

The strategic role of communication in management and the contribution of corporate museums

Received
10th October 2023

Revised
06th June 2024

Accepted
22nd July 2024

Marta Maria Montella

Abstract

Framing of the research: In today's hypercompetitive market scenario, where the relational dimension of strategies has become paramount for enterprises, corporate heritage has become an identity asset of highly distinctive effectiveness in communication processes, as it accredits the company in cultural and social terms and gives it a relevant competitive advantage over competitors.

Purpose of the paper: The paper aims to highlight corporate museums' potential as a tool for corporate communication and offers an overview of Italian corporate museums' current performance in this regard.

Methodology: The paper moves from the analysis of the main assumptions of the economic-managerial literature, with particular regard to the issue of the relational dimension of strategies and corporate communication on the one hand and corporate museums on the other. At the same time, it leverages an empirical survey conducted on Italian corporate museums.

Findings: While corporate museum management is highly aware of the potential of these institutions to direct all stakeholders for the enterprise's benefit, differences emerge regarding implementing the most effective strategies and tools to achieve all the value possible/optimize the value achievable.

Research limits: The main limitation of the research is the national sample size under investigation.

Practical implications: The paper aims to contribute to both the advancement of theoretical studies and managerial practice, including highlighting strategies and actions that can be implemented to improve the performance of corporate museums in terms of corporate communication.

Originality of the paper: The paper focuses on corporate museums' contribution to the strategic role of communication in management, approaching the topic from theoretical and empirical perspectives.

Key words: corporate communication; total relationship marketing; heritage marketing; corporate museum; Italian situation; museum service-output

1. Communication as a critical success factor

In today's market scenario, characterised by interdependence among open systems and increasing dynamism and complexity (i.e., variety, variability, and indeterminacy) (Golinelli, 2010), the relational dimension of strategies has become paramount for enterprises. In fact, since the 1970s, with society's shift from consumption linked to material primary needs to consumption linked to intangible desires, the marketing paradigm

has decisively veered from product to consumer, and the enterprise has become marketing-oriented (Stanton, 1984; Parasuraman, 1987; Guatri *et al.*, 1999): customer satisfaction is the primary goal of strategic choices (Rust and Zahorik, 1993; Anderson, 1998; Johnson and Gustafsson, 2000; Ferrero, 2013; Mattiacci and Pastore, 2013).

The relational approach to marketing (Grönroos, 1994, 2000; Gordon, 1998; Martini, 2000) first resets the relationship with end-consumers by shifting the sale from a *hic et nunc* fact to a medium/long-term loyalty dynamic with a view to lifetime value and customer retention (Gummesson, 1987; Sheth and Parvatlyar, 1995; Gwinner *et al.*, 1998; Mithas *et al.*, 2005). Then, it focuses on governing the network of relationships and interaction with all possible internal and external stakeholders to influence their cognitive patterns and behaviours for their benefit and gain widespread consensus and legitimacy (Gummesson, 2008).

Within this framework, corporate communication, as the tool for governing the intra and inter-systemic relations of the company, has become not only a competitive necessity but a critical success factor and, indeed, a condition of survival (Varey, 2000; Zerfass, 2008, Nothhaft 2010; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2011; Falkheimer, 2014; Invernizzi and Romenti, 2015;), and has also changed its contents and modalities to a significant degree (Steyn, 2002; Tench *et al.*, 2017). It is no longer enough to be concerned with product quality; dynamic and circular processes are needed to help create structural consonance and systemic resonance between the organisation and the relevant systems in its environment (Golinelli, 2010), procuring global accreditation of the enterprise.

In the marketplace, now understood as a conversation, visibility, distinctiveness, and reputation thus become imperative for competitive advantage, and corporate communication assumes a primary-essential role, as it is indispensable for defining and disseminating corporate image (Simcic Brønn, 2014). The latter is a concise representation of the company's identity, history and strategies, in other words, of the distinctive tangible and intangible resources that enable it to have competitive advantages (Balmer, 2001; Melewar and Jenkins, 2002; Kitchen *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, it has become crucial in relational strategy based on two-way and enduring relationships. This intangible asset, thus, also takes priority for branding policies through which to make companies and products identifiable and actively contribute to their enhancement, ensuring that they meet consumers' expectations and attitudes, thus becoming a value in itself (brand equity) (Aaker, 2009; Christodoulides and De Chernatony, 2010; Kapferer, 2012; Siano *et al.*, 2022). For communication strategies to be effective in hypercompetitive market scenarios with a high rate of symbolic pollution, new marketing approaches and tools are needed. In particular, companies today must also address the issue of gaining widespread legitimacy by leveraging their social role and the impact, not only economic, that they have on larger or smaller communities (social, economic, technical and even cultural evolution of the community)¹ (Du

¹ This possibility stems from the recognition of enterprise as a factor not only of material well-being but also of civil and cultural progress since commonly used industrial activities and products are a material/tangible testimony of a

et al., 2010; Blombäck and Scandeliuss, 2013).

Considerable influence, therefore, lies with heritage marketing (Misiura, 2006; Montemaggi and Severino, 2007; Balmer, 2013; Riviezzo *et al.*, 2021) and total relationship heritage marketing (Montella, 2018). The communication of the heritage accumulated by a company as a result not only of its internal experiences (endogenous resources), but also of what it has drawn from its reference context (exogenous resources-rootedness in the territory), as well as of the benefits that the company has brought about for a wide range of stakeholders², has assumed primary relevance in defining, qualifying and enhancing corporate identity, image and brand (Urde *et al.*, 2007; Burghausen and Balmer, 2014; Rindell *et al.*, 2015; Rose *et al.*, 2016; Balmer, 2017; Balmer, Chen, 2017; Burghausen, 2022).

Thus, this cultural heritage has become an identity asset of highly distinctive effectiveness in communication processes, accrediting the company in cultural and social terms and bringing a relevant competitive advantage over competitors.

This assumption is even more valid considering that globalisation processes must necessarily be approached with “glocal” logic (Svensson, 2001). Demand, which is increasingly oriented toward non-standardised goods and services and attracted above all by the intangible and, in particular, symbolic and cultural characteristics of the offer, recognises the traditional character of companies and products (centuries-old training, longevity³ and local typicality⁴) as having a clear distinctive value, a high index of reliability and undergoes considerable emotional involvement.

