

Narrative and Multimodal Approaches to Corporate Discourse

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Promoting “Made in Italy” Abroad

By

Stefania D’Avanzo

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*A te, papà', che mi hai insegnato il valore più alto ed onesto della
cultura...*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	x
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
A JOURNEY THROUGH THE I CENTENARI ASSOCIATION IN THE ITALIAN BUSINESS SCENARIO	
The Italian Business Scenario: The Controversial Situation of the Industrial Field in the South of Italy. Marketing Strategies in the Italian Business Scenario	
Business Orientation of Family Businesses Over Time	
The Italian Family and Non-family Businesses in the Post-pandemic era:	
Corporate Storytelling in the Italian Business Scenario	
I Centenari: An Association of Italian Family Enterprises	
A journey through all the Associates: historical information	
CHAPTER TWO.....	28
INVESTIGATING THE I CENTENARI WEBSITE FROM A MULTIMODAL PERSPECTIVE	
Metaphors in Corporate Branding	
The Company Logo	
The Role of Testimonials: What Kind of Power?	
CHAPTER THREE.....	59
NARRATING AND COMMUNICATING BUSINESS STORIES – CORPORATE STORYTELLING ON THE I CENTENARI WEBSITE	
Corporate Storytelling: Some Theoretical Perspectives	
Corporate Identity and Cognitive Linguistics	
Cognitive Categorization	

CHAPTER FOUR	73
UNIONE IMPRESE CENTENARIE ITALIANE: CORPORATE STORYTELLING FROM A MULTIMODAL AND STRUCTURALIST PERSPECTIVE	
The Unione Imprese Centenarie Italiane Association: Historical Information	
The Associates	
Multimodal Metaphorical Meanings on the Unione Imprese Centenarie Italiane Website Homepage	
Corporate Storytelling from a Multimodal Perspective	
Storytelling Through the “Book” Metaphor	
Storytelling Through Family Multimodal Representation	
Storytelling Through the Multimodal Representation of Corporate Headquarters and Products	
A More Abstract Representation	
The “Journey” Metaphor	
CONCLUDING REMARKS	112
BIBLIOGRAPHY	115

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INTRODUCTION

According to a report by the Italian Family Business association (<https://www.aidaf.it/aidaf/chi-siamo>), family businesses represent a key component of the Italian economy, above all thanks to their contribution to GDP and employment. In particular, the total number of family businesses is estimated at more than 85% of the total number of businesses. From a European perspective, the impact of family businesses on the Italian economy is consistent with the one in the other European countries as the percentages correspond to 80% in France, 90% in Germany, 83% in Spain and 80% in the UK. Notwithstanding, in contrast with all the economic contexts of the other European countries, Italian family businesses are mainly managed by family members (66%), whereas only 26% of family businesses are found in France and 10% in the UK, as in both countries the companies are managed by external managers. In short, family businesses represent a unique feature of the Italian economic context. Furthermore, in recent years, a great interest has been shown by scholars from different disciplines, including history, sociology and business management, towards long-lived family companies (O'Hara 2004; Corbetta and Salvato 2012), who tried to explore practices and strategies adopted by the companies to “survive” over time. More specifically, their successful actions have been largely explored to find out the actual reasons for their lasting growth.

Recently, greater attention has been paid to the immaterial values characterizing the longevity of Italian family companies. For instance, their historical values and traditions have been analysed as strategic resources employed to build empathy in their relationships with customers (Montemaggi and Severino 2007). In this scenario, narratives have acquired more and more importance as, through narration, long-lived family companies can communicate their past heritage, their values and their identity in a more efficient way while encouraging the involvement of customers and improving the knowledge of the company of all their stakeholders (Qualizza 2009). Starting from all these assumptions and

