed to do. I think that our business would improve if the bureaucracy was simplified.</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? We use the wooden waste materials for heating the shop and the workshop. We are not planning to invest money in installing solar panels or other devices as we think that it is still profitless.</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? We don't monitor the number of clients.</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? We sell our products directly here in the shop to tourists but the majority of our customers are Italian and French retailers and wholesalers.</p>
<p>19. What is your turnover? Following the economical crisis our turnover has slightly decreased but, on average, it is of nearly 300,000 euros per year.</p>
<p>20. the address of an internet site www.lesamisdubois.com</p>
<p>21. please include some electronic photos</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p>22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview What emerged from the interview is that Corrado Brunet and his two partners are very keen on their job. They are aware of the importance of the Internet in order to reach and attract customers and they have a very updated website.</p>

<p>LA CHEVRERIE – GOAT DAIRY FARM</p>
<p>La Chèvrerie is a family-run goat dairy farm set in Valsavarenche, in the territory of the Gran Paradiso National Park. Anna Rotella, the owner, breeds 54 goats and produces and sells goat cheeses and eggs. Meeting with Anna Rotella, owner of the business</p>
<p>1. How long has the business been operating? I started this business 7 years ago.</p>
<p>2. How many employees? I'm alone in this business, I do everything by myself, from breeding and milking goats to producing cheeses. Next year my husband will probably become my partner in the business.</p>
<p>3. Who has established the business? It was me who established the business.</p>
<p>4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea? My strong passion for animals and my desire/curiosity to try to start such kind of business by myself.</p>
<p>5. What made you select this location?</p>

<p>Because I like Valsavarenche very much and the climate here is perfect for breeding goats.</p>
<p>6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else? Absolutely not. Some years ago I tried to move my business to Piedmont, but a great part of the goat cattle fell sick and died. I had to come back here; probably, being in the National park, the air and the grass are less polluted. Here my cattle is fine and produces good milk that makes me able to produce quality cheese.</p>
<p>7. Is the landscape important to your business operation? Yes, see question 6.</p>
<p>8. Do you think there is something unique about your business? I think that what makes my business unique is the fact that it is authentic/genuine. Goats are my life and I like what I do very much, even if running this business alone is very tiring.</p>
<p>9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business? Next year I'm planning to enlarge and concentrate the buildings of my "farm" and I hope I will benefit from regional fundings to do it.</p>
<p>10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success? I think that the only threat (a part from the risks for the cattle health) is the decrease of tourists' number in the area but, since now, I decided not to wait for tourists in my farm but to join them in markets and all along the country ski tracks in Valsavarenche; I don't know why, but they like buying my cheese while skiing!</p>
<p>11. Did the business have state help to start? Yes. When I started I benefited from a regional contribution for young farmers (I started it as a part time job) of 15,000 euros. I used this money to buy the plants and the equipment for the stable and for buying my first goats.</p>
<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? It wasn't difficult, it only took a very long time to get it.</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy? Yes.</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? See question 12.</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? The only help I need is the one my husband can give me joining me in the business.</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? The project for the new structure of the farm is eco-friendly: the structures will be self sufficient from an energetic point of view and the stable will have a grass roof and, therefore, it will have a low environmental impact.</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? I don't know; managing the business by myself and selling my cheeses in market and on the country ski trails I'm not able to count costumers.</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? My customers are keen on nature and genuine products. They are mainly tourists or Aosta Valley inhabitants coming to Valsavarenche for skiing or hiking.</p>
<p>19. What is your turnover? I think it is of about 20,000 euros per year.</p>
<p>20. the address of an internet site No internet site</p>
<p>21. please include some electronic photos</p>



22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview

What emerged from the interview is that Anna Rotella deeply loves her job and her goats (during the interview she said “Goats are my life”). She is also very interested in protecting the environment and she also participates to a market called “mercato a km 0”, where local producers only sell products of our territory.

Although she hasn't a website and his seat is difficult to find (and usually she is not there, but breeding or milking her goats so customers have to call her on her mobile and wait for her coming back) she is known because of her quality cheeses, so she doesn't need, according to her, to promote herself on the web (also because she wouldn't be able, working alone, to produce great quantities of cheese).

La Chèvrerie is partner of a network of local producers called *Atelier du Goût*¹.

HABITAT COOPERATIVE

HABITAT is a cooperative operating on the sector of nature based tourism and of environmental education.

Meeting with Roberto Giunta, president of the cooperative society.

1. How long has the business been operating?



The society was founded in 1986, but they actually started acting in 1990, when they started managing the visitors centres of the Gran Paradiso National Park.

2. How many employees?

Until 2002 there were 6 employees working on the visitors centres of the National Park. After 2002 we stopped managing those structures and, consequently, the number of employees varies depending on the periods of the year. Nowadays we are two working partners (with VAT number) and 21 partners who cooperate occasionally.

¹ The *Atelier du Goût* is both a network of local producers and a showcase for their products owned by Fondation Grand Paradis. The aim of this network is to promote the products of our territory and to stress the relationship existing between products and land.

