

**An interview with Tommaso Fanfani
Chairman of the Piaggio Foundation**

by Giuseppe Paletta

T.F.: Piaggio's cultural project originated with Giovanni Alberto Agnelli who, in 1992, became the chairman of Piaggio, an engineering industry founded in 1884. At that time, Giovanni - or 'Giovannino' as he was known by many - was only 28 and a lover of history and culture in general. He understood the significance of a business' roots from all points of view, including the commercial.

He always told me: "You cannot imagine how much it means to me to go to Japan and be able to say that our company has been established for over a century". He was not only a business man in the strict sense of the word. He graduated in Social Sciences and then earned an MBA, but his principal studies were grounded in liberal arts.

Giovanni's approach was marked by a strong sense of curiosity. He felt it was important to record the company's history and so he started - I don't know if it was his idea or of the staff working with him - by asking me, a professor of Economic History at the University of Pisa, to assign some theses on the history of the Piaggio company. His main motivation was cultural but there was also probably a goal of consolidating the company's external image. My answer to his request was "Okay, we can do it, but we'll need an archives. Without that, we can't really accomplish anything". To this, Giovanni Alberto Agnelli said in return: "We don't have a historical archives".

It seemed rather strange that a company established since 1884 did not have an archives. It was equally strange that there was no records repository, at least of what I call the *daily proceedings*; that is company's books, the minutes of the Board of Directors, of meetings and so on. So Giovanni gave me the task of seeking out the company's historical records. I started my investigation especially by questioning the older employees and discovered my first lead. I found out that, up until a few years earlier, there had been a general manager, later appointed CEO, Francesco Lanzara, an extremely methodical man who used to collect and classify those records he believed to be worth holding for longer than the terms required by law.

Since Lanzara was the CEO, this meant that his records might contain a large part, if not the entire history of the company. This was a real stroke of luck as it allowed me to make the extraordinary discovery, in a practically abandoned area of the plant, of 42 boxes of well-preserved records which then became the basis of the Piaggio archives. The oldest records dated 1920, whereas the most substantial part covered the period between 1943 and 1970 which corresponded to the years Lanzara spent in the company.

Once I had acquired the "Lanzara fond", I started to look for Piaggio records in other external offices. The first and most obvious place to begin was in Genova - Sestri Ponente, the birthplace of the company and headquarters of Piaggio Aero Industries, a part that seceded from Piaggio & C. in 1964. I also looked for records and documentation in Finale Ligure,

another historical productive plant of Piaggio since 1903. I continued my investigation in the communication and commercial agencies that worked with Piaggio over the years. I also carried out research in “Leader” in Florence, in Zancani’s agency in Genoa, in Publifoto in Milan, in the historical notary’s archives in Genoa, in the archives of the Courthouse in Genoa, looking for documentation regarding the evolution of the company, the creation of new branches, what supplies was purchased for the plants, any documentation about advertising campaigns or the normal commercial activities of an engineering company producing motors and means of transport.

I didn’t find out much from these investigations, except for the extremely important Genova Sestri Ponente repository with all the files regarding the airplanes built by Piaggio from its origins in 1900 to the 1960s. Each and every plane had its own file. Along with the historical records of the Sestri and Finale plants, I found boxes full of records-- in particular photographic plates of trains and airplanes. I subsequently compiled a generic descriptive list of the material available in Sestri and Finale. Facing such a wealth of unclassified and inaccessible documentation, Giovanni Alberto and I were persuaded to make the archives usable, not only the one in Pontedera but also the Liguria collection of the company. I began extensive negotiations with Rinaldo Piaggio, chairman of Piaggio Aero Industries and nephew of the founder, Rinaldo Sr. Giovanni Alberto Agnelli exerted considerable pressure to unify the two groups of records and documentation; thus, we finally signed a cooperation protocol providing for the transfer of the historical archives of Genova Sestri Ponente to Pontedera, the classification and the arrangement of the archives on our part, pledging to make it accessible and return it to Sestri when they had the right conditions to keep their own historical archives. I spoke informally with the regional Superintendence office assuring them that, despite the physical transfer of the records, they would still belong entirely to the company in Sestri. In other words, a repository of an officially recognized heritage was taking shape outside its region of ownership. This agreement took place in 1992-1993 when the Sestri company was undergoing a complex productive and corporate phase that included financial uncertainty and various transfers of property. In the end I could not carry out the signed convention and we discontinued the project. Since then we have focused on our repository in Pontedera.

