

Foreword

by Giuseppe Paletta

In this issue of Culture e impresa, we continue our analysis of the structures to protect and preserve memory within an enterprise. In particular, our feature interview with Daniela Brignone describes the history of the Peroni archives and museum.

As with Barilla, the Peroni experience started with a process of identity acknowledgement started by the entrepreneurial family and subsequently supported by the employees. No managerial mediation was required, since there was no “top management” at Peroni where the family ran its own business. However, if the family sells the firm to a multinational, the absence of a mediator representing the firm’s identity may pose a problem.

There are further parallels with Barilla in this second case. As the Peroni archives operate in close connection to the business, they feel the direct effects of the economic situation, and their position within the firm’s list of priorities remains relatively low. Although the situation might not look very promising, the interview identifies this mixing of the archives’ cultural activity with the company’s operations as the basis for offering valuable assistance to all other functional departments in the company’s daily battle in the marketplace.

The delicate relationship between the Peroni Archive/Museum and their multinational ownership is characterized by new organizational features. The interview outlines the current working relationship, without making forecasts. The future of Peroni’s cultural activity and that of the enterprise itself as an autonomous and recognizable economic entity, depends on how this relationship evolves.

Besides the cultural operation activated by Peroni chairman, Giorgio Natali in 1993, Brignone calls attention to earlier informal attempts to conserve the company’s heritage. The unexpected discovery of a collection of objects, reminiscent of production and advertising processes at the beginning of the 20th century, demonstrates a previous awareness of the *nobility of making* – someone had found these objects worthy of display in a museum.

Daniela Brignone's scientifically meticulous work recognizes the inherent need for self-representation in a company's operational activity. In a sense, the conservation of memory is a *spontaneous need* of motivated organizations. It's also interesting to note how the first impulse to conserve tends to consider the semantic value of objects rather than of archival documents. This consideration takes us a step further: the interview identifies a historical archive and a museum, accepting a functional separation between two different cultural assets. This aspect is not discussed in depth in the current interview, but we certainly will explore it further in future issues of Culture e Impresa

A final note: Daniela Brignone works as a consultant with the Peroni Archives and Museum, and at the same time she carries out free-lance research with the Centro per la cultura d'impresa (Centre for Business Culture). It is in this latter role that she consented to our interview. The content of the interview is therefore totally independent from the Peroni company's point of view.