studies, this work is aimed at investigating narrative strategies adopted by traditional long-lived Italian family firms belonging to the I Centenari association (<https://www.assocentenari.it/en/index.php>) and the Unione Imprese Centenarie Italiane (<https://www.uicitalia.org>) in order to promote their own identity. The I Centenari association was founded in Naples in 2001 by Pina Amarelli and Martino Cilento. These two entrepreneurs decided to create a project for the enhancement of long-standing family firms. The main goal of the association was to promote the development of the oldest firms in Italy and in the Campania—a region in the South of Italy where it is located. Its founders wanted to promote this region, which was sometimes unable to offer convincing business models. The Unione Imprese Centenarie Italiane association was started in 2000, when eleven long-lived companies founded the Associazione Imprese storiche Fiorentine (AISF) at Palazzo Vecchio in Florence in the North of Italy. In 2006, they became part of other centenarian Tuscanian companies, and thus their name changed to Unione Imprese Storiche Toscane (UIST). After some further changes, in 2019 it was renamed Unione Imprese Centenarie Italiane (UICITALIA). The companies that form the association share the high and prestigious quality of their products along with respect to their cultural traditions.

This study will attempt to shed light on “storytelling” as a marketing strategy, which will be investigated here from a linguistic perspective. More specifically, the concept of performativity will be explored with reference to narratives employed by the companies to “narrate” and promote themselves. On the other hand, narrative strategies in corporate discourse often imply multimodal communication. Thus, multimodal approaches will be taken into consideration. In particular, an analysis of the interplay of all semiotic processes (Wignell et al. 2018; Jewitt, Bezemer and O’Halloran 2016; O’Toole 2011; Machin 2011; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) employed by the associations in order to promote their corporate identity will be provided. In short, corporate communication will also be investigated through the lens of a “social semiotics” approach with the final goal being to achieve a more comprehensive view of the promotional uniqueness belonging to these companies. In the first chapter, some historical information concerning the firms belonging to the I Centenari association will be provided along with their position in the

Italian business and marketing scenario. They are long-lived family firms which managed to survive over time thanks to their traditional roots and values. Thus, further information concerning their history will help to better explore their nature. In the second chapter, a multimodal investigation (Wignell et al. 2018; Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran 2016; O'Toole 2011; Machin 2011; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) of the I Centenari website will be proposed. In particular, the website will be explored from a multimodal perspective with particular attention paid to the storytelling sections. The three metafunctions – ideational, interpersonal and textual (Wignell et al. 2018; Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran 2016; O'Toole 2011; Machin 2011) – involved in a multimodal analysis will be taken into consideration. Hence, a better overview of the association identity will be provided because the interplay of the complex text-image will be explored from a wider perspective. The study will try to include both a systemic-functional approach to multimodal discourse analysis and a social semiotics approach (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). The systemic-functional approach SF-MDA is mainly based on the metafunctional principle, which plays an important role for understanding the underlying organization of semiotic resources.

According to the social semiotics approach, the focus is instead on how processes of “meaning making” shape individuals and societies. So, in the study, a further aim will be to understand the “design” of the Centenarians’ website. Designs are intended as conceptualizations of the form of semiotic products and events (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001). They are means to realize discourses in the context of a given communication situation. In this section, further attention will be devoted to metaphorical meanings related to the multimodal images included in the Centenarians’ website. Multimodality has often been applied to corporate branding, especially in terms of multimodal metaphor. The main assumption is that these are “living organisms” (Koller 2009), as they are represented as people in terms of growth, dynamism, connectivity and flexibility. Thus, a further attempt to explore multimodal metaphors from the perspective of corporate brand communication will be made.

Specifically, the exploration of metaphorical meanings developed by the association to represent itself on its homepage will be provided. In the third chapter, the storytelling strategies adopted by the companies will be

investigated from the theoretical perspective of studies on corporate storytelling (Catenaccio, D’Avanzo and Geert 2021; Paynter and Halabi 2021; Brown 2006) and cognitive linguistics (Ran and Duimering 2007; Taylor 1995; Lakoff 1987; Rosch 1978). In particular, cognitive categorization will be applied to the investigation of corporate storytelling with the final aim to focus on the most relevant categories employed by the firms while narrating themselves. It is necessary to point out that, in previous studies, cognitive theories and methodologies have usually been explored in mission statements rather than storytelling. Thus, starting from the assumption that corporate narratives are speech acts bringing into existence a reality which did not exist before (Ford and Ford 1995), through this study, an original attempt to apply cognitive categorization to corporate storytelling will be made in order to explore the different ways the companies convey and promote their own identity.