I started the laborious task of filing the material with two young graduates Carlo Corbo and Paolo Pezzini, and in 1992 the company granted each of them a scholarship. One year later, I was able to give the chairman the first results of the classification-inventory of the first nucleus of our historical archives. I remember that first slide presentation to the young chairman and his staff in the conference room of the Piaggio executive management. Agnelli himself was amazed to see that in a short time, an extremely important records repository had taken shape, containing accounts, advertising material, photographs, drawings, sketches, receipts and other items. This was at the end of December 1993, and the satisfaction of seeing the organization and arrangement of the first few hundred files naturally led me to ask the question: “With such a varied and substantial archives, why not create a museum? Why don’t we collect and order the most significant productive testimonies?”

At the beginning of 1994, Giovanni Alberto Agnelli first took me to the places that now house the museum, the archives and conference room. At that time, they were only abandoned warehouses full of old hardware, shelves, and boxes of spare parts; there was even the old foundry. Places that had deteriorated for many years, marginal to the productive areas of the plant. Tools and equipment as well as the different productive functions of these places were moved to new structures a few years ago and to plants west of the original location where the archives is now kept. There we stood and Giovanni told me: “It’s around 2.500 square meters: six months from now, this will be the structure for the archives and the museum.” As I said, the area was practically devastated and so instead of six months, six years passed before the

museum was ready. However, we managed it and the museum is now a reality. Sadly, Giovanni Alberto Agnelli died in 1997 at only 32 years old and he never saw the final achievement of something that he strongly believed in and, for this reason, the museum was named in his honor. Together with the museum, the other central element of the Piaggio cultural project was the Piaggio Foundation. Of the three— archives, museum and foundation — this last one I believe was the most strongly desired by Giovanni Alberto Agnelli as a link between the business and its territory. The core of his vision was first, to consider Piaggio as a foundation that makes up this territory; and second, that Pontedera was a company town.

In recent years, the local economy has diversified, but, up to a few years ago, this company was the central source of income of the territory. During our long talks, the relationship between us discarded all corporate formality and we became friends, Giovanni Alberto Agnelli synthesized his vision in this way: “the company does not only have a role of producing profit; the company should be a constituent that valorizes the territory and that interacts with it in a more complex way.” In 1993-1994 he spoke about the social function of the business when the studies on this subject were still in their early stages and the relationship between the company and the stakeholders was not an important consideration.

Piaggio Foundation arising from the cooperation within the company, whose participation reached 50% and two local bodies: the municipality of Pontedera and the province of Pisa, who each contributed 25%. The board of directors is formed by 8 directors, 4 publicly nominated and 4 privately. The endowment fund is supported at 50% by Piaggio and at 50% by the two local bodies. This is the fundamental point that best expresses our shared sense of this cultural initiative: we want the Foundation to be not only an element of prestige and image for the company, but also an element and a pivotal link between business and territory, between culture and business. The photograph you see here was taken during the first public initiative of the Foundation. On May 30, 1995 in Florence at the offices of the Region of Tuscany, the Foundation presented “il filo di Arianna”, an orientation program towards university and the world of work for high school students: I received it from the Agnelli Foundation in Turin. The presentation was well-attended; besides Giovanni Alberto Agnelli, guests included Riccardo Varaldo, director of the S. Anna School in Pisa, Mario Garzella, Piaggio CEO, Alessandro Pinelli, director of external relations and myself.