<p>3. Who has established the business? The cooperative society was established by 9 partners, who were biologists or simply keen on nature.</p>
<p>4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea? The founders of the society wanted to transform hiking into an occasion to learn “reading” the territory in all its aspects: observing animals in their natural environment, recognizing their traces, learning the names of flowers and trees (environmental education).</p>
<p>5. What made you select this location? We chose to establish the seat of our society in the area of the Gran Paradiso National Park for two main reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First of all because we wanted to be members of the <i>Consorzio Gran Paradiso Natura</i>, whose aims concern the promotion of tourist development and improvement of the local economy; • Secondly, because the fact of acting in the National Park increased the tourist and clients appeal
<p>6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else? As we are in a small region in which there are both a National and a Regional Park it would probably not be a problem having the seat out of the park but, if we were in a bigger area the business wouldn't work if located out of the protected natural area.</p>
<p>7. Is the landscape important to your business operation? Of course, it's fundamental. Nevertheless what makes the strength of our business is the matching of nature and culture.</p>
<p>8. Do you think there is something unique about your business? I think that what makes our business unique is our passion for our job and the strong belief that it is possible to “live” dealing with the environment. At the beginning it was actually possible to maintain ourselves only by working with nature; nowadays it is becoming more and more difficult and this is the reason why, a part from the two working partners, all the other members of the society cooperate with us as a second job or in their free time.</p>
<p>9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business? I think that the biggest opportunity for our business is that, being an enterprise, we have the possibility to improve ourselves thanks to refresher and specialization courses.</p>
<p>10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success? The fact of being a private enterprise is, in Aosta Valley, also a problem. In our area, in fact, Public agencies give the assignments to the best offering and do not reward quality; thus, the small enterprises risk to loose the majority of the job opportunities.</p>
<p>11. Did the business have state help to start? At the beginning we benefited from the law helping cooperative societies by financing the purchase of furniture, etc. We still benefit, for instance, from fundings for buying vehicles.</p>
<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? It was just a little bit long to get it, but it didn't restrict how we operate.</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy? Yes</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? See question 12</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? I think that, from the tourist point of view, we would be helped if the Region started promoting Aosta Valley not only as snow/ski and high mountain hiking but also as nature based tourism. As in the last decades the number of school trips has sensibly decreased I think that schools should be sensitized of nature based tourism and environmental education should be strongly promoted (on</p>

both regional and national level).
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? We are all members of environmental associations and we sensitize children of the importance of environmental protection. As we work in the park and we use the park structures we are bound to use organic products and to try to reduce the quantity of rubbish we produce.</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? We have an average of 10,000-12,000 customers per year.</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? We have a range of customers spacing over children and young people (until 20-year-guys) and people older than 35; there is therefore a gap between teenagers and adult people, which is more and more increasing over the years.</p>
<p>19. What is your turnover? Our turnover is, on the average, 150,000 euros per year.</p>
<p>20. the address of an internet site www.ambientenatura.com</p>
<p>21. please include some electronic photos</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p>22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview The Habitat cooperative society is very active and able to adapt itself to the market. Roberto Giunta and his partners are very prepared and aren't strictly bound to the National Park in their job.</p>

CASTELLO MONTE VIBIANO VECCHIO
The Castello Monte Vibiano Vecchio farm is the first farm in Europe certified as “zero greenhouse emission”. “Monte Vibiano vecchio” farm was awarded the Premio Impresa Ambiente 2010 (Enterprise-Environment Prize 2010) as the Best Management of Natural Environment.
<p>1. How long has the business been operating? It was founded in the sixties.</p>
<p>2. How many employees? 40 people are employed in the farm.</p>

<p>3. Who has established the business? The founder of the business was Lorenzo Fasola Bologna.</p>
<p>4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea? The farm was founded in the sixties by Andrea Fasola Bologna, the father of Lorenzo.</p>
<p>5. What made you select this location? Lorenzo and his family own the Castello of Monte Vibiano Vecchio since 1892. They have about 700 hectares of forestry, vineyards, olive oil trees and other fields.</p>
<p>6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else? It is possible, the most important thing is the spirit all the manager, employees and property have towards the environment.</p>
<p>7. Is the landscape important to your business operation? It is very important, not only for the beautiful view but mostly for the variety of cultures we have, from vineyards, olive trees, forestry and other fields like crop.</p>
<p>8. Do you think there is something unique about your business? Yes, we're the FIRST AND UNIQUE FARM IN ITALY, EUROPE AND PROBABLY IN THE WORLD TO HAVE REACHED THE ZERO GREENHOUSE GASES EMISSION ACCORDING TO THE STANDARD 150 14064, ALL CERTIFICATED BY DET NORSKE VERITAS. There aren't other farms that can say that, for sure.</p>
<p>9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business? We have the opportunity to give a big example from a little company and we hope other bigger farms and companies in general in Italy would follow our 360 GREEN REVOLUTION, as BEST PRACTICE to make their business environmentally sustainable.</p>
<p>10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success? I think that If media will go on misinforming people and business companies about the possibility of renewable energies and all new environmental friendly technologies, the future of our children is definitely compromised.</p>
<p>11. Did the business have state help to start? Yes.</p>
<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? It wasn't easy and some of them had let us curb some of our activities for some years.</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy? We have had a big support from a man that was an expert in finance.</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? Yes, it was long and complicated.</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? Yes, we always need them because we always invest in new researches, new technologies and we don't want to stop our continuous improvement.</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? Yes, we absolutely have, as we won the "PREMIO IMPRESA AMBIENTE 2010" as the company with the best environmental management; this prize allows us to engage the "BUSINESS AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENT 2011" prize, that is an official prize of the European community; we'll be the company that will represent Italy.</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? We have almost all of our big clients that come here one time a year. Regarding the winery we have daily 20-30 people in average visiting the cellar, tasting our wines and enjoying our ECOTOUR, that is made on electric jeep, charged by our two photovoltaic plants, so that this tour is COMPLETELY ZERO GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (ZERO CO2 ECOTOUR) -</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? We go from the most important airline companies in the world to single people that buy a bottle of wine or olive oil directly in our winery. Italian tourists: 35%</p>

Foreign tourists: 65%

Students: 15%

Young people: 55%

Families: 30%

19. the address of an internet site

www.montevibiano.it

20. please include some electronic photos



SDA BOCCONI SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Founded in 1971 by Università Bocconi, SDA Bocconi School of Management was first a pioneer in Italy and today enjoys international recognition as a leading management school. In 1998, SDA Bocconi was the first institution in Italy to obtain EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) accreditation. It ranks 10th in Europe and 28th among international business schools in the Global MBA Rankings 2011, published by the Financial Times. SDA Bocconi operates offers executive courses, specialist master degrees, MBA programmes and tailor-made courses for private companies, banks and public administrations. Research activities play a crucial role in the process of generating, developing, and bringing up to date the knowledge that is at the heart of educational activities, management education, and promotion of management culture.