The opportunity to articulate total relationship marketing as total relationship heritage marketing was recognised by companies well in advance of theoretical elaborations. Indeed, since the 1960s, many companies have implemented heritage branding and retro-branding policies through the adaptation of historical brands to the tastes of today’s consumers and they have equipped themselves with various heritage marketing tools (Napolitano *et al.*, 2018; Garofano *et al.*, 2020), from the use of storytelling to publishing institutional monographs, organising events, developing specific merchandising, reintroducing old, successful products

community’s way of life (skills, knowledge, needs and desires, customs, values, available resources, etc.) and at the same time intervene in the formation of social values. This aspect can directly relate to the wellness theme in the original meaning of well-being, replacing the dominant 20th-century meaning of welfare. Thus, a well-being based on relationships rather than ownership/possession of goods and that is included in total relationship marketing (Montella, 2018).

² This theme is all the more relevant for our context given the inimitable competitive advantage that the image capital, Italy, enjoys also reverberates on the corporate image of the companies that operate there, and all the more so when the prestige contributes to their reputation due both to the longevity they can boast and to the external economies inherent in the territorial spheres in which they operate and in which Italy’s rich cultural geography is articulated.

³ See in particular: Giarretta, 2004; Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2005; Zellweger and Astrachan, 2008; Corbetta and Salvato 2012; Riviezzo *et al.*, 2016; De Falco and Vollero, 2015; Cerquetti *et al.*, 2022.

⁴ See in particular: Napolitano and De Nisco, 2017; Spielmann *et al.*, 2019; Montella and Silvestrelli, 2020.

in an updated form, participating in historical business associations, establishing foundations, and, most importantly, organising archives and establishing corporate museums⁵.

Building on these theoretical assumptions, if properly designed and managed, corporate museums appear to be one of the most effective corporate communication tools available to a company.

Therefore, this research aims to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What is the role and potential of corporate museums in strategic communication?

RQ2: What is the current performance of Italian corporate museums in this regard?

2. Communicating through the corporate museum

Corporate museums⁶, which can be defined as museums established, governed and financed by a company to create its own narrative identity (Montella, 2018), are optimal for implementing total relationship marketing strategies by leveraging the company's overall heritage. This contributes significantly to identifying the enterprise and its products, distinguishing it from competitors, inducing a favourable opinion, and making its effective emotional and symbolic appeal felt for a long time.

The importance of such institutions as communication tools for strengthening the relational capital of a company, establishing its image also from a cultural and social point of view and enhancing its reputation and brand for the achievement of widespread consensus and legitimacy (Griffiths, 1999; Gilodi, 2002; Montella, 2010; Castellani and Rossato, 2014; Piatkowska, 2014; Liggeri, 2015; Napolitano *et al.*, 2018; Montella, 2018; Iannone and De Chiara, 2019; Pulh *et al.*, 2019; Simone *et al.*, 2022; Riviezzo *et al.*, 2021 and 2022), has been recognised by companies well in advance of business scholars, as evidenced by their increasing diffusion already since the second half of the last century in Europe and then in Italy⁷.

⁵ Assolombarda (2003) pointed out that the corporate museum can become a flywheel to characterise the more or less long history of a company's production and, with it, respond to marketing policies. History can thus become an element of promotion since it is corporate culture and it increases the confidence of potential customers who knows they are dealing with a company rich with experience.

⁶ Corporate museums should be distinguished from other organisation units, such as archives, collections of objects far from the core business of the company to which they belong, and foundations without permanent collections. Each of these, in fact, involves profound differences in their mission and, therefore, their managerial implications.

⁷ In Italy, the phenomenon has been slower and more contained than in countries such as Germany, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, reaching its peak in the 1980s and 1990s and affecting mainly the "industrial triangle" of the Northeast, in line with the country's entrepreneurial history.

The corporate museum is an optimal storytelling tool (Hansen and Kahnweiller, 1993; Fontana, 2013; Riviezzo *et al.*, 2016; Salmon, 2017) for telling a company's story from a wide range of perspectives (Coleman, 1943; Cohen and Bacdayan, 1994; Stein, 1995; Kinni, 1999; Montemaggi and Severino, 2007; Martino, 2013; Solima, 2015; Montella, 2018), and making explicit the multidimensional value of its overall heritage.

To this end, the museum can highlight the main distinctive aspects of the enterprise, such as:

- products, production processes and advertising campaigns, highlighting their features and material and intangible and notably symbolic and cultural characteristics (e.g. historical importance, ethical and possibly aesthetic quality);
- the wealth of knowledge (know-how);
- values and symbolic essence, including corporate culture and corporate social responsibility;
- rootedness in the territory: i) the tangible and intangible resources drawn by the company from the reference context; ii) the positive externalities generated by the company for the social, economic, technical and even cultural evolution of the community; iii) the company's links with other local institutions and activities;
- longevity, as evidence of the company's ability to establish long-term virtuous ties with all stakeholders, follow balanced growth and keeping in tune with the evolution of the needs expressed by society.

The museum can express the content of the communication through texts and metatexts and by using multisensory codes (visual, aural, tactile). Traditional and proven tools the museum can make use of include the display of objects, graphics, photos and written documents; the use of audiovisuals; fixed communication apparatus such as captions and information panels; publications of various kinds (Martino, 2013) from catalogues, which would constitute a business monograph (Magagnino and Foroni, 2010), to short guides and brochures; guided tours; lectures and seminars; and temporary exhibitions.

In addition, it can use technological supports (Leoni and Cristofaro, 2021), digital forms of communication and special events of various kinds. It can also engage in social media (Invernizzi and Romenti, 2013), feed the corporate website (Vallini, 2005) and disseminate commercials. Moreover, corporate museums can implement distribution initiatives (circulation of self-made exhibits, loan of objects to exhibitions and fairs promoted by others) and actively participate in associations that network historical enterprises nationally and internationally (e.g. Museimpresa⁸).

⁸ The Associazione Italiana Archivi e Musei d'Impresa, promoted by Assolombarda and Confindustria, was founded in Milan in 2001 to identify, network and offer visibility to companies that have chosen to prioritise their cultural heritage within their communication strategies" and proposing to promote the "concept of corporate cultural responsibility" and to "foster the exchange of knowledge and experiences between the museum community, businesses, cultural institutions and the general public." As of June 2023, it brings together more than 100 museums and archives of large, medium and

Finally, it should be kept in mind that communications conveyed by the museum are articulated in meta-levels: the first concerns the museum itself (i.e., the capital stock of which it is made) and its activities; the second relates to the identity and values of the company to which it refers.

Therefore, the managerial and organisational perspectives of the corporate museum (exhibit design, information facilities, contact personnel, visual identity, and all other communication tools) should reflect the corporate identity to deliver a consistent message and induce mental associations in the visitor that refer to the company (Casagrande, 2000). Furthermore, these should be part of the corporate integrated marketing communication programme, ensuring that all forms and messages of communication implemented are carefully tied together to communicate the predefined message and establish in the consumers' minds the desired corporate reputation and image (Belch and Belch, 2018; Vernuccio *et al.*, 2022). More specifically, all museum layout and management choices should be designed to be as effective and efficient as possible in isolation (micro perspective) and simultaneously harmonised with all of the company's promotion tools (macro perspective) (Keller, 2013).

