

Massimo Negri

Manuale di museologia per i musei aziendali

Review by Tommaso Fanfani

More and more companies are taking interest in the reorganization and enhancement of their historical heritage. Companies worldwide are increasingly aware that collecting, preserving and organizing the records of their productive activity is far from being a cultural trifle. In fact, combining tangible values, such as **business** and **territory**, with the intangible but basic value of **culture** has not only proven to be worthwhile, but also profitable.

Corporate social responsibility continues to gain importance and is carried out through various activities: sponsoring of events for solidarity, fund-raising, social budgeting, transparency, and ethical rating. Firms also express social responsibility through a different relationship between company and clients, business and stakeholders.

Companies are progressively mindful of a deep and profitable link between enterprise and territory. Enterprise is not only in charge of goods and services production, but also plays a fundamental social role, i.e. cultural promotion and preservation of:

- the **historical roots** of its **production process**
- the **territory**
- the **surrounding community** with its own culture, customs and worldview.

To fully grasp the relationship between business and territory, companies need to spearhead projects for spaces that:

- house records of corporate/productive activity
- host seminars, meetings and discussions take place
- sponsor art exhibits or other cultural events

The entrepreneur's aim is to make a profit, but also to combine its economic goals with the intrinsic expectations of the local community.

Manuale di museologia per i musei aziendali, written by [Massimo Negri](#), with Monica Amari and Cristina Menegazzi, presents an invaluable review of these assets, which serves to define the broad range of corporate social responsibility.

The book:

- sums up the literature on company museums
- explains how a company museum comes to life
- gives information about company museums in Italy and abroad
- lists the several kinds of company museums that can be planned and created with reference to different production fields

- sets out guidelines for the best exploitation of resources allotted to company museums or archives.

Manuale di museologia per i musei aziendali lays out a cultural path, aimed partly at helping professionals who are already working in the field — with outlines, classifications etc.— but also describes the dynamics of company museums in order to suggest new reasons why a museum should be created. There are also practical guidelines and reference models, such as the museum in [Velenje](#), a mining district in Slovenia.

The authors take for nothing for granted with an apparently simple and surely over-exploited topic such as the general culture of museums. Problems and proposed models start from the **awareness** that each company has its own **history** to share and **potential** to develop; yet is firmly grounded in the local culture and identity. In other words, enterprise helps to create a community's cultural identity that the museum should then preserve and enhance. In fact, the company museum acts as a **powerful social tool** in the interest of both stakeholders and shareholders.

Although traditionally associated to the sphere of culture, the company museum also has a significant role as a vehicle for spreading a **positive corporate image**, i.e. a marketing tool aimed at shareholders' satisfaction. The museum is a «**culture-carrier**» and an **open workshop**. Each museum's mission has to be defined, elaborated and declared. It has several goals: social, cultural and commercial.

A company museum shows **stability**, long-term **creativity**; and focuses on human factors such as **research and innovation** – values that raise brand visibility and thus, its power on the market. By opening this public channel, a company lets its **skills, success and longevity** be judged, and increases the value of its products through positive feedback in terms of image and intangible worth.

The [Piaggio Museum](#) is a case in point: it started as a collection of written records intended to create an historical archives. In 1992-1993, the project goals included:

- increasing the feeling of belonging
- exhibiting the most important products from 1884 until today
- tracing the commercial development of the Liguria and Tuscany regions
- sharing the Agnelli family history
- creating a cultural body within the company
- consolidating a cultural link between business and the local community

Considering the basic issues that face a new relationship between business, culture and the surrounding territory, Giovanni Alberto Agnelli established an archives and museum, as well as the [Piaggio Foundation](#) to manage and promote the activities of both. The foundation is jointly owned by public and private bodies.

Piaggio's cultural project is a fine example of how to put Massimo Negri's manual into practice. Despite its name, there is little focus on the brand. It is actually a district museum which collects the memories and records of the whole territory; a museum of science and technology; an open workshop; a place where meetings, discussions and art exhibits take place. In one word, it is a place where business and territory meet and share the same values and goals.