Thus we began to operate with an orientation to the training for work and study, to the guidance for students in their choice of university. From that moment, the Foundation gave life to a series of initiatives and activities, especially in the field of culture, from economy to justice, hosting —once the Museum became available —plays, art exhibitions and other events.

The core of the Foundation aims at the mobilization of the culture in the territory not only of Pontedera, but also of the Tuscan region. One unplanned result may well have been the territory’s sharing in the promotion of Piaggio’s products. This is the sense of the origins of Piaggio’s cultural project. We should remember that Giovanni Alberto Agnelli started the project, but when he died in 1997, the museum had not yet been built. The Foundation had been working for only two years and only the archives was consolidated. We were at the beginning of the project and in 1997 there was a moment of indecision on what might be the future of Piaggio’s cultural project.

At that time, the chairman was Alessandro Barberis who agreed fully with the project of Giovanni Alberto Agnelli and felt it was a moral duty towards the young entrepreneur who believed in the integration between the objectives of corporate responsibility and of corporate productive development. The museum was inaugurated on March 29, 2000. It was the culmination of a process that had begun seven years earlier. On that day, the collection of Piaggio vehicles was shown both a national and international public. The museum was a lot smaller than what is today: the number of vehicles was less, the setting was far more Spartan,

The choreography and communication had not yet been implemented. But the museum had begun to exist, so the cultural projects continued according to their three basic elements: archives, museum and foundation.

In 2000, the business went through a critical stage, both at the end of the 1990s and at the beginning of the new century. The company went through a period of productive crisis that reached dramatic levels in 2003. The level of debt was so high that we didn't know how to keep the company and the Foundation working. These are notorious facts and I can only recall them: in October 2003, the control of the company passed to Roberto Colaninno. That moment was filled with tension due to financial difficulties that the new chairman faced by injecting fresh capital into the company and implementing a complex strategy of reorganization.

The priority was the future of the company, not to mention thousands of jobs. At that moment the cultural project could have either faded into the background or even come to a complete stop. On the contrary, from the beginning Colaninno expressed his support of the cultural project and addressed the recovery of the foundation's activity, discussing it with the public partners, in particular the municipality of Pontedera. The new chairman found a consolidated experienced cultural structure, shared it and became one of its supporters and still today expresses his responsibility and participation to the extent that the chairman of the company and the two CEOs sit in the Board of Directors of the Foundation. One may well ask how an Italian financier, who had taken over direction of an engineering company, was able to find the strength at such a critical moment for the business, to keep investing resources in an intangible project with the cultural goals of creating links with its territory.

There are several answers to this question and I believe only Roberto Colaninno can give them without fear of contradiction. From my point of view, in the Piaggio cultural project, the function of social responsibility plays a leading role. The vision of the relationship among shareholders and their expectations takes the connotation of who believes that there are new frontiers for 'intangible' activities that are functional to the strategic objectives of the company.

This implies that both the entrepreneur and the company are fully convinced that pursuing cultural objectives not only underlines the ethical value of the business itself, but also increases the visibility of the business in the market. Numerous studies have demonstrated consumers' preferences for products of a business that invests in culture, in solidarity projects and other 'intangible' values. Roberto Colaninno worked in Olivetti, in Ivrea where he started his managerial and entrepreneurial career. When we consulted rapidly on the strategies and policies of the foundation, I heard a few reference to experiences coming from far away that I believe can orient an entrepreneur to full support of the corporate social function.

In terms of "positioning" of the Foundation, the best proof of the success of the Piaggio cultural project and its usefulness as a link between territory and business came to light during times of disagreement –in labor relations and internal conflicts as well as in the relation between the company and the local authorities. It is no secret that in some of the most critical moments the foundation served as the meeting place for bargaining between trade union and corporate representatives, or between corporate units and government representatives. On several occasions, the Foundation has acted as a sort of buffer zone in a territory where labor conflicts have always been rather heated and debate is often lively. Unquestionably, this institution has an important cultural function that is strategic for the territory and shared by the local municipal and provincial bodies; but it also serves as an intermediary in other functions that are not strictly cultural.