As a result of the prerogatives highlighted, specific to media expressly aimed at qualitative returns, the public is enabled to identify the company in its economic and social context and to distinguish it from its competitors, to conceive a favourable opinion of it, and feel its effective emotional and symbolic appeal for a long time⁹.

2.2 Museum communication effectiveness

The corporate museum is a particularly effective communication tool.

First of all, it should be considered that the target communicator of the corporate museum is very composite (Martino, 2010): the messages conveyed through it reach a broad and heterogeneous audience, including all the user types mentioned in the literature on corporate institutional communication: governments, influence groups, media, general public, local communities, business sectors, financial sectors, customers, competitors, internal-employee audiences¹⁰. The museum also allows the

small Italian companies (www.museimpresa.com).

⁹ This is in accordance with the traditional response levels of the potential customer to the information/stimuli used by the salesperson (Lambin and Schuiling, 2012): *cognitive-type response*, consequent to the explicit communication about the company's historical data and facts and with implicit constant reference to its corporate identity; *affective-type response*, resulting to the tacit work of persuasion and "seduction" exercised by the museum, which therefore becomes a fundamental and load-bearing element of the company's image; and *behavioural-type response*, consequent to the satisfaction of the museum experience that determines in the minds of visitors a strengthening of the company's reputation positively influencing their future purchasing choices.

¹⁰ As is well known, these target audiences are further segmented into (i) residents, authorities, community bodies, educational institutions; (ii) influencers on specific issues (activists, opinion formers, academics, educators, specific groups); (iii) distributors and suppliers; (iv) government offices and agencies, state agencies; (v) publishing, radio, television; (vi) shareholders and

company to approach multiple clusters of actual and potential consumers with one-to-one marketing; moreover, they could be reached remotely by conveying the museum offer through digital resources. Finally, it enables the implementation of differentiated (and possibly focused) communication to engage different categories of stakeholders, internal and external.

Furthermore, as a cultural communication institution with a centuries-old tradition and high symbolic prestige¹¹, the museum allows for the development of cultural activities closely related to the company's core business, thus generating greater added value than other investments in culture¹².

Moreover, unlike sponsorships, which seek to capture the public's attention in a mediated form since this should bounce back from an event to the supporting company, with the corporate museum the company directly assumes the role of issuer of a message that reaches the recipients immediately, optimising communication processes. Consider also that in the museum, the processes of encoding and decoding messages take place under conditions of minimal noise, and the environment is specially designed to connect the visitor with material heritage documents and facilitate the immersivity, experientiality, interactivity, dynamism and storytelling that have become the new buzzwords (Stogner, 2009). Corporate museums, free from the meritorious constraints placed on public museums, also offer an excellent field of application for experiential marketing (Livingstone, 2011; Zena and Hadisumarto, 2013; Pulh *et al.*, 2019): for entertainment goals and the theatricalization of the offer, they can also leverage the peripheral components of the offer, the tangible atmospherics (furnishings, materials, ICT instrumentation to support the visit, etc.) and the intangible ones (lights, colours, smells, music, etc.) and entertainment strategies pursued through events and performances.

At the same time, the visitor, as a conscious user, is placed in a particularly favourable state of mind, mitigating their critical barriers in favour of an emotional involvement that stimulates interest and attention

individual investors, banks, institutional investors, pension funds, investment funds, insurance companies, brokers, financial analysts; (vii) general public.

¹¹ The *International Council of Museums (ICOM)* in 2022 defined the museum as follows: "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing."

¹² In a nutshell, investments in culture are used by companies to reach a different and broader audience than their target market and to reverberate the public's acceptance of the initiative on themselves. As illustrated by Gilodi (2002), direct investments concern the interventions made by a profit-driven company with its products in the cultural market (such as "artistic objects" produced, for example, by Swatch, Alessi, Versace with copyright design and limited edition, which become collector's items, or such as goods/services instrumental to the enjoyment of cultural objects and/or activities, such as publishing, restoration, and provision of services). On the other hand, indirect interventions contemplate the provision by an enterprise of funds or services in favor of a cultural product made by others to obtain image returns and, therefore, economic benefits (such as cultural sponsorships and the establishment of foundations).

to the exhibited materials and related messages, as well as the formation of a lasting memory. All this fosters behavioural and mental “brand loyalty” from a lifetime value perspective.

Lastly, the museum can implement company market surveys by administering questionnaires to visitors (on-site and remote) to survey satisfaction, expectations and preferences, which are helpful for effective fine-tuning with consumers and for immediate feedback.

2.3 Museum communication benefits

The corporate museum can optimally achieve all the benefits envisaged in the literature about corporate communication and related to increasing the company’s relational capital by establishing and consolidating lasting and bidirectional relationships with all stakeholders by leveraging the company’s heritage. While all these benefits relate to gaining widespread acceptance, they can be segmented into internal and external benefits.

Internal benefits follow organisational purposes concerning corporate culture’s consolidation and intra-systemic dissemination¹³. The museum, in fact, can be an excellent tool to recognise and express at its best this essential factor for organisational cohesion and derive all possible positive effects from it. In particular, if properly used, the museum can positively affect the corporate climate, helping to foster and strengthen internal relations and motivate staff, increasing their sense of belonging and making them feel a part of the expected performance (Casey, 1997; Griffiths, 1999; Argote, 2012). In addition, the museum can contribute to the continuous evolution of corporate culture following changes in the enterprise’s environment. Doing this will prevent it from being considered according to a rigid conservative attitude and becoming a constraint. Therefore, corporate museum planning and management choices (from organisational to strategic ones) should also be conceived according to internal stakeholders.

External benefits result from the definition, dissemination, and strengthening of corporate identity, image, brand and reputation and pertain to the influence in favour of the company of external stakeholders’ cognitive patterns and behaviours. In particular, the museum can be an excellent tool for customer expansion and retention, fostering lasting emotional involvement and trust. The postmodern customer, indeed, is increasingly attracted by the intangible and mainly symbolic and cultural characteristics of the offer and productive organisations, whose appreciation significantly depends on the explication of the heritage embedded in them and their role in the evolution of the community. Equally crucial is obtaining legitimacy and consensus from all relevant context entities (primarily the local political-administrative and socio-economic systems), which greatly influence the organisation’s life and long-term survival. Under an increasingly widespread demand for sustainability and the inescapable assumptions of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), consensus increasingly depends on new and peculiar requirements of a

¹³ Corporate culture results from the interactive set of values, stories and cognitions shared by its internal participants (Gerloff, 1993; Schein, 1998).

proper ethical nature concerning the impact of economic circuits on society and the environment and thus extended also to the preservation of the ecosystem in the totality of its social, natural, and cultural components. When effectively set up and managed according to these objectives, the museum can significantly contribute to them not only as a tool of institutional communication but also by illustrating the socially responsible and sustainable behaviour of the company, as well as directly performing public relations by representing the company as a cultural reference and acting in its name and on its behalf as an institutional mediator.