BACKGROUND

Milan, for its crucial economic role and its fervent political and cultural activity that often anticipates national trends, it is often nicknamed as the "moral capital of Italy". The city is one of Europe's main transportation and industrial hubs, and recognized as a world fashion and design capital, with a major influence in commerce, industry, music, sport, literature, art and media. Milan is the EU's 10th most important centre for business and finance with its economy being the world's 26th richest by purchasing power. 15.2% of Milan's population is foreign born, and the city's workers have the highest average income rates in Italy, and 26th in the world. Its economic environment has made it, according to several studies, the world's 20th and Europe's 10th top business and financial centre, having been highly successful in terms of city branding.

1. How long has the business been operating?

The school of management was founded in 1971.

2. How many employees?

-

<p>3. Who has established the business? Prof. Claudio Dematté, Università Bocconi</p>
<p>4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea? From the very beginning, the school was designed keeping in mind the need of the Italian companies of a post-graduate quality education for their employees, that would allow them to be increasingly competitive. The aim of SDA Bocconi is to bring international developments in science and academic culture into contact with the real needs and operational problems of those involved in management in businesses, and in financial and public institutions.</p>
<p>5. What made you select this location? Milan has been chosen because it was already the base of the Bocconi University. However, the city of Milan represents a credible and trustworthy centre as far as managerial contents are concerned (see Background).</p>
<p>6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else? Building the school of management somewhere else would have led to a very complex management, since most faculty members teach both at Bocconi University and at SDA Bocconi. Moreover, Milan was the most credible place for this type of activity.</p>
<p>7. Is the landscape important to your business operation? In a broader concept of “landscape” we can say that the facilities offered by the university campus (eg lecture halls, library, restaurants, parking areas, gym, etc.), that are shared with the school of management, represent an environmental asset which is critical to the business.</p>
<p>8. Do you think there is something unique about your business? Perhaps the most important uniqueness factor is the capability of the school of management to develop specific content for small and medium enterprises.</p>
<p>9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business? A possible path of growth and development could be to shift from a strictly commercial relationship with companies to a new model of connection, more continuative and collaborative, in a logic of partnership.</p>
<p>10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success? Competition with other universities is really tough, especially in an international environment.</p>
<p>11. Did the business have state help to start? The school didn't received direct funds, but at times companies get public funds to be allocated to employee training.</p>
<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? -</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy? -</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? -</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? -</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? -</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? -</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? SDA Bocconi programs address people with working experience, from all over the world. Clients of SDA Bocconi are private companies, banks and public administrations.</p>
<p>19. What is your turnover? More than 40 million Euros.</p>

20. the address of an internet site

<http://www.sdabocconi.it>

21. please include some electronic photos



22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview

The uniqueness and distinctiveness of this project lies in the ability of the school to make use of the great wealth of knowledge of the Bocconi world, recognized by the national and international scientific community, to support the processes of development of small and medium enterprises, which in Italy constitute a significant reality, making 99.9 percent of total enterprises.

CICCOLELLA SPA

Ciccolella Spa is located in Molfetta (Bari). It is one of the biggest firms in Europe in the fields of production and marketing of cut flowers and potted plants. Since 2007 it was quoted in Borsa Italiana, becoming the first energy flowers firm quoted in a Stock Exchange all over the world. Ciccolella is specialized in the production of protected crops of rose and anthurium (64 different varieties of roses and 25 of anthurium) and in distribution and offer of the most complete range of floral products, from other varieties of flowers, to bouquets, compositions and plants. With 40 years of experience in the field, Ciccolella currently has about 100 hectares of greenhouses at its production sites in Italy and it has companies in the Netherlands highly specialized in the sale and distribution of garden products throughout the European continent.

BACKGROUND

The "Tavoliere delle Puglie" is a completely flat plain, situated in northern Puglia, southern Italy. It covers a surface of 3,000 km², being the Italian largest plain after the "Pianura Padana". Today, after a widespread improvement, the plain is intensively cultivated. In addition to wheat, beetroots and tomatoes, which are typical of the Foggia province, there are olive groves and vineyards, which allow the production of high quality DOC oil and DOGC wine.

1. How long has the business been operating?

<p>The business started in 60s. My mother and my father grew vegetable in a field which happened to be close to the Molfetta cemetery. A friend suggested to start cultivating roses and chrysanthemums in order to increase revenues. They put so much effort and determination in their work, the small firm has continued to grow until my brothers and I entered in the business and started to trade flowers in foreign markets. Nowadays we are a multinational firm, but production and enterprise values are closely linked to Puglia.</p>
<p>2. How many employees? Nowadays the group counts about 1.800 employees. We have three site of production in Puglia (Molfetta, Melfi, Candela) and three Dutch societies handling the distribution side.</p>
<p>3. Who has established the business? See answer 1</p>
<p>4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea? See answer 1</p>
<p>5. What made you select this location? My family is from Puglia: this is my parents' homeland. The climate and the ground here are ideal for growing flowers, otherwise I think they wouldn't have started with the flowers business.</p>
<p>6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else? In Europe there are other places which are favorable for this business, but this is our land.</p>
<p>7. Is the landscape important to your business operation? See answer 5.</p>
<p>8. Do you think there is something unique about your business? There are many small players in the flowers business around here, but my family was able to create something special: a firm from Puglia that sells flowers all over Europe.</p>
<p>9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business? In Italy flower production field is still very traditional. I think there is still plenty of room to innovate, especially in the distribution side.</p>
<p>10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success? Nowadays we are a large group of societies, my family it's only a part of that. To conciliate all needs and requests is not an easy task.</p>
<p>11. Did the business have state help to start? No.</p>
<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? -</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy? -</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? -</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? -</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management? In 2004 Ciccolella signed an agreement with EDISON S.p.A. for energy supply of greenhouses; this agreement was the start point for use of co-generation processes through which energy saving, cost competitiveness in the supply of greenhouses and respect for the environment are combined.</p>
<p>17. How many customers/visitors do you have? -</p>
<p>18. What kind of customers do you have? -</p>
<p>19. What is your turnover? About 500 million Euros</p>

20. the address of an internet site

<http://www.ciccolella.eu>

21. please include some electronic photos



22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview

Starting from a simple intuition and taking advantage of the natural lean of their native land for the cultivation of plants and flowers, the Ciccolella family has managed to outperform the competition of many local producers. Seizing the opportunity for internationalization, through a series of acquisitions the group has aligned its expertise in trading flowers and plants to major European competitors.