From the public partners' point of view, the Province of Pisa and the municipality of Pontedera, there has always been the sharing of our projects. We have thought up and planned

the activities together each year, sharing strategies and initiatives, and making choices, from the biggest to the smallest details for an event, an exhibition or a conference.

I believe that this agreement and sharing demonstrate a rare example of a mixed Foundation on equal terms between private and public that has succeeded in satisfying both the expectations of a private partner – that wants an income from its investments – and the requests of the local bodies that use different parameters to evaluate the return on cultural activity.

G.P: First of all, thank you for the clarity and completeness of your introduction that will allow me the opportunity to focus on the different single issues that you have raised. Foundation, archives, and museum: what is their juridical relationship?

T.F: The Foundation is the only legal party. It is recognized regionally, has an initial endowment and lives thanks to contributions of its partners: 50% from the company and 50% from the two local bodies. Moreover, the company gave the building to the Foundation with a three-year interest-free loan. All the things in the museum and in the archives belong to Piaggio. The Foundation manages and administrates these cultural assets.

G.P: So the company gave the means for ‘cultural production’ and the Foundation uses them to organize a substantial part of its activity.

T.F: That’s right. In fact, the activities of the Foundation come from independent choices of the institution, regardless of what the needs and expectations of the partners may be. Obviously there is a board of directors to whom the chairman gives an annual account of the foundation’s policies and this ensures the sharing of common goals. The complete independence of the foundation has never been questioned. It is also necessary to say that the company took on both the regular and extra upkeep of the building ; its daily running, maintenance (let’s not forget that the Museum and the offices used by the Foundation cover 2500 square meters!), personnel, everything. The Foundation has its own budget coming from the annual contribution of the partners and is entirely contributed to the realization of the activity.

G.P: Right. So it’s clear that the investment of the company actually involves a lot more than its 50% quota. Let’s speak of a different matter. Previously, you spoke about the fundamental question of the cultural independence of the Foundation. This is clearly guaranteed from an internal governance: can you describe it?

T.F: The structure revolves around the board of directors that appoints a chairman chosen, according to the statute, from among the four directors designated by the company. The vice-chairman, again according to the statute, is chosen from the directors publicly appointed, in the same way that the president of the auditors’ committee is. From the governance point of view, let’s say that everything comes from the board of directors who, however, have delegated a notable margin of autonomy for operation to the chairman.

This is undoubtedly the consequence of the experience that this foundation has developed from its origins up to now. There has never been any interference from the company or the partners on the functioning of the Foundation. As far as the contents are concerned, we gave ourselves very few rules related to the use of our buildings. For example, we do not host labor, political or religious demonstrations. These are the only limits. For the rest, the

governance of the Foundation revolves around the chairman who, having the complete confidence of the Board, gives the orders and takes care of the management and so on.

G.P: One might say it is a governance based on the person of the chairman and his authority. On the other hand, in this situation the chairman –in other words, you—are the one who started and carried out the project.

T.F: Yes. I must say that for the first three years, from 1994 to his death on December, 13 1997, the chairman of the Foundation was Giovanni Alberto Agnelli himself. At that time, the Foundation had an extremely authoritative scientific committee that I promoted in 1994 and of which I was the president. It was formed by Salvatore Settis, now director of the Normale, Riccardo Varaldo and, also in Pisa, the Superintendent of that time, Gianna Pincastelli.

G.P: For archival assets I imagine.

T.F: Of the entire sector. In the provincial Superintendence offices, there is no distinction among categories as in the regional ones. Here the Superintendent is responsible for monuments and art galleries as well as the preservation of archival assets. In the scientific committee, there was also Pier Saillot who, at that time, was one of the directors of the Villette in Paris; there was Autieri, a Fiat former manager. Keep in mind that Giovanni Alberto was the son of Umberto Agnelli so he kept a direct link with Fiat. There was also Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, architect, professor of architecture at the University of Florence now at the Politecnico in Milan and Stefano Trumpi, a computer scientist who I believe still has the responsibility in the G8 on the computerization of the African continent. It was a scientific committee of an extremely high level, also because Giovanni Alberto Agnelli did not address the cultural activity of the Foundation himself. Instead he was the chairman but delegated the scientific committee to make the proposals that the board of directors then carried out.