Finally, in addition to all this, the corporate museum can significantly contribute to local development, making the company's rootedness in the territory explicit, strengthening community identity, and increasing the income differential for the entire territorial economic-productive system. In particular, it can offer valid support to territorial marketing, the increase and enhancement of the tourist offer - above all by targeting the specific cluster attracted by the industrial heritage - the enhancement of productivity and the image of local museum networks, and the development and support of socio-cultural activities through the hosting of local events (Montella, 2018).

3. Empirical investigation

3.1 Methodology

The empirical survey was addressed to 94 identified corporate museums in Italy¹⁴ (the survey universe), obtaining a response rate of 53.19% (50 museums constitute the survey sample).

The research objectives were to be empirically verified:

- The awareness level of the management of Italian corporate museums concerning the potential of these institutions as communication tools;
- The way museums are managed to achieve these goals, with particular reference to communication content (messages), materials displayed, communication means, and delivery methods used.

The survey, quali-quantitative and responding to exploratory purposes, was conducted in the first half of 2019 and updated in 2022 through a questionnaire administered by email and completed mainly by persons with primary responsibility in the museum (56%: director, curator, conservator, manager, coordinator)¹⁵. When necessary, the researcher also conducted telephone interviews with museum contacts.

From a structural point of view, therefore, the questionnaire was divided into two sections.

A. General data

- Location

¹⁴ To identify corporate museums as defined in Section 2, see Simone *et al.*, 2022.

¹⁵ This is followed by figures from the company's marketing/communications/external relations department (16%); company president/administrator (6%); company (and, therefore, museum) owner, museum foundation president, museum secretarial staff (4% each); other (4%); unspecified (6%).

- Legal status
- Users
- B. Museum and corporate communication
 - Museum's potential to illustrate, disseminate and consolidate corporate identity, image and reputation
 - Communication contents
 - Materials on display
 - Communication means and modes

The questionnaire includes closed (dichotomous or multiple-choice) and open-ended questions. The latter are instrumental in cases where one does not want to influence the answer given by the museum contact person in any way, leaving instead the possibility to express in the desired way and offering all the appropriate details and clarifications, and, if it were excessively long, to list all the possible options.

The responses obtained were computed in a specially constructed database. Then, to facilitate the analysis of the survey results, a numerical value was uniquely assigned to each response option¹⁶. Finally, the data for each item were analysed, following the best-suited methods for each of the three possible types of responses. Notably, the sum of positive and negative responses was chosen for the dichotomous responses. In the other cases (namely open or multiple-choice questions), frequency detection and statistical processing such as mean and mode calculation were used.

3.2 Results

General Data

Most museums are located within the company premises (60%) or close to it (18%). A few are distant from corporate facilities (14%), and even fewer are located in disused establishments (8%).

These institutes are mainly devoid of legal autonomy (74%)¹⁷ and configured as operating units dependent on the marketing and communication area (34%) or directly on top management (34%)¹⁸.

As for annual visitors, most museums (24%) have up to 1,000, although half are at most 500. Slightly fewer (20%) are those between 5,000 and 10,000 visitors¹⁹. The users are mainly tourists and students (respectively

¹⁶ Closed questions: a) dichotomous responses: yes=1/no=0; b) multiple choice options: numerical value between 1 and n.; 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932) to measure the degree of agreement or disagreement with a particular question or statement.

Open-ended questions: first, a comparative analysis was done to infer the basic constants by which they could be divided into standard categories and to record any exceptions to themselves; then, these response categories were quantified (Corbetta, 1999), that is, the variables that emerged were coded by assigning a precise numerical value to each.

¹⁷ Museums with a legal status (26%) are generally established as foundations (20%), followed by associations, S.r.l. (LLC) and S.s.i.u. (2% each).

¹⁸ The remainder depends on the production division, research and development or the Human Resources Department (2% each).

¹⁹ In addition, 18% range from 1,000 to 5,000 visitors, 12% from 10,000 to 50,000

34% and 33% of the public on average), followed by traders/employees (17%), residents (8%) and company employees (6%)²⁰.

Museums and corporate communication

Of the high importance of the museum as an additional corporate communication tool, the majority of respondents are well aware, stating that it was created to preserve the tangible and intangible identity heritage of the target company and enhance it through attractive storytelling²¹.

The museums surveyed aim to communicate the firm-specific heritage by illustrating, first and foremost, the company's history²², including its values, longevity, product evolution, production process technologies, knowledge heritage, and brand and business communication evolution.

The illustration of the firm's rootedness in the local context and the exchangeable enterprise-territory benefits is also highly important. In particular, the majority of respondents assert the positive impact of the local context on business activities²³, clarifying how the territory has contributed to shaping the company's products and production processes (as a source of material and intangible resources stratified over centuries and therefore decisive for the company's success as inimitable or difficult to imitate) and often the name itself. The illustration of the positive impact by the enterprise on the socio-economic and even cultural development of the territory is also considered quite important²⁴.

Also high is the importance most attached to illustrating the full range of value of the products and processes of the reference company²⁵, highlighting their tangible and intangible characteristics. In particular, museums aim to make visitors appreciate their heritage for their historical and socio-cultural values, not limiting to its commodity and technical values (e.g. physical characteristics, technological profiles). To this end, they recount its development through the centuries (materials and production process, forms, uses, and so on) and relate it to the social, economic, and cultural changes that have occurred in the context, beginning with the local context.

The importance of the museum as a tool for communicating corporate social responsibility²⁶ is somewhat recognised as well as demonstrating to

and 8% from 50,000 to 100,000. Only 2% exceed 100,000. The remaining 16% were unable to quantify their annual audience.

²⁰ The remaining 2% are the company's clients and guests of meetings organised by outside companies.

²¹ This aspect is of high importance for 40% of museums, highest for 36%, fair for 14%, low for 8%, and none for 2%.

²² This aspect is of highest importance for 42%, high for 26%, fair for 18%, low for 6%, and none for 8%.

²³ This aspect is of highest or high importance for 28% of museums (each), fair for 24%, low for 4%, and none for 16%.