CAROZZI FORMAGGI SRL

Carozzi Formaggi Srl is located in Pasturo, Valsassina (LC) a small town situated at 650m of altitude. In a new plant of 2.000 square meters, the firm focuses on aging of traditional cheese of Valsassina, Taleggio and Gorgonzola, by maintaining the traditional craft at all stages of the production process.

BACKGROUND

Valsassina is a valley in the Alps of Lombardy, northern Italy, within the province of Lecco. Valsassina is enclosed between the group of Grigne, in the West, and the group of Orobiche Alps, which, in a semicircle from east to the North, separate it by the valleys of Bergamo and Valtellina. Valsassina also reaches the Lecco's branch of Lake Como at Lecco and Bellano. The valley is run by the Pioverna stream, which flows from the Grigne to the Lake Como.

The dairy production is the strength of the Valsassina economy. New producers of cheese have not forgotten the ancient rules like, among other things, the transferring of cattle on summer pastures at higher altitudes. The milk produced is processed to obtain high quality cheeses such as Taleggio DOP, a square-shaped cheese of ancient origins, with uniform and

compact paste and thin crust.
<p>1. How long has the business been operating? The firm was founded in Ballabio (LC) by my grandfather Aldo Carozzi as a cheese trade company. In 1970's he decided to open the first seasoning plant in order to become a producer. In 1980, after the death of my grandfather, my father Roberto and my mother Donata took control of the company and in 2000 they opened a new plant in Pasturo (LC). In the last years my brothers and I entered the business as salesmen.</p>
<p>2. How many employees? We are about 15 people including production, commercial and administrative sides.</p>
<p>3. Who has established the business? See answer 1.</p>
<p>4. What was the inspiration behind the business idea? After some years of experience as a salesman in a local cheese company, my grandfather decided to start a trade activity in cheese. After a while, decided to become a producer in order to avoid depending too much on suppliers, and to better control the quality of the products.</p>
<p>5. What made you select this location? My family is from Valsassina, we've always lived here. We could not imagine starting this activity in another place, because we would have lost our tradition and history.</p>
<p>6. Would this business work if it was located somewhere else? Yes, technically the business could work in all the provinces included in the Consorzio del Taleggio, but we would lose the charm, the tradition and the craftsmanship that distinguish Valsassina's cheeses and people.</p>
<p>7. Is the landscape important to your business operation? The fact that cheese is produced through traditional processes, using genuine milk, which comes from livestock grazing on mountain meadows, with clean air and water, makes the landscape a distinctive element of our business.</p>
<p>8. Do you think there is something unique about your business? Tradition, craftsmanship, landscape are all aspects that make this business unique and hard to replicate. Anyway, all the producers from Valsassina can use these attractiveness factors as commercial incentives.</p>
<p>9. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your business? The biggest opportunity would be to spread the awareness and enhance the image of our top quality cheeses outside Valsassina and abroad. In this way we could increase sales and avoid the price competition of large scale distribution.</p>
<p>10. What do you think are the greatest threats to future success? In recent years we have seen a reduction in the intake of our local cheeses. Moreover, the rising purchasing power of large scale distribution is a battle we face every day.</p>
<p>11. Did the business have state help to start? No, my grandfather started using his own savings.</p>
<p>12. If yes: how easy was it to get? Did getting it restrict how the business operates? -</p>
<p>13. Did you find getting help or support easy? -</p>
<p>14. Did things take a long time, was the paperwork easy? -</p>
<p>15. What help would improve your business now? I think that Government Agencies, and the "Consorzio del Taleggio" could be more helpful in supporting export sales. Selling abroad is still difficult, given that it implies to know the foreign markets, to find potential contacts, and to manage the administrative side of sales.</p>
<p>16. Do you have an environmental management?</p>

No, we don't. Last year though, our firm obtained the International Food Standard and the Food BRC Certification in order to ensure the quality of the products and processes at a European level.

17. How many customers/visitors do you have?

In 2010 we had about 600 clients.

18. What kind of customers do you have?

Our clients are 85% from Italy and 15% from abroad. In Italy we sell to large scale distribution (40%), wholesalers (45%) and directly to restaurants and alimentary shops (15%)

19. What is your turnover?

About 9.200.000 Euros.

20. the address of an internet site

<http://www.carozzi.com>

21. please include some electronic photos



22. Your own conclusions and remarks i.e. information about the company in media, image (if known) in the local community, your additional impressions from the interview

Carozzi is a historical company, deeply rooted in its traditions, which has been able to keep the pace with modernity, while continuing to enhance the beneficial aspects of its territory. Considering the cheese intake reduction noticed in the inhabitants of the surrounding areas, Carozzi needs to expand its selling area in order to avoid price competition.

What emerges from this first analysis is that there are some topics of a great interest referring to the birth and the development path of these businesses:

- ✚ **Variety of entrepreneurial models.** The analysed cases highlight the presence of substantial differences among business models as far as the

following topics are concerned: offered products, business dimensions, competitive field of reference. These differences demonstrate that it seems not to exist a unique way to do business; on the contrary there are different ways, for businesses, to be present inside natural areas too.

- ✚ **Entrepreneurship linked to territory.** The studied businesses seem to share a strong link to the territory (where territory is intended in its wide meaning):
 - offering local products like wines, cheeses and cold cuts;
 - hosting tourists and visitors of the area in hotels, agritourisms, restaurants;
 - showing and making people experiencing the local beauties through the organization of photography workshops, expositions and different kinds of museums;
 - giving birth to entrepreneurial activities owned by local people.

In other words, businesses and entrepreneurs seem to exploit one or more territorial aspects in order to start and build their entrepreneurial activity.