At that time, there was also a managing director who followed the construction of the museum, the procedure, the public and private funding and executed the board's resolutions. With Giovanni Alberto Agnelli's death, this asset changed considerably. The scientific committee, for a series of different reasons, was eliminated in 1997. The committee was gradually diminishing and all the governance of the Foundation was taken over by the board and the CEO. This happened in the years before the death of Giovanni. When he died, I stepped in (March 1998) and so there was continuity in the presidency between the two individuals who, with different roles, had started the Foundation. Naturally, I give the Foundation general lines oriented to the total autonomy in its relation to the company, also because Giovanni was the chairman of the company and wanted a person who also came from it to become CEO. For me, on the contrary, the most important thing was to underline the cultural character in the operation. The CEO then, for a number of reasons, left the foundation between 2000 and 2001 and the board, from that moment temporarily delegated responsibilities to the chairman which had previously been the prerogative of the CEO.

G.P: So the chairman is a sort of CEO. The scientific committee, which was a relevant subject during the first stage, disappeared and so everything is centered on the dialogue between the chairman and the partners. Is that right?

T.F: Yes, it is. Naturally the chairman is a link between the company and the public bodies, so it's clear that his role is based on a relationship of mutual trust, otherwise it would impossible to accomplish much.

G.P: In time, the number of governance players was reduced.

T.F: Yes. The scientific committee is no longer there nor is the CEO.

G.P: I'd like to ask you a malicious question.

T.F: Go right ahead. I like malicious questions.

G.P: Don't you think there could be a problem of continuity? When the structures are more rarefied, as in this case, the stages of succession are more delicate. It would be necessary to invest more energy to train individuals that can guarantee the continuity of the institution.

T.F: That's not a malicious question.

G.P: It's an honest one.

T.F: I have to say that the Foundation could run all by itself, in the sense that, given the solid relationship among the partners and the continuity of the contributions, the institute has its own staff where I have personally supervised the division of skills and expertise. There are, for example, people trained for the management of an archives. Since it opened to the public in 2000, our historical archives has provided resources for the preparation of 45 university theses. It has also become an extraordinary repository for a wide range of publications, articles and research studies to be used by researchers on themes such as administration, corporate accounting, management, organization, internal relations and so on. The archives is a valuable source for publications and research linked to the product –to the history of Vespa, the image of Vespa in the cinema, in communication, in the history of communication and the evolution of design.

Part of our staff has attained consolidated expertise on a sizeable archives: 4000 bundles, 21,000 files concerning company personnel that still needs to be catalogued; 80,000 product designs that the company recently gave us, only the tip of a iceberg, given that the designs I could acquire are almost one million. Then, there are other co-workers who take care of the vehicles park since we are constantly involved in external events. Right now we have some empty spaces in the museum because the items are in Tokyo on display at an exhibition on Italian art and culture. One of our historic vehicles and many old advertising illustrations are being shown temporarily at the Italian Culture Institute in Hanoi and we are present in many other national events (one week ago at the Senate we inaugurated an exhibition of the 1953 film "Vacanze Romane" (Roman Holiday) with models of the Vespa). The personnel that follows the activities of the Foundation and external events is highly skilled in managing relations with our public partner and with the local authorities, including the institutional relationship with the Region and with the State. We can therefore say that continuity exists in the Foundation's daily running, largely based on an extremely simple corporate model.

