The design of a Knowledge Exchange Network between university and SMEs: the DEA experience

DPPI 2011
Designing Pleasurable Products and Interfaces

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CONTEXT

THE ITALIAN MANUFACTURING SYSTEM

"Made in Italy" sectors
- automotive—mechanics
- food & drink
- clothing—fashion
- home—furnishings

THE ITALIAN MANUFACTURING SYSTEM

"Made in Italy" companies in Italy
- 542,876

in Lombardy
- 129,753

25% of the national total amount

in Italy

676 Excellent design firms

SMEs (>90%)

industrial districts model

Made in Italy: luxury & low complexity

DPPI 2011 / Milan, 23-06-2011
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> Model Evolution
From Local to Global Network
- new abilities to generate visions
and interpret the signs of these changes

CONTEXT
THE MARKET PLACE EVOLUTION

- fast and fluid changing
- increasingly aggressive competition

DPPI 2011 / Milan, 23-06-2011
Design as a strategic tool for sustainable innovation

a kind of innovation not necessarily technological (technology pull) not from the marketing point of view (marketing push)... but most of all based on meanings:
- new user needs,
- new values (cultural, symbolic...)
- new scenarios
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2 DAC projects

2005          2006

33 enterprises, 35 designers, 38 results
design knowledge & technology transfer
physical transfer of innovation agents
After 3 years of experimentation, results:

Designers > Entrepreneurs
global contexts, market trends, users lifestyles, systemic vision

Entrepreneurs > Designers
concretizing the design activity, steering choices

Design culture + Product culture = positive cognitive circuit

+ Projects going over the objectives set by both actors
+ Long term relations established
+ New businesses founded by the participants
web 2.0 platform, design innovation, creative digital arena, share, interact, learn, co-create
DEA _DESIGN & ARTIGIANATO PER IL TRENTINO_

Initiative spreading
Call for candidates
Official communication channel
Results spreading channel

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Results

 Visibility
Reputation

Approaching to Web 2.0 tools
A complete repository of designers, companies and partners for generating collaborations besides their own territorial district.

Job opportunities

Direct contact with University
Filter and supplier of useful and targeted information

Knowledge transfer

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Open issues

University as aggregating factor or deterrent to open innovation?
Technology as threat or opportunity?
Insufficient SMEs’ familiarity with the Net?
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RESULTS SPREADING

DEA’S EXPERIENCE

DEA’s Experience

FuoriTrentino

Web

DEAtv
The success obtained locally convinced CEii and Provincia Autonoma di Trento, in collaboration with Politecnico di Milano and DesignHub.it to develop DEA into a real support service for SMEs.

Create a system that can support design activities: new products and services through pilot projects.

Raise awareness of design as a strategic lever.
CONCLUSIONS

DEA is a new way to interpret the relationship between University, enterprises and territory that is based on a real application of design thinking to concrete cases.

Through these processes the University enables a local network and has the possibility to study the territory to define new models and practices.

The action-research methodology adopted allows to empirically transferring the acquired knowledge on the territory itself that could in turn generate innovation.
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Thanks.

www.designhub.it/dea