- ✚ **Territory only in a measure “entrepreneurship forge”.** More rarely the empirical analysis has brought out the protected natural areas territory as the driving force behind entrepreneurship like industrial districts, or through imitation processes between entrepreneurs, or thanks to the ability of attracting external investors. Nevertheless, the positive experience of the Sextantio albergo diffuso should make us reflecting on the possibility of exploring this path too.
- ✚ **Different resource and competence supply among businesses.** Though maintaining a familiar character, the studied realities have shown to have different resource and competence portfolio and level of management, depending on the business dimensions. This is a mark of the importance of the possessed resources and competences in order to build a solid and lasting competitive advantage and to start paths of dimension growth and of management development.
- ✚ **Limited interaction between businesses and institutions.** Generally, what emerges from the analysis is that the interaction occasions between businesses and institutions supervising territorial development are very marginal. Furthermore, the analysis highlights the fact that these interaction occasions are mainly limited to the financing grant (both as owned or in debt capital). This aspect is partly mitigated when there are subjects as, for instance, consortiums, acting as bridges connecting the private sphere and the public one. Nevertheless, this lack of communication is of high importance if we consider the relevance that tourism could have in natural areas


development and the fact that destination management actions are crucial for the territorial development.

- ✚ **Limited spaces of business cooperation.** The collaboration level among businesses emerging from the analysis is quite limited too. It seems not to be very relevant for successful experiences and, once more, in mainly takes place inside consortium activities. This element is of particular importance if we consider that many of the studied cases are small-sized realities that could actually benefit from carrying out projects and activities in cooperation with competitors, suppliers and customers.

Downstream of this first step, we have identified four businesses – one for each of the selected sectors – having an entrepreneurial experience particularly reach of interesting aspects, on which we have developed an in-depth analysis.

- ✚ **Bellevue Hotel, for the Tourism Activities sector.** This business was able to develop, in the hospitality sector, an interesting business model also outside the local context, working on many dimensions. First of all, the owner family has managed to build a high level service in the hotel, enabling them to increase both the number of visitors and the average price of the offered services. Secondly, they have built their development path broadening the offered services range and extending it to a handcraft products shop and to some restaurants, more and more localized in the Park and strongly linked to tradition and local products. They have therefore wisely combined business natural growth needs with those of environmental sustainability of entrepreneurial development.
- ✚ **Cogne Valley Tour Operator Consortium, for the field of SME Development:** in the tourism world, consortiums can play an important part in a territory's *destination management* activity. In the industrial world, they may represent a form of aggregation that allows SME to acquire some advantages typical of large enterprises'. The consortium of Cogne Valley is simultaneously working on activities for promoting the territory and on nature-related tourism services, as well as directly organising different kinds of events. It is also active in the delicate part of encouraging integration and cooperation between operators that work at different levels of the tourism field (tour operators, travel agents', hotels, restaurants, skiing schools, alpine guides, etc.).
- ✚ **Fondation Grand Paradis, for the Environmental field, is a key body in the Park.** It promotes and manages a series of culture and nature-related sites inside the Park. With the aim of making the flora, fauna, and beauties of the area known, the Foundation is building a culture and nature-related tourist

product, offering tourists not only something to see, but also an opportunity to experience the territory, with the difficulty of balancing the area's different stakeholders' interests (Regional and municipal administrations, Mountain Community, private operators). The Foundation's experience also allows to reflect on the economical sustainability of the management of this kind of sites, and therefore to evaluate the possibilities for the involvement of private entities.

 ***Les Cretes, for the Build Heritage field.*** By using the territory's natural resources, it has managed to create a wine of excellent quality, leaning of traditional cultivating techniques. Unlike much of the Italian competition, this Aosta Valley business, located on the Park's boundaries, has put together technical and production skills common to many entrepreneurs and commercial and communication skills. This enlargement of expertise took place from the '90s, under the wise guidance of Costantino Charrere, belonging the fifth generation of a family of entrepreneurs that has run this agricultural company which was established in 1750. Nowadays, thanks to the contribution of the his two daughters who support him with the management, this entrepreneur has succeeded in creating a highly regarded brand, to be present in 15 foreign countries, to place the produce in different commercial channels, to be acknowledged at a suitable price and to obtain important national awards for some of the labels.

Annex B

LES CRETES WINERY



Business Profile

How long has the business been operating?

Les Crêtes winery was founded in 1989. However, the Charrère family, who is the owner of the business, has been working in the agricultural sector since 1700.

How many employees?

10 people are employed in our winery.

Who established the business?

The founder of Les Crêtes is Costantino Charrère.

What was the inspiration behind the business idea?

Les Crêtes winery was founded in order to pursue a family tradition. The strength of our

business is that, year by year, we have been able to continually innovate it. Innovation, applied to all the levels of the production weaving factory, is today a strategy for emerging and differentiate ourselves in the global market. Here are some examples of innovation concerning our business:

- use of QR CODE on our stickers
- use of Stelvin screw caps for our bottles
- photovoltaic panels
- experimentations in the field of organic grape growing.

What made you select this location?

The business is located a few minutes away from the ancient family cellar building and from the historical water mill (dating back to the 18th century). Furthermore, the main vineyards are set a few kilometres far from the cellar.

How many customers/visitors x year?

Usually nearly 600 customers visit our business; they are both interested in visiting the cellar and in tasting our wines.

What kind of customers?

We have different kind of customers: single private customers and groups (loyal customers and occasional ones), dealers, sector guides, other wine producers, agents and foreign importers.

What is the turnover?

Our average turnover is of about 1,300,000 euros per year.

Business expansion opportunities

What are the biggest opportunities for the business?

Being in contact with importers in various foreign countries is a good opportunity to increase

our business.

What are the greatest threats to future success?

The global market is a great threat, since it generates too much business competition. Surviving in a market where businesses are bound to drive to lower prices is becoming more and more difficult. Having high production costs, the only survival possibility we have is to focus on the quality of our products, on the peculiarity of our territory and on our business brand (which is already well-known both at national and international level). This is our strategy to create a niche market focusing on mountain wines.

Is there an environmental management plan?