Finally, the last chapter is devoted to the exploration of storytelling delivered by the businesses belonging to the *Unione Imprese Centenarie Italiane*. This investigation is carried out from a multimodal perspective while taking into account theoretical issues on corporate storytelling (Catenaccio, D’Avanzo and Geert 2021; Riessman 2008) and a structuralist approach to corporate narratives (Labov and Waletzky 1967). It is necessary to point out that the latter was considered as a more appropriate methodological approach than the cognitive one adopted for the analysis of the *I Centenari* association due to the diverse nature of narrative strategies enacted by the *Unione Imprese Centenarie Italiane* association.

The final aim will be to provide a wide overview of Italian corporate storytelling meant for spreading “made in Italy” abroad. In short, starting from the relevant role played by family businesses in the Italian economic scenario also due to their marketing strategies enacted to survive over time, the work will attempt to answer the following research question: What kind of corporate and promotional identity is conveyed by the companies while narrating themselves? In short, as both the *I Centenari* and *Unione Imprese Centenarie Italiane* are identified as associations including long-lasting family businesses which have managed to endure, this monograph will try to shed light on their strategic actions activated to convey and promote their own distinctiveness.

CHAPTER ONE

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE I CENTENARI ASSOCIATION IN THE ITALIAN BUSINESS SCENARIO

In this section, the investigation of the I Centenari association from a historical viewpoint will be provided. The analysis will be preceded by the exploration of the controversial situation concerning the industrial field in the south of Italy in order to contextualize the business scenario where long-lived family firms have managed to survive in a more detailed way. Furthermore, an overview of the financial conditions of Italian businesses in the post-pandemic era will be shown, which will be preceded by the exploration of business orientation of family businesses over time.

Finally, theories concerning corporate storytelling will be introduced along with a final description of the I Centenari association and of the companies the association is made up of.

The Italian Business Scenario: The Controversial Situation of the Industrial Field in the South of Italy. Marketing Strategies in the Italian Business Scenario.

In recent years, the gap between southern and northern industry has widened. In particular, industrial investments and employment have decreased more sharply in the south than in the rest of Italy, and the contribution of the southern regions to the total industrial value added has diminished. More specifically, the area which suffered most included small firms specialized into low-tech sectors with a weak attitude towards internationalization. Notwithstanding, although their weaknesses prevailed over their strengths, there were signs of vitality for some local productive systems and types of firms, mainly large enterprises (https://www.bancaditalia.it/pubblicazioni/qef/2013-0194/QEF_194.pdf). Before the beginning

of the economic crisis between 2001 and 2007, the Italian GDP increased 7.8% in the north of Italy and 4.8% in the south. Between 2007 and 2011, its decrease was bigger in the southern regions (-6.8% and -3.8%, respectively). During these periods, all the sectors were mainly involved in the decrease in the south, but the gap between the northern and the southern regions could be mainly observed in the industrial field. As a matter of fact, the latter was the most affected by the crisis in the south. In particular, it decreased by 11.5% between 2007 and 2011. The poor economic performance by southern industries seemed to derive from the unstable relationship between territories, sectors and companies. Nonetheless, some enterprises and fields have had a good capacity to react to the recession. For instance, the fashion industry has shown successful business experiences in Naples, in the Campania-a southern Italian region. Furthermore, the food sector has shown sheer vitality in four southern provinces besides the high-tech field including the most successful aerospace industry in the south of Italy.

Orientation of Family Businesses Over Time

A growing academic interest has recently emerged in the understanding of how strategic orientation may influence family firms' long-term survival, and how it is in turn affected by the specific characteristics of such a category of firms (Riviezzo et al. 2015). In particular, the possible conflicts deriving from the overlap between family and business systems have often been explored.

More specifically, scholars tend to emphasize the necessity for the firms to ensure stability and continuity to family members with conservative decisions but also innovate and take risks to increase competitiveness of the business in a continuously changing environment (Miller and Le Breton-Miller 2005).