There is also to say that the company gives a guarantee, I would say almost total on the continuity of the governance from a managerial point of view. So, if tomorrow there is no Tommaso Fanfani to be the chairman, the company can find a new chairman with adequate professional training consolidated by the experience of these past years. People change, but the skills remain because they are passed down. To conclude, I don't see any danger of discontinuity of skills or expertise. The only risk is that the company, in exceptional circumstances, could cast doubts on the model of the Foundation. At the present moment I do

not see any risk at all. Last year, which marked the sixtieth anniversary of Vespa, Roberto Colaninno launched the idea for a new museum, appointing Massimiliano Fuksas, a renowned architect, to design the project. The new museum would be a few hundreds of meters distant from where it stands now and would be built inside the plant. There are one or two warehouses about 20 meters high dating from the early 1950s: the project envisages an extra story over the large operative space, for storage of (recently produced) vehicles yet to be shipped out. The first floor is seen by the visitor to the museum, a space that is not always full, but sometimes may contain around 25,000 vehicles. The museum, as I was saying, will be placed on a suspended level between the roof of the warehouse and the first floor, formed by many transparent spheres and using different colors dedicated to the different functions of the foundation. So, if we manage to make this project a reality, the new museum will be twice the size of this one for both dimension and contents and this will allow us to enlarge the vehicle display space; at present we have a repository of about 280 vehicles that we cannot exhibit because of the lack of space.

G.P: So the entire structure would be moved.

T.F: Exactly; archives, museum and Foundation.

G.P: And this would allow the Foundation to become involved in the practical side of the company; that is, company operations.

T.F: No. We haven't really approached this question yet.

G.P: Wait, before going further along this path, allow me to conclude the reasoning on the governance: if I have understood correctly, the Foundation trains a staff whose skills become a guarantee of continuity.

T.F: Of course. It's a process that provides the basis in order not to interrupt the Foundation.

G.P: So the strength is the relationship between the chairman and the structure seen as an entity that is able to generate its own cultural training and to create its own leadership.

T.F: In my opinion, the strategies in an organization that is public and private at the same time come from outside. Inside there is the process of training, preservation and supply of the services. But the strategic choices – for example, which conference is to be organized, who do we need to interface with, which public event should we participate in – are made by the chairman who, of course, has to agree with the board and, more in general, with the partners. So it is difficult to imagine that one of these young people could suddenly - although he or she certainly will in the future – keep the level of the Foundation's activity at 360 degrees. The universities are proving to be a wellspring from which to draw potential future professionals.

G.P: What I would like to understand is whether the staff can embody the cultural autonomy of the Foundation. As chairman, you have both a political and scientific role at this point in time.. In the future, will the staff be able to guarantee cultural autonomy through, for example, a CEO?

T.F: I don't think so. Don't forget that the personnel is not hired by the Foundation but by the company. I have managed to make a few changes in these last years. For example, I asked the

company to make some resources available and to give up others. The people who work now in the Foundation are university graduates: two people with an indefinite contract and the other two with a project contract. Then there is an artistic advisor who is also currently responsible for institutional communication. She is also a graduate and works with us with a project contract too. Finally there are two guards, former Piaggio workers in charge of the removal of the vehicles, of the surveillance during the opening hours of the museum, of the organization of the guided tour for the schools or other visitors. So, the continuity of the governance is, in my opinion, guaranteed – and I hope I can explain myself clearly - by the Foundation's own representation of itself. As long as the the project is shared by the three partners, the Foundation will continue to create its own cultural competence, thus linking the political dimension with the cultural one.

Therefore, the profile of the chairman of a Foundation (defined by statute as an agent for the cultural promotion of the territory) should not be that of a Piaggio engineer nor that of a pure politician. It is interesting to see how we have evolved from a statute that limited a foundation's range of expertise to historical research, to the prospective of training young people for active and flexible roles and finally to participation in art exhibitions, plays, book presentations; to contributing conferences about economy, justice and education.

G.P: This means to modify the statute.

T.F: No. Without touching it. You know, we are quite a flexible structure that undergoes change every time we change the directors. We have met with the notary several times, especially because there has recently been some turnover at Piaggio.