Yes, we have integrated and organic crop protection systems. Over the last few years, heightened public awareness vis-à-vis environmental issues has led to a considerable reduction in the use of agrochemical products in the field of crop protection. Legislative measures have restricted both the level of residues allowed in crops productions and the number and type of molecules which may be used. Therefore, environment protection and human health safeguard have been the main reasons for the development of both integrated and organic crop protection systems and, consequently, of the gradual increase in the use of substances known as sex pheromones. We are using the pheromones for the sexual confusion method to control the population of two Lepidoptera of the grape; this method is very important to preserve the natural balance between insects population in the vineyards and good insects populations (e.g.: lady bug is a very common predator in our vineyards) and to respect the environment. The soil erosion is prevented by planting grass between the rows. This method is also important to preserve the soil humidity and the organic matter, to create a habitat for the fauna populations, making the setting of a natural balance between helpful and damaging insects easier.

Business support

Did the business have state/grant help to start?

Yes. We received Regional Funds to build our cellar.

If yes: how easy was it to get?

It wasn't easy because in Aosta Valley, in 1989, the wine-growing system wasn't very developed yet. Incentives were therefore mainly given to cattle farmers.

Is the business eligible for other grant aid and support? If so what?

Yes, there are incentives to increase our business at an international level. They are provided by the Chamber of Commerce and the ICE in order to manage the vineyards in an integrated way. We also benefit from both regional and European funds enabling us to participate in national fairs.

Previous, Current and Future

What help would improve your business now?

Nowadays travelling abroad is very important in order to consolidate the relations with the importers, to participate in international fairs and, at the same time, to open our cellars to the more and more frequent visitors.

We would really like to receive incentives for the above mentioned activities.

Conclusions

Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?

We don't know if our business would work if located somewhere else; actually we cannot image our winery to be set anywhere else, since it is so strongly linked to our territory that probably it would be impossible to move it elsewhere.

Is the landscape important to the business operation? WHY?

Yes, the landscape is our strong point. We live in a mountain area; it is strongly characterized by the landscape and, in such a territory, wine-growing can be considered a heroic activity. On request, visitors are guided in a tour throughout our vineyards in order to experience our territory at first hand and to tread on the land that gives the life to our grapes.

Is there something unique about the business?

Yes, Les Crêtes was the first business, in Aosta Valley, to be recognized at both national and international level.

We are, still now, the biggest Aosta Valley private business. Thanks to the high quantity of wines we produce we are present on the national and international market. Our wines can be found on both Italian and international main guides.

How have local programs or policies helped or hindered the business?

Till now local policies have helped our business as far as the building construction, the

machinery purchase and the participation in sector fairs is concerned.

HOTEL BELLEVUE



Business Profile

How long has the business been operating?

The business has been operating for 86 years.

How many employees?

We have nearly 70 employees.

Who established the business?

Leone Cesariano Cunéaz from Gressan built Hotel Bellevue di Cogne in 1925. It has been run by the same family for 4 generations.

What was the inspiration behind the business idea?

We don't know, but in the '20s a lot of hotels were built in Cogne. In those years the mining activity was growing, with big investments. During the months of July and August hotels worked with summer tourism and during the rest of the year they worked as the mine's guest rooms.

What made them select this location?

We don't think the Park was the reason for investing in Cogne. We think the reason was mainly the expansion of the mine and the appearance of mountain tourism.

How many customers/visitors?

Our premises receive about 30.000 customers a year (of which 14.000 are customers of the hotel).

What kind of customers?

60% Italians

12% French

6% Belgians

5% Swiss

4% English

3% Americans

2% Russians

2% Germans

6% other nationalities (The Netherlands, Canada, Spain, Israel, Sweden, Australia, Japan, Austria, Brazil).

What is the turnover?

3,000,000€

Business expansion opportunities

What are the biggest opportunities for the business?

To belong to a quality hotel chain such as Relais&Chateaux, which has created an excellent network of 500 outstanding and unique houses around the world.

What are the greatest threats to future success?

The main difficulty is to maintain the position of prestige in the category of hospitality and quality cuisine.

Is there an environmental management plan?

We pay a lot of attention to the environment and to pollution in general. We pay attention to the use we make of natural resources.

Business Support

Did the business have state/grant help to start?

No. In 1925 there weren't any facilitation opportunities or grants but neither were there any bureaucratic duties .

Is the business eligible for other grant aid and support? If so what?

Two separate funding applications:

- Interest subsidy funding applications on long term invested capitals. Those are made especially for investments and our company has many projects.
- Regional funding applications through a free grant for 30% of the invoices amount admitted to calculation, according to the de minimis system.

Previous, Current and Future

What help would improve your business now?

Less bureaucratic pressure which hinders us in every way.

Conclusions

Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?

Certainly, but it would be different.

Is the landscape important to the business operation? WHY?

Now that the mine is closed and that the environment is becoming a sought-after and threatened resource, the Park and the natural environment has become the true and irreplaceable natural resource in Cogne. But the environment in itself isn't enough for a

company to survive. It needs partners, and these exist if the quality of life in the area is excellent, more attractive than life in the city.

Is there something unique about the business?

The knowledge that a hotel is made up, first of all, of a quality clientele, secondly of outstanding and enthusiastic staff, a management that has believed in this company, its location and finally, of its walls, fittings, pictures, furniture, carpets, cuisine and history. We are confident that without tradition there cannot be innovation, only a succession of ephemeral fashions. The spirit of Hotel Bellevue is expressed through the way we welcome our guests, not customers; through the furnishing, the details of the décor, the pictures, the music, the perfumes, the carpets, the cuisine, the wine cellar, the vegetable garden, the spa and the shop. It was born and developed as an experiment in which knowledge is gained, research is done, traditions are worked on, the future is planned, myths are created. And myths must be reinvented and reinterpreted as a mark of tradition.

How have local programmes or policies helped or hindered the business

The Region tries to favour hotel development. But bureaucratic difficulties, the endless duties we are subject to and inspectors, who seem to be more numerous than the clients, are obstacles that sometimes seem insurmountable.

CONSORZIO OPERATORI TURISTICI DELLA VALLE DI COGNE (CONSORTIUM OF COGNE VALLEY'S TOUR OPERATORS)



Business Profile

How long has the business been operating?

The business was started 10 years ago.

How many employees?

We are: 1 president, 1 employee in charge of the office, 2 full time employees for the data processing centre and 1 full time employee for the winter period.