Thus, some controversial perspectives have emerged as some studies have emphasized the limits to growth and success caused by the familiar nature of the firms (Allio 2004; Zahra 2005). Some others have instead highlighted the positive effect deriving from the overlap between family and business (Miller and Le Breton-Miller 2005; Miller, Le Breton-Miller and Scholnick 2008; Corbetta and Salvato 2012; Welsh et al. 2013). In particular, some scholars assert that long-lived companies have the ability

to project themselves towards the future by adopting a long-term orientation while guaranteeing continuity through everyday operations (Lumpkin and Brigham 2011). The most recent trend concerning this issue mainly focuses on the new attitude by long-lived companies on exploring new opportunities and domains (Sharma and Salvato 2011; Zellweger and Sieger 2012; Stubner et al. 2012; Moss, Payne and Moore 2014; Allison, McKenny and Short 2014), whereas family businesses traditionally highlighted their weak interest towards taking risks deriving from exploration. According to a previous study on the I Centenari (Riviezzo et al. 2015) based on interviews with the companies owners, the firms have shown to be strongly oriented towards the exploration of new marketing strategies. They have been able to change over time in order to achieve lasting success. Many of them introduced some relevant innovations. A key strategy implicit in exploration is represented by their appearance on the international markets despite the existence of some different entry strategies. For instance, Bottiglieri, a centenarian shipping company, has operated on international markets since the beginning of its success, and has gradually extended its activities into the Middle East and Persian Gulf. Others have recently entered foreign markets. Notwithstanding, their success is also due to their positive attitude towards exploitation. In particular, the latter has been considered as an essential feature of their long-lasting success. During the interviews, the respondents largely focused on their relationships with customers and other stakeholders, based on trust and their ability to stand the test of time.

Furthermore, they provided several instances of their ability to manage communication and to pay the right attention to their territory of origin. In short, the key themes used to explain the nature of exploitation within the examined firms were (1) relationship with customers; (2) communication; and (3) local roots (Riviezzo et al. 2015, 196).

All these themes are found in the narratives published on the I Centenari website. As can be observed in the following chapters, traditional roots and relationships with customers are the main elements emerging from their narratives.

The Italian Family and Non-family Businesses in the Post-pandemic Era

In order to provide a general overview concerning the post-pandemic conditions of big and small Italian companies, some relevant information from the Rapporto Regionale PMI 2021 (the Regional Report on Small and Medium Enterprises 2021) will be provided. The report includes data on about 160 enterprises including some small and big ones. According to the report, the Covid-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented economic and financial crisis. Some fields, including tourism, food service, transportation and fashion, have been the most impacted by Covid-19, whereas others, such as the pharmaceutical and the agri-food businesses, have been encouraged.

Furthermore, the pandemic has reduced the creation of new capital companies in the whole country. The most relevant effects can be mainly observed during the first half of 2020 due to the first lockdown, when a reduction of new companies by a quarter compared to the data in 2019 was noticed. During the next six months, the reduction was lower although it never stopped (-3%). From a wider perspective related to the different impact of the pandemic on the several Italian regions (north versus southern), some less negative effects were observed in the south of Italy, probably due to the high number of businesses producing food in this area – a field which has not been impacted by the negative effects of the pandemic. In order to cope with the difficulties encountered by the Italian companies, an Italian plan called “Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza” (PNRR) was presented at the European Commission. The plan focused on the introduction of laws and investments aimed at increasing the growth potential of the country while providing a sustainable development. The plan has been a great opportunity as it has helped the companies to change their operational contexts while orienting them towards a green and digital transition. As far as the impact of the pandemic on the family businesses is concerned, a study revealed that the latter showed more strength and stability than non-family businesses. In particular, it was noticed that there was a lower need by the family businesses to introduce changes related to customers and products along with the immediate introduction of smart working and a higher foreign turnover in 2021 in comparison with non-family businesses (<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/coronavirus-imprese->

familiari-resistono-criisi-e-prevedono-crescere-2021-ADGEdiQB). These results were confirmed by a study carried out by the Italian University of Castellanza “Cattaneo” which proved that the Italian family businesses did not suffer from the current crisis, which instead was welcomed as a great opportunity. The scholars analysed the answers from 182 Italian companies with a turnover of under 50 million euros, producing goods in different fields including food/beverages (12%), clothes (8%) and plastics and rubber (8%). The survey revealed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, 51.3% of family businesses declared they did not expect a lower customer demand in 2021. The data referring to productivity was quite encouraging as well, as confirmed by 75% of family businesses and 68% of non-family businesses. As far as the reduction of liquidity is concerned, family businesses showed more optimism than the non-family ones. Furthermore, they complained less about liquidity and changed working conditions due to the pandemic. Finally, the sales figures showed a growth in 2021 related to the engineering field (+25%), agricultural products, food and beverages (+15%), and textiles, clothes and shoes (+17%).