G.P: Okay, that's clear. Now, let's go back to the prospect of a new place for the museum and to the question of the effectiveness of the company.

T.F: Effective relations between the Foundation and business is a normal condition. In some periods it becomes everyday routine. Especially recently, everything we do, every event the foundation participates in is shared with the company and there is a direct link between the Piaggio press office and the public relations and communications manager of the company. The event, project or initiative may originate from us or from the company. For example, the company organizes conventions in different periods of the year, or perhaps the presentation of products. There are meetings with the dealers and internal discussions as well as operational meetings among structures, divisions and sectors There are also training sessions. Sometimes it's simply a matter of availability of premises to hold a meeting; other times collaboration is more complex; for example, organizing the iconographic research for publications managed by Piaggio in cooperation with various publishing houses. Occasions for shared effectiveness are frequent whether it concerns the content of the cultural project, or the content of the archives. I think that the cyclic nature of the cooperation –apart from practical issues like the organization of events, is the result of the sensitivity of managers who may or may not consider the Foundation, the archives and the museum as potentially significant containers for strategic, managerial and organizational objectives. The company frequently asks us questions on the development of a design or business communication, and sometimes consults us about the events organized a product launch.

A recent example will explain what I mean; the Calessino is a new Piaggio product that will be soon launched on the market. The name of this last generation product comes from the museum where there is the Ape Calessino of 1956. They asked us who this name belonged to in order to reuse it.

Commercial interaction with the company is strong and we are solicited in this direction every day. Maybe this is also the secret behind the company's support. However, I seriously believe that as long as the entrepreneur is convinced of the corporate social function and therefore believes that a cultural project is a way to interpret the expectations of the shareholders, everything is fine. If, on the other hand, the entrepreneur has no sensitivity towards social factors, the return on supporting cultural initiatives in terms of image, expertise, and services for the production itself. When experts of the *Centro stile dell'impresa* come here to look at some photographs, the design of the 1940s and 50s, maybe looking for a new idea or an inspiration, this is a service that the Foundation's historical archives provides for the company.

G.P: So, while the starting of the project arose from the empathy between yourself and Giovanni Agnelli, the development that you refer to allows the project to multiply its links with the operative parts of the business. This seems even more important considering a large company like Piaggio whose several divisions can test the utility of the project directly. Together with the political link remains at the upper level, a network of functional relations has grown throughout the operative nerve centers of the company, which consider the Foundation as their own.

T.F: That's correct. However, the underlying premise stays the same: the fruitfulness of the relation between cultural project and business, between Foundation and company is contingent upon on the sensitivity of the people with decision-making power. The life of the cultural project depends on the choices of the top management, on their cultural sensitivity and vision. The synergy among Foundation, museum, archives and business allows the Foundation to carry out a service at multiple levels. We offer a productive atmosphere to present a new project, to discuss strategies for marketing a product, to meet young design talents and so on. So there is positive interaction between the business and the Foundation that can bring mutual benefits and consolidate the natural link between the company and its cultural foundation. It hasn't always been easy, especially when the company was struggling in the market, but the existence of the Foundation was never questioned. I think this is because the company has gained from this interactivity.

G.P: We keep referring to *the company* as if it were a monolith. On the contrary, it hosts a lot of actors who don't necessarily agree with each other all the time: entrepreneurs, managers, technicians, workers. Can all these internal stakeholders recognise themselves in the museum?

T.F: Yes, I definitely think so, because the sense of belonging is felt at all levels, as much by the company as by the employees and their families. When Piaggio produces and invests millions for a new project that reminds us of a vehicle seen in the museum, we recall not only the history of the company, but also of the products themselves. As far as the employees and the outside world is concerned, the Foundation and the museum are frequently considered sacred places. When Giovanni Alberto Agnelli died, there was a period of confusion – as I said before – about the cultural project and its continuation. While walking on the streets, people would ask me “When are you going to open the Piaggio museum? When will the Piaggio museum be ready?” This to say that this place and what it represents is a sense of identity not only for the memory but especially because it is a concrete demonstration of what we did together, of what can be done. Marc Bloch (a French historian) once said that the history doesn't help to know the future, but to understand the present.