Who established the business?

Originally this business was an association called “Les Amis du Paradis” and it was founded by my father. In 2000 it was transformed into a consortium.

What was the inspiration behind the business idea?

As we are in Cogne, a small and quite isolated location, it was the need of creating an association of different businesses in order to improve our productive capability to inspire the business idea.

What made them select this location?

Because the aim of our consortium is to promote nature based tourism in the park, therefore Cogne is the perfect place!

How many customers/visitors?

NOT APPLICABLE

What kind of customers?

Our customers are mainly Italian, foreign tourists are still the minority.

What is the turnover?

NOT APPLICABLE

Business expansion opportunities

What are the biggest opportunities for the business?

I think that, as far as the consortium is concerned, the biggest opportunities are the regional fundings to organize events and to promote our reality (50 % of the expenses). As far as the

hotels are concerned the best opportunities are the regional subsidized loans and the free grant loans.

What are the greatest threats to future success?

I don't see any threats to the future of our business. If there is any problem, we will simply shift from the consortium to an association. As we are an aggregation of entrepreneurs there is no competition, we are very united and we have a lot of voluntary workers.

Is there an environmental management plan?

It depends on the hotels; some of them have an environment management whilst some of them are still working on it.

Business Support

Did the business have state/grant help to start?

Yes, we benefited of a municipal funding of 17,000 euros. The municipality also contributes to the payment of the press agency and in the organization of events.

If yes: how easy was it to get?

It was easy.

Is the business eligible for other grant aid and support? If so what?

Previous, Current and Future

What help would improve your business now?

I think that, at a national level, we should promote different realities, including Aosta Valley, in addition to the classical ones like Venice and Rome.

Conclusions

Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?

No.

Is the landscape important to the business operation? WHY?

Yes, it is very important for our business operation.

Is there something unique about the business?

The location.

FONDATION GRAND PARADIS



Business Profile

How long has the business been operating?

The business was founded in 1998; it has therefore been operating for 13 years.

How many employees?

Nearly 20 people are employed at Fondation Grand Paradis at present. The number of employees has rapidly increased in the last five years. 10 people are employed all over the year, while during summer other 10 seasonal workers join the staff in the management of the nature and culture-based sites. In addition to the fix and seasonal workers our foundation collaborates with some associations of tourist and park guides in order to create a more

complete and attractive tourist offer.

Who established the business?

Fondation Grand Paradis was founded with the Regional Law n°14 - 14th April 1998.

What was the inspiration behind the business idea?

Fondation Grand Paradis was created to enhance and convey the natural and cultural peculiarities of the Aosta Valley area within the Gran Paradiso National Park jurisdiction.

What made you select this location?

The network of locations we own, which has increased during the years, is made up of buildings of both natural and cultural interest. These buildings belong to the Aosta Valley Regional Government, to the Gran Paradiso National Park and to the municipalities within the Aosta Valley slope park jurisdiction and have been given to our foundation as a commodate. The foundation partners have started a common management of these sites in order to reach the critical mass necessary to create a sustainable tourist offer. As far as our head quarter is concerned, it is set in Cogne, in the site of the old mining village. The village itself was a location our partners wanted to valorize and promote from a tourist point of view. The choice of having this network of sites in the Gran Paradiso National Park was also aimed at creating new job opportunities in the park area.

How many customers/visitors?

Nearly 40,000 people visit our sites every year.

What kind of customers?

Our customers are both individuals and groups. As far as groups are concerned they are mainly school trips or groups organized, for instance, by tour operators. Single customers belong to a proximity market and are mainly Italian. Our target, in the majority of the cases, are families. We have created a differentiated tourist offer, able to attract both culture and nature lovers, families having children and, thanks to the new technologies, young people too.

What is the turnover?

Our estimate 2011 budget is of 2,000,000 euros. Our activity has an institutional and a commercial budget. As far as the commercial one is concerned, it is of a residual kind; the

entrance ticket prices are therefore symbolic.

Business expansion opportunities

What are the biggest opportunities for the business?

The best opportunity for our business is represented by fund raising, especially as far as European funds are concerned.

What are the greatest threats to future success?

The greatest threat for the future of our business is the reduction of public funds available resulting from the economic crisis. Those funds, in fact, are nowadays mainly concentrated on the essential services.

Is there an environmental management plan?

At the moment we don't have an environmental management plan. We are implementing the processes to reach an environmental certification system.

Business Support

Did the business have state/grant help to start?

It was founded thanks to Regional Government funds.

If yes: how easy was it to get?

-

Is the business eligible for other grant aid and support? If so what?

-

Previous, Current and Future

What help would improve your business now?

Less bureaucratic pressure would certainly simplify our daily job.

Conclusions

Would this business work if it was located somewhere else?

No.

Is the landscape important to the business operation? WHY?

The landscape is our *raison d'être*.

Is there something unique about the business?

The fact that we are a private foundation acting as a dynamic management tool for the promotion of sustainable tourism and of sites belonging to public bodies.

How have local programs or policies helped or hindered the business

Our foundation was created with a regional law.

Annex C

4. Entrepreneurial development in natural areas and policy implication

Even in protected natural areas, entrepreneurship is an essential resource for the development of the territory, as it produces richness, it gives work opportunities, it gives “things to do”, both for tourists and for the local population. A territory with more activities is:

- ✚ More attractive for visitors, favouring the development of tourism and improving the level of satisfaction of customers.
- ✚ More interesting for those who live there, maintaining the population in the area and attracting new residents who bring work power, skills and energies.

This means that it is necessary to experiment in all possible ways to stimulate entrepreneurship, especially in areas where the relevant presence of the Public Administration can offer residents employment and career opportunities that don't encourage the diffusion of an entrepreneurial culture. This situation could require different action methods and longer time spans to obtain results, but it shouldn't discourage individuals from taking this course.

With the aim of encouraging entrepreneur development, policy makers should be reassured that there are examples of enterprises inside natural areas that are interesting and deserve attention. However, it should be considered that these are occasional examples, created by particular conditions, and not a diffused entrepreneurship, typical of industrial areas. This doesn't mean they aren't important entrepreneurial experiences in natural areas, only that opportunities must be reproduced and stimulated each time with individual actions, while in a context which creates entrepreneurship more diffusely it can be managed with actions which are not as direct.