²⁴ This aspect is of fair importance for 24%, high for 22%, low for 16%, highest for 14%, and none for 24%.

²⁵ This aspect is of high importance for 44% of museums, highest for 18%, fair for 12%, low for 14%, and none for 12%.

²⁶ This aspect is of high importance for 26% of cases, highest for 24%, fair for 18%, none for 18%, and low for 14%.

stakeholders the attention that the company pays to respect the environment and common goods in general, its commitment to the quality of the urban environment, and the investments made in culture, social activities, sports, etc. In some cases, the museum also becomes an opportunity to highlight the care devoted by the company to the design and implementation of satisfactory working environments.

The use of museums to disseminate and consolidate corporate culture, fostering employees' feelings of belonging and motivation, is considered very important²⁷. To this end, museums offer testimonies of yesterday's and today's workers and illustrate the company's past and present activities for its employees (welfare, recreational, leisure, socialising, educational and cultural activities).

To communicate these aspects, museums display company products (94%), archival documents and historical photographs and/or films (84%), technical drawings and prototypes (76%), tools and machinery (68%), and, in some cases, historical merchandising (packaging, labels, advertising material, and so on) (24%).

As for how the communication service is provided, exhibits are generally accompanied by information supports in the tour route (62%), such as textual tools (captions, panels), technological apparatus (audiovisual, computer or multimedia) and guided tours. Less frequent are the use of brochures or printed guides (56%), special exhibition sections (38%), catalogues and publications (32%) and temporary exhibitions (30%). In addition, a large proportion of the museums surveyed say they use differentiation of offerings (78%), offering multiple visit routes and/or multiple levels of reading of exhibits functional to communicating a specific aspect or satisfying a specific cluster of users. Less frequent (36%) is the use of spectacularization of the offer for experiential marketing purposes, leveraging tangible and intangible atmospherics, digital technologies, entertainment strategies, immersiveness, experientiality, interactivity, dynamism and storytelling. Some museums, for example, focus on highly scenic displays (18%), organise special events (12%), display objects of particular rarity and/or produce reconstructions (10%) or choose venues of particular archaeological-industrial and/or historical-artistic interest (8%). The museums surveyed contribute to corporate communication through distribution and promotion policies and establishing and strengthening the company's ties with the local area and other national players. Generally, high importance is given to promotion²⁸, especially using multimedia channels (websites, social media, as well as mailing lists and newsletters) (92%) and the press (76%). Less frequent are distribution policies implemented through the production of travelling exhibitions and/or set up in other venues (42%), and the loan of its objects to exhibitions and fairs promoted by other entities (66%).

²⁷ This aspect is of high importance for 28% of museums, highest for 26%, fair for 20%, low for 20%, and none for 6%. Understandably, it is less important in micro and small businesses, whose employees are almost always overwhelmingly the owners themselves.

²⁸ This aspect is of high importance for 42% of museums, highest for 24%, fair for 20%, low for 10% and none for 4%.

Also considered quite important is the strengthening of relations with other local institutions and activities²⁹: first and foremost, public authorities (42%), but also other museums and historical-artistic attractions (18%), cultural organisations (16%), and educational institutions (12%)³⁰. To this end, the involvement in the local socio-economic reality³¹ and participating in events or other initiatives for the promotion of the territory is very relevant (72%), perhaps offering for the occasion extraordinary openings, guided tours, complementary exhibitions, as well as joining associations (56%) of local or national character, first of all, Museimpresa (44%). On the other hand, the declared commitment of the museums surveyed to provide information on local cultural heritage³² (other museums in the area and various heritage), making maps of the city, brochures and information leaflets available to their users and/or making use of their website is limited (10%).

4. Discussion

In the light of the theoretical assumptions described and the empirical analysis conducted, the corporate museum turns out to be an effective tool for conveying the elements suitable for the formation of such a positive perception of the company in the public's mind that it largely contributes to the creation of a favourable relational context in the long run. Indeed, the museum constitutes the synthesis of the company's many distinctive resources (tangible and intangible) and its tangible testimonies, that is, the firm-specific cultural capital. Therefore, it constitutes the speaking manifesto used to account to all the company's stakeholders not only the material elements of the company's products but also the symbolic and notably cultural values embedded in them and in the company's history, as well as of corporate policies based on values that are ethical and on the willingness for the preservation, enhancement and development of the local context.

Therefore:

- The corporate museum assumes full strategic importance in the entrepreneurial management's performance as the perfect bearer of an image surplus value responding to the primary need to strengthen the company's reputation also from a cultural and social point of view by implementing communication strategies that achieve global accreditation of the company;
- It should be recognised as an additional, effective corporate communication tool for management. It constitutes, in fact, an

²⁹ This aspect is of high importance for 36% of cases, fair for 26%, highest for 18%, none for 12% and low for 8%.

³⁰ In rare cases, museums have ties with tour operators and Confindustria (4% each), trade unions, suppliers, banking institutions, MIBACT and local people (2 each).

³¹ High importance is found in 28% of museums, highest in 14%, fair in 22%, low in 16% and none in 20%.

³² This aspect is of no importance for 40% of museums, fair for 18%, low for 16%, high for 14%, and highest for 12%.

additional operational lever commensurate with distinct objectives and specific modes of operation, capable of dialoguing with all corporate functions and representing the company in different institutional and territorial settings.

Its effectiveness implies a strong consistency between corporate identity and the message conveyed by the museum and, therefore, a strong coordination and an integrated approach between the corporate museum and other marketing communication tools.

However, the empirical analysis shows that corporate museums' contribution to strategic communication in the current Italian context could be more significant.

In fact, although managers state that they attach great importance to such institutions as a corporate communication tool, attesting to a high and widespread awareness by companies about the potential of the corporate museum, there appear to be differences among Italian institutions, especially regarding implementing the most effective strategies and tools to achieve the possible strategic effects. In particular, too many institutions are still not sufficiently attentive in communicating the main aspects related to the corporate heritage that would allow them to generate the full multidimensional value and, above all, they underestimate the importance of the appropriate tools to actually obtain the benefits related to each of these. Indeed, shortcomings regarding the range of information and tools to support the visit are frequently noted. For most corporate museums, the difference between offering a service of simple physical accessibility to exhibition rooms and full intellectual accessibility to what is shown and told is not so clear. It is almost as if the mere display of objects is enough to convey the desired messages. Too often, confusing output with stock, they limit themselves to displaying objects that substantiate their collection, believing that this is sufficient to convey the messages they want to communicate. Strengthening the service of communicating historical information about the objects on display - with particular regard to the content of the communication (messages), the media of the communication, and the modes of delivery used - thus appears as the central aspect that needs to be enhanced to enable museums to optimize their contribution to strategic communication.