I believe the Piaggio museum is a privileged place that gives recognition to all parts of the company and to the community that surrounds it. When the ratio between the population and employees is 26,000 to 13,000 (even if not all from Pontedera, strictly speaking), it's clear that we are talking about a company town.

G.P: I'd like to tell you about something I saw at the Dalmine Archives. Last year, for the celebration of the centenary of the company, Carolina Lussana organized an exhibition with the photographs of the historical archives representing workers and asking the visitors to recognize the people and write their names next to the images.

With this system, the *worker/numbers* as they frequently appear in business iconography became *worker/people*. The effect was overwhelming: the visitors debated, exclaimed aloud and were moved when they recognized grandparents, parents, or even themselves when they were young. On that occasion, Carolina Lussana used the business archives to increase the recognizability and stimulate the sense of belonging to the company through a cultural instrument. Does the Piaggio Foundation have plans for a similar initiative?

T.F: Apart from Carolina's ingenious idea, let's say that the operative strategy of the Foundation has always been transversal, because here in Tuscany we are facilitated by the fact that social barriers are less marked than in Lombardy. I believe that this place as it is organized shows the versatility of the company. To tell the truth, I have never thought about it before, but I can say that here there are tensions, orientations, and very different ways of doing things. It's an environment where the strongest players are the products themselves and the testimony of the historical moment: two elements that create a sort of balanced compensation. So, I believe that the Piaggio cultural project helped to make people understand the DNA of the company, but at the same time, it highlighted the identification with common work, which is the result of a cultural mentality that doesn't consider differences of social classes.

Then, as in all 'heroic' companies, meaning companies that managed to produce goods that lasted over the years and are still present on the market, their strength also lies in the fact that there is continuous contact between the engineer and the planner, the designer, the mechanic right down to the person who only looks after the oiling of the product. I hope I have answered your question.

G.P: Yes, completely. My curiosity comes from the fact that I am familiar with more impersonal working environments where I come from and you have reminded me that here in Tuscany the social communication is more direct. Anyway, Lussana's idea of interacting with the photographs was very effective.

T.F: Extremely valuable. It's a good idea. When we had the exhibition "Arte e lavoro" we included a section of photographs of the various trades and occupations in Piaggio: the turners, the plumbers and so on.

But I want to tell you an episode to make you understand the particular relation between social classes in this company. Piaggio is famous for its historical strikes, the ones of the 1950s or the early 1960s lasted several turbulent months. This is a company that, in the years after the war, had a lot of traditional authoritarian legacies; it was almost a military company for its kind of production. In 1964, during a violent strike, the workers pelted Enrico Piaggio's house with stones and the members of its family couldn't leave with their car because the workers overturned it, as also happened to Francesco Lanzara. But later in November, when an ambulance was seen leaving the offices because Enrico Piaggio had taken ill all of a

sudden, and the news spread that the “boss” –who so much hated at that moment-- was in that ambulance, the strike ended immediately. When he died ten days later, the reaction of the workers and of the city was one of extraordinary participation. The photographs of Enrico Piaggio’s funeral are an impressive testimony: Thousands and thousands of people crowded the fields and the place of his private residence in Varramista. This to say that, despite the strong unrest, the relationship, the link to the company prevails and the company belongs to everyone. Even more, if in 1945 D’Ascanio chose to imitate Uncle Scrooge McDuck and create the MP6, asking his technicians to work without pause on Saturday and Sunday, night and day, they did it. There are a lot of similar episodes that make it clear that the company is “the home base”. In living ‘shoulder to shoulder’, the concept of the company as a superior entity, the expectations, and the level of participation at Enrico Piaggio’s funeral are, in my opinion, important signs. And Piaggio is full of episodes like these.

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