The challenge becomes more interesting the more there is the conviction that entrepreneurship, especially innovative entrepreneurship, isn't created simply making economical resources available for potential investors, but that it needs a favourable context. A favourable context is a place with plenty of energy and competencies, where there are individuals and opportunities coming from other territorial and cultural contexts, where public and private spheres interact efficiently and where each one individually contributes to the development of the territory.


The analysis brings out clearly that in contexts such as natural areas, there are two types of entrepreneurship. The first one is of a more family-run kind and directed at working inside the natural area. It includes companies that are “a work-opportunity for

the family”, instead of being a tool to increase partners’ capital. They are mainly accommodation facilities, small artisan companies and small tourist services. The second type is broader, has a bigger scope of competition and is capable of reaching more interesting amounts of activity and economic results. It has the possibility of building successful and innovative experiences even if they are inspired by sustainability which is coherent with the characteristics of natural areas.

Both types of entrepreneurship are decisive for the development of the territory. The family-run type are important because they contribute to guarantee a first level of development of the area in terms of employment, of contributing to Gross Domestic Product, of enriching the attractiveness both for tourists and for residents. The broader type of entrepreneurship is important because it favours the development of some champions, characterized by a business model which is particularly innovative, that can enrich the learning process with new competencies and brings in new ideas and strategies that can be imitated.

These two kinds of entrepreneurship should be supported in different ways but should always be qualified and effective. For the first type, support services when acquiring new capital, training activities and basic consultancy and involving them in opportunities of knowledge transfer. For the second type, support for commercial development outside regional borders, management training and comparing with non-local experiences. In both cases these support services can be provided both making external professionals available, and encouraging the creation of bodies such as consortiums with specific objectives (consortiums for acquisitions, for commercializing farming produce, for the development of a brand-name or for the promotion of the territory). In the second case it is convenient to avoid a recurrent mistake: an efficient management of a consortium cannot be taken for granted. It is also convenient to focus all the necessary competencies in the consortium for reaching the set objectives.

The first element of success of entrepreneurial experiences is a strong bond with the territory, especially in terms of the products or services in offer. This is due to knowledge of a product still being one of the main guidelines for the start-up of an enterprise, or due to the territory strengthening and making produce trustworthy. From here different support actions are set up at different levels:

-  Working on technical training, of the development and preservation of craftsmanship, on the diffusion of hand labour, with the aim of nourishing the start-up process of new entrepreneurship, even the exclusively family-run type.

- ✚ Strengthen the image of the territory acting on the system, with the aim of building a brand name and a reputation and to increase in this way communicative power to support enterprises.
- ✚ Explore, in coordination with the enterprises, both through structured analysis and through brain-storming, the existence of areas for introducing innovative products and services which are related to the territory, such as the cases analysed. For example a tour operating activity created around photography courses, or the growing of ornamental flowers instead of vegetables.

When identifying new ways of development it is essential to consider their compatibility with the features of the area where they will be applied and therefore the areas they will favour. For example, activities related to the use and development of natural resources and cultural artistic heritage. However it is also important to create a critical mass in some areas of activity, to be able to reach an offer that can be considered by potential customers, as well as considering the values, the culture of the territory and its natural potential. In spite of the restoration investment and of the significant development in terms of investment and of the undoubtful level of quality, the Forte di Bard is proof of how difficult it can be to successfully develop artistic and cultural activities in a rather isolated way in a territory like Aosta Valley, where there is a bigger sensibility for the mountain and nature than for artistic and cultural activity. This may be because citizens themselves aren't an efficient transmitting vehicle, or because the product in itself seems less appealing.

A second element for the success of entrepreneurial experiences is the centrality of the strategy and, more specifically, innovation of the business pattern and the ability of interpreting changes in the external environment. It is the ideas and the ability of creating a system for the coherence between the offered product system, the targeted customers and the resources and skills. These connote the successful cases and the performances of companies that are superior to the average ones in the field.

A third element for success is the quality of the portfolio of resources and skills, as well as the broadness of the field of reference. The ability of looking ahead and of reasoning over a medium or long period of time allows companies to start prefiguring possible scenarios and imagining the possible actions to undertake. In this way they also develop a decidedly useful approach and work method in the present increasingly competitive context.

Considering these last elements for the success of entrepreneurial experiences, it is essential to guarantee companies the possibility of accessing quality training and consultancy services to be able to continually increase their level of professionalism

and skills. In this sense it is also necessary to try to increase in loco services and professionals with these characteristics. But even though for training and generally technical services it is easier and more appealing that the territory develop excellent products which are accessible to enterprises, for training and managing services for higher-level services, providers from external contexts may be more effective. This could mean bringing external professionals and supplying in loco training or consultancy, or even allowing companies to obtain grants to access managing training in prestigious schools in Italy or abroad, which would make comparison with external contexts even more efficient.

To sum up, protected natural areas have still not become systems characterized by a diffused entrepreneurship, capable of self-generation and of fuelling new businesses at significant levels. This makes it obviously necessary to carry out an action at a system-level that can contribute to creating a favourable context for carrying out an entrepreneurial activity, both for the farming-food-environmental field and for the tourism field, which has some specificities of its own. In this sense it is necessary to imagine a varied intervention from the guiding elements inside the territory, both for the coordination between different bodies and for the direct activity management, which not being economically convenient, would probably not be able to be managed directly by private bodies.

For a lot of activities that require big investments in terms of preservation and development of natural, artistic and cultural heritage, a small number of users may not make management convenient if convenience is measured with the usual indicators of remuneration of the invested capital. These activities and services are essential to increase the attractiveness and the quality of life in the territory. Therefore it is particularly interesting to experiment with the different ways of involvement between public and private bodies, operational for an efficient management of these activities. At the same time it can be useful to study the ways of evaluating investments of this nature that would allow to appreciate a series of benefits, less directly quantifiable and intended to materialize longer periods of time, but surely important for the development of the territory, in a broad sense.