Margins for improvement are also noted regarding the promotion and especially the distribution policies implemented by corporate museums to contribute to corporate communication, as well as actions aimed at fostering stronger ties with the local area (cultural heritage, institutions, activities, communities).

5. Conclusion

The paper's findings hold implications for theoretical studies and the advancement of managerial practice, underscoring the importance of our research in the academic and corporate spheres.

First, in light of the economic-managerial literature mainly referred to the strategic role of corporate communication and marketing approaches

and tools that enable broad and sustained engagement of all corporate stakeholders by leveraging the cultural dimension of the company (TRHM) (§ 1) and related to the corporate museum (§ 2), the study highlights and justifies the relevant role and potential of corporate museums as a powerful corporate communication tool aimed at achieving widespread consensus, pointing out some main aspects:

- strategies and actions to be developed to improve the performance of this tool, with particular regard to the communication content considered as a priority, the materials displayed, the communication media, and the delivery methods used (§ 2.1);
- the particular effectiveness of corporate museums (§ 2.3);
- the main benefits achievable inside and outside the organisation (§ 2.3).

Moreover, the research offers insight into the current performance of Italian corporate museums in terms of corporate communication, pointing out the main strengths and weaknesses (§ 3 and 4).

Important managerial implications flow from this.

Indeed, the paper contributes to making production organizations and corporate museum managers increasingly aware of the following:

- the strategic communicative role of these institutions;
- the management guidelines and practices to improve the performance of this tool.

The national size of the sample under investigation constitutes the main limitation of the paper. However, it is a starting point for future research to enrich this field of study with empirical evidence belonging to contexts other than Italy. In addition, subsequent research could develop strategies with clear objectives, targets (or buyer personas), content, KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and metrics to measure the effectiveness of the content strategy of corporate museums. Still, the level of responsiveness between the communication implemented by corporate museums and the IMC approach could be investigated by verifying to what extent the activities developed and the tools used are coherently connected, as well as with other marketing communication activities (offline and online) of the company.

References

- AAKER D.A. (2009), *Managing brand equity*, Simon and Schuster, New York.
- ANDERSON E.W. (1998), "Customer satisfaction and word of mouth", *Journal of Service Research*, vol. 1, n. 1, pp. 5-17.
- ARGOTE L. (2012), *Organizational learning: Creating, retaining and transferring knowledge*, Springer Science & Business Media, New York.
- BALMER J.M.T. (2001), "Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate marketing-Seeing through the fog", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 35, n. 3/4, pp. 248-291.
- BALMER J.M.T. (2013), "Corporate heritage, corporate heritage marketing, and total corporate heritage communications: What are they? What of them?", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, vol. 18, n. 3, pp. 290-326.

- BALMER J.M.T. (2017), "Advances in corporate brand, corporate heritage, corporate identity and corporate marketing scholarship", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 51, n. 9/10, pp. 1462-1471.
- BELCH G.E., BELCH M.A. (2018), *Advertising and promotion: An integrated marketing communications perspective*, McGraw-Hill, New York.
- BALMER J.M.T., CHEN W. (2017), "Corporate heritage brands, augmented role identity and customer satisfaction", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 51, n. 9/10, pp. 1510-1521.
- BLOMBÄCK A., SCANDELIUS C. (2013), "Corporate heritage in CSR communication: a means to responsible brand image?", *Corporate Communications: an International Journal*, vol. 18, n. 3, pp. 362-382.
- BURGHAUSEN M. (2022), "Towards a Co-Creational Perspective on Corporate Heritage Branding", in Iglesias O., Ind N., Schultz M., (edited by), *The Routledge Companion to Corporate Branding*, Routledge, London, pp. 345-363.
- BURGHAUSEN M., BALMER J.M.T. (2014), "Corporate heritage identity management and the multi-modal implementation of a corporate heritage identity", *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 67, n. 11, pp. 2311-2323.
- CASAGRANDE V. (2000), "Semiotica degli spazi museali", *La memoria dell'impresa*, vol. 4, pp. 23-25.
- CASEY A. (1997), "Collective Memory in Organizations", *Advances in Strategic Management*, vol. 14, pp. 111-151.
- CASTELLANI P., ROSSATO C. (2014), "On the communication value of the company museum and archives", *Journal of Communication Management*, vol. 18, n. 3, pp. 240-253.
- CERQUETTI M., MONTELLA M.M., SARDANELLI D. (2022), "Corporate museums as heritage vehicles: a comparative analysis between family and non-family businesses", *Corporate Governance and Research and Development Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 1-22.
- CHRISTENSEN L.T., CORNELISSEN J. (2011), "Bridging corporate and organisational communication: review, development and a look to the future", *Management Communication Quarterly*, vol. 25, n. 3, pp. 383-414.
- CHRISTODOULIDES G., DE CHERNATONY L. (2010), "Consumer-based brand equity conceptualisation and measurement: a literature review", *International Journal of Market Research*, vol. 52, n. 1, pp. 43-66.
- COHEN M.D., BACDAYAN P. (1994), "Organizational routines as stored in procedural memory. Evidence from a laboratory study", *Organization Science*, vol. 5, n. 4, pp. 554-568.
- COLEMAN L.V. (1943), *Company Museum*, American Association of Museums, The American Association of Museums, Washington DC.
- CORBETTA P. (1999), *Metodologia e tecniche della ricerca sociale*, Il Mulino, Bologna.
- CORBETTA G., SALVATO C. (2012), *Strategies for longevity in family firms*, Palgrave MacMillan, London.
- DU S., BHATTACHARYA C.B., SEN S. (2010), "Maximizing Business Returns to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): The Role of CSR Communication", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, vol. 12, n. 1, pp. 8-19.
- ESPOSITO DE FALCO S., VOLLERO A. (2015), "Sustainability, longevity and transgenerational value in family firms. The case of Amarelli", *Sinergie Italian Journal of Management*, vol. 33, n. 97, pp. 291-309.

- FALKHEIMER J. (2014), "The power of strategic communication in organizational development", *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, vol. 6, n. 2/3, pp. 124-133.
- FERRERO G. (edited by), (2013), *Marketing e creazione del valore*, Giappichelli, Torino.
- FONTANA A. (2013), *Manuale di Storytelling: raccontare con efficacia prodotti, marchi e identità d'impresa*, Etas Libri, Milano.
- FREEMAN R.E. (1984), *Strategic Management: A stakeholder approach*, Pitman, Boston.
- GAROFANO A., RIVIEZZO A., NAPOLITANO M.R. (2020), "Una storia, tanti modi di raccontarla. Una nuova proposta di definizione dell'heritage marketing mix", *Il capitale culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 10, pp. 125-146.
- GERLOFF E.A. (1993), *Strategie organizzative*, McGraw-Hill, Milano.
- GIARETTA E. (2004), *Vitalità e longevità d'impresa: l'esperienza delle aziende ultracentenarie*, Giappichelli, Torino.
- GILODI C. (2002), "Il museo d'impresa: forma esclusiva per il corporate marketing", *Liuc papers*, n. 101, pp. 1-37.
- GOLINELLI G.M. (2010), *Viable Systems Approach. Governing Business Dynamics*, Cedam, Padova.
- GORDON I. (1998), *Relationship Marketing*, John Wiley, Toronto.
- GRIFFITHS J. (1999), "In Good Company? Do Company Museums Serve the Company, its Marketing Department, its Employees or the Public?", *Museum News*, vol. 10, pp. 35-38.
- GRÖNROOS C. (1994), "From Marketing Mix to Relationship Marketing: Towards a Paradigm Shift in Marketing", *Management Decision*, vol. 32, n. 2, pp. 4-20.
- GRÖNROOS C. (2000), *Service Management and Marketing: A Customer Relationship Management Approach (2nd ed)*, Wiley, Chichester.
- GUATRI L., VICARI S., FIOCCA R. (1999), *Marketing*, McGraw-Hill, Milano.
- GUMMESSON E. (1987), "The New Marketing-Developing Long-Term Interactive Relationships", *Long Range Planning*, vol. 20, n. 4, pp. 10-20.
- GUMMESSON E. (2008), *Total Relationship Marketing*, Elsevier, Oxford.
- GWINNER K.P., GREMLER D.D., BITNER M.J. (1998), "Relational benefits in services industries: the customer's perspective", *Journal of The Academy of Marketing Science*, vol. 26, pp. 101-114.
- HANSEN C.D., KAHNWEILLER W.M. (1993), "Storytelling: an instrument for understanding the dynamics of corporate relationship", *Human Relations*, vol. 55, n. 8, pp. 989-1010.
- IANNONE F., DE CHIARA A. (2019), "Il museo d'impresa: strumento di engagement e heritage management", *Micro and Macro Marketing*, vol. 28, n. 3, pp. 435-468.
- INVERNIZZI E., ROMENTI S. (edited by), (2013), *Progetti di comunicazione per la reputazione aziendale*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
- INVERNIZZI E., ROMENTI S. (2015), "Adopting an Entrepreneurial Perspective to the Study of Strategic Communication", In Holtzhausen D., Zerfass A., (edited by), *Handbook of strategic communication*, Routledge, New York, pp. 214-228.
- JOHNSON D. M., GUSTAFSSON A. (2000), *Improving Customer Satisfaction, Loyal and Profit: An Integrated Measurement and Management System*, John Wiley & Sons, New York.

- KAPFERER J.N. (2012), *The new strategic brand management: Advanced insights and strategic thinking*, Kogan Page Publishers, London.
- KELLER K.L. (2013), "Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment", In Schultz D.E., Patti C.H., Kitchen P.J. (edited by), *The evolution of integrated marketing communications*, Routledge, London, pp. 65-81.
- KINNI T. (1999), "With an Eye to the Past: Transmitting the Corporate Memory", *Corporate University Review*, vol. 7, n. 1, pp. 24-27.
- KITCHEN P.J., TOURKY M.E., DEAN D., SHAALAN A.S. (2013), "Corporate identity antecedents and components: toward a theoretical framework", *Corporate Reputation Review*, vol. 16, n. 4, pp. 263-284.
- LAMBIN J.J., SCHUILING I. (2012), *Market-driven management: Strategic and operational marketing*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London.
- LEONI L., CRISTOFARO M. (2021), "Technology adoption in small Italian museums: an empirical investigation", *Il capitale culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 23, pp. 57-87.
- LIGGERI D. (2015), *La comunicazione di musei e archivi d'impresa*, Lubrina, Bergamo.
- LIKERT R. (1932), "Technique for the measure of attitudes", *Archives of Psychology*, vol. 22 n. 140, pp. 5-55.
- LIVINGSTONE P. (2011), "Is it a Museum Experience? Corporate Exhibitions for Cultural Tourists", *Exhibitionist*, Spring, pp. 16-21.
- MAGAGNINO M., FORONI L. (2010), *Monografie istituzionali d'impresa*, QuiEdit, Verona.
- MARTINI U. (2000), "Marketing relazionale e nuove modalità di generazione del valore per il cliente", *Sinergie Italian Journal of Management*, n. 51, pp. 3-47.
- MARTINO V. (2010), *La comunicazione culturale d'impresa. Strategie, strumenti, esperienze*, Guerini, Milano.
- MARTINO V. (2013). *Dalle storie alla storia d'impresa. Memoria, comunicazione, heritage*, Bonanno, Acireale-Roma.
- MATTIACCI A., PASTORE A. (2013), *Marketing: il management orientato al mercato*, Hoepli, Milano.
- MELEWAR T.C., JENKINS E. (2002), "Defining the corporate identity construct", *Corporate Reputation Review*, vol. 5, n. 1, pp. 76-90.
- MILLER D., LE BRETON-MILLER I. (2005), *Managing for the Long Run: Lessons in Competitive Advantage from Great Family Businesses*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.
- MISIURA S. (2006), *Heritage Marketing*, Elsevier Oxford.
- MITHAS S., KRISHNAN M.S., FORNELL C. (2005), "Why do customer relationship management applications affect customer satisfaction?", *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 69, n. 4, pp. 201-209.
- MONTELLA M.M. (2010), "Musei d'impresa come strumento di comunicazione. Possibili innovazioni di prodotto, processo, organizzazione", *Esperienze d'impresa*, vol. 2, pp. 147-164.
- MONTELLA M.M. (2018), *I musei d'impresa. Heritage e total relationship marketing*, Studi MOA, Roma.
- MONTELLA M.M., SILVESTRELLI P. (2020), "Heritage e relationship marketing per le imprese agroalimentari italiane", *Micro and Macro Marketing*, vol. 29, n. 1, pp. 71-92.

- MONTEMAGGI M., SEVERINO F. (2007), *Heritage marketing: la storia dell'impresa italiana come vantaggio competitivo*, FrancoAngeli, Milano-Roma.
- NAPOLITANO M.R., DE NISCO A. (2017), "The great beauty. The role of cultural heritage and place identity in the international marketing strategies of made in Italy", *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, vol. 13, n. 2, pp. 99-175.
- NAPOLITANO M.R., RIVIEZZO A., GAROFANO A. (2018), *Heritage Marketing. Come aprire lo scrigno e trovare un tesoro*, Editoriale Scientifica, Napoli.
- NOTHHAFT H. (2010), "Communication management as a second-order management function: Roles and functions of the communication executive - results from a shadowing study", *Journal of Communication Management*, vol. 14, n. 2, pp. 127-140.
- PARASURAMAN A. (1987), "Customer-oriented corporate cultures are crucial to services marketing success", *Journal of Services Marketing*, vol. 1, n. 1, pp. 39-46.
- PIATKOWSKA K.K. (2014), "The Corporate Museum: a new type of museum created as a component of marketing company", *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum*, vol. 6, n. 2, pp. 29-37.
- PULH M., MENCARELLI R., CHANEY D. (2019), "The consequences of the heritage experience in brand museums on the consumer-brand relationship", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 53, n. 10, pp. 2193-2212.
- RINDELL A., SANTOS F.P., DE LIMA A.P. (2015), "Two sides of a coin: Connecting corporate brand heritage to consumers' corporate image heritage", *Journal of Brand Management*, vol. 22, n. 5, pp. 467-484.
- RIVIEZZO A., GAROFANO A., NAPOLITANO M.R. (2016), "Il tempo è lo specchio dell'eternità". Strategie e strumenti di heritage marketing nelle imprese longeve italiane", *Il capitale culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 13, pp. 497-523.
- RIVIEZZO A., GAROFANO A., NAPOLITANO M.R. (2021), *Corporate Heritage Marketing: Using the Past as a Strategic Asset*, Routledge, London.
- RIVIEZZO A., MASON M.C., GAROFANO A., NAPOLITANO M. R. (2022), "Uncovering the worth of the past: the relationship between corporate museums' strategic orientation and dual performance", *Management Decision*, vol. 60, n. 7, pp. 1852-1874.
- ROSE G.M., MERCHANT A., ORTH U.R., HORSTMANN F. (2016), "Emphasizing Brand Heritage: Does it Work? And how?", *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 69, n. 2, pp. 936-943.
- RUST R.T., ZAHORIK A.J. (1993), "Customer satisfaction, customer retention, and market share", *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 69, n. 2, pp. 193-215.
- SALMON C. (2017), *Storytelling: Bewitching the modern mind*, Verso Books, London.
- SCHEIN E.H. (1998), *Culture d'impresa. Come affrontare con successo le transizioni e i cambiamenti organizzativi*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano.
- SHETH J.N., PARVATLYAR A. (1995), "Relationship marketing in consumer markets: antecedents and consequences", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, vol. 23, n. 4, pp. 255-271.
- SIANO A., VOLLERO A., BERTOLINI A. (2022), "From brand control to brand co-creation: An integrated framework of brand paradigms and emerging brand perspectives", *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 152, pp. 372-386.

- SIMCIC BRØNN P. (2014), "How others see us: leaders' perceptions of communication and communication managers", *Journal of Communication Management*, vol. 18, n. 1, pp. 158-179.
- SIMONE C., MONTELLA M.M., LAUDANDO A. (2022), "I musei d'impresa: collegare il patrimonio, il marketing e la creazione di valore. L'esperienza italiana", *Il capitale culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, vol. 26, pp. 141-168
- SOLIMA L. (2015), "Imprese e musei d'impresa: dalla comunicazione storica all'immagine aziendale", in Ferradino V. and Napolitano M.R. (eds.), *Storia d'impres e imprese storiche. Una visione diacronica*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, pp. 434-451.
- SPIELMANN N., CRUZ A.D., TYLER B.B., BEUKEL K. (2019), "Place as a nexus for corporate heritage identity: An international study of family-owned wineries", *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 129(C), pp. 826-837.
- STANTON W.J. (1984), *Fundamentals of Marketing*, McGraw-Hill, New York.
- STEIN E.W. (1995), "Organizational memory: Review of concepts and recommendations for management", *International Journal of Information Management*, vol. 15, n. 2, pp. 17-32.
- STEYN B. (2002), "From Strategy to Corporate Communications Strategy: A conceptualization", *Journal of Communication Management*, vol. 8, n. 2, pp. 168-183.
- STOGNER M.B. (2009), "The Media-enhanced Museum Experience: Debating the Use of Media Technology in Cultural Exhibitions", *Curator: The Museum Journal*, vol. 52, n. 4, pp. 385-397.
- SVENSSON G. (2001), "Glocalization" of business activities: a "glocal strategy" approach", *Management Decision*, vol. 39, n.1, pp. 6-18.
- TENCH R., VERČIČ D., ZERFASS A., MORENO Á., VERHOEVEN P. (2017), *Communication Excellence. How to Develop, Manage and Lead Exceptional Communications*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- URDE M., GREYSER S.A., BALMER J.M. (2007), "Corporate brands with a heritage", *Journal of Brand Management*, vol. 15, n. 1, pp. 4-19.
- VALLINI C. (2005), "I musei aziendali veneti in rapporto al web", *Economia della cultura*, vol. 15, n. 2, pp. 241-246.
- VAREY R.J. (2000), "A critical review of conceptions of communication evident in contemporary business and management literature", *Journal of Communication Management*, vol. 4, n. 4, pp. 328-340.
- VERNUCCIO M., CESAREO L., PASTORE A., KITCHEN P. (2022), "Managerial and Organizational Perspectives on Online-Offline Integration within Integrated Marketing Communication: Toward a Holistic Conceptual Framework", *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 41, n. 3, pp. 519-540.
- ZELLWEGER T.M., NASON R.S., NORDQVIST M. (2012), "From Longevity of Firms to Transgenerational Entrepreneurship of Families: Introducing Family Entrepreneurial Orientation", *Family Business Review*, vol. 25, n. 2, pp. 136-155.
- ZENA P.A., HADISUMARTO A.D. (2013), "The study of relationship among experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty", *ASEAN Marketing Journal*, vol. 4, n. 1, pp. 37-46.

ZERFASS A. (2008), "Corporate communication revisited: Integrating business strategy and strategic communication", In Zerfass A., van Ruler B., Sriramesh K., (edited by), *Public Relations Research*, Springer VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden.

Marta Maria Montella
The strategic role of communication in management and the contribution of corporate museums

Academic or professional position and contacts

Marta Maria Montella
Associate Professor in Management
University of Macerata - Italy
e-mail: martamaria.montella@unimc.it

sinergie
italian journal of management

ISSN print 0393-5108
ISSN online 2785-549X
DOI 10.7433/s125.2024.13
pp. 271-291

 **FONDAZIONE
CUEIM**

**S I
M A**

Italian Society of
MANAGEMENT