Corporate Storytelling in the Italian Business Scenario

Storytelling has progressively become less linear and more digitalized. For instance, the innovative use of storytelling in social media, especially on Twitter, was extremely effective in legitimacy diffusion as the storytelling elements, specifically cognitive, pragmatic and emotional elements, influenced the extent on diffusion as well as network density and eigenvector centrality (Duygu et al. 2019).

Digital storytelling is widely employed in the Italian business scenario, especially in the fashion, food and furniture fields (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305474756_Managing_narrative_sensemaking_in_digital_storytelling_strategies_for_Made_in_Italy_companies_A_Sartore_S_Romenti_A_Miglietta_ext_abstract). Some coherent stories are told with the aim to allow the reader to build a universe of symbols and meanings, which are able to face attacks on the communication of Italian products and services deriving from counternarratives (Gabriel 1995). In particular, “Made in Italy” is emphasized as a key-concept in the Italian corporate narratives in order to “fight” counternarratives aimed at delegitimizing the

authenticity of Italian products. A fundamental distinction between traditional storytelling and digital storytelling resides in defined or not defined meanings allowed by social networks. As with offline storytelling, corporate online storytelling feeds on this semiotic incompleteness (Ferraro 2015). In particular, social networks and blogging platforms allow the antenarratives and counternarratives to modify the connections between stories that the company creates and tries to control in order to create meaning from its communication. In order to try and increase the level of signification, corporate communication is based on defined meanings. When “Made in Italy” is at the core of narration, the readers are allowed to create and interpret their meanings. In particular, counter-narrations try to modify the original narrative while antenarratives modify it by reinterpreting it. For this reason, online narrations are destined to change due to the open structure of social networking and blogging platforms, so the aim of the message can be commented and shared. According to Czarniawska (2004), corporate narratives are slow to change and repeat themselves due to the speed of message signification change in social networks and blogging/content-sharing platforms.

Conversely, non-digital storytelling is likely to survive changes due to the lack of the possibility of being published, shared, commented on or integrated on social networks. In the following sections, a more detailed investigation concerning non-digital storytelling from various perspectives will be provided in order to explore possible narrative categorizations aimed at conveying corporate identity.

I Centenari: An Association of Italian Family Enterprises

The I Centenari association was founded in Naples in 2001 by Pina Amarelli and Martino Cilento. They were greatly encouraged by the pride for their homeland and their entrepreneurship. Thus, they decided to create a project for the enhancement of long-standing family firms, following the experience already consolidated by Les Hénokiens, an association from across the Alps that brings together family businesses from all over the world, with more than two hundred years of history. The association aimed at promoting the development of the oldest firms in Italy and in Campania – a region in the south of the country where the association is located.

Its founders wanted to promote this region, which was sometimes unable to offer some convincing business models. In 2018 the association included some other companies from other Italian regions, thus becoming the Association of Italian Family Historical Companies.

Today, I Centenari is a group of heterogeneous companies sharing the extraordinary values of familiarity and longevity: “Important names, brands famous all over the world, successful entrepreneurs, men and women who have shared destinies, responsibilities, honors, but also discipline and rigor in the family as in the enterprise” (<https://www.assocentenari.it/en/chisiamo.php>). The companies are far from the globalized world as they want to defend the essence of Italian craftsmanship and their “Made in Italy” logo. This means that they want to preserve values for younger generations. Over time, the companies have drawn their own inspiration from their ancient past while projecting towards a distant future. In the following, some historical information concerning the companies belonging to the association has been provided. Specifically, the corpus under investigation includes twenty-nine long-lived Italian family companies producing artisanal and handmade products, as illustrated in Table 1.1.

Company	Industry
Besana	Dried fruit
Cianciullo Marmi	Natural stone for building
Cilento M. e F.llo	Textiles/men’s tailored clothing
Coelmo	Generating sets
De Luca Industria Grafica e Cartaria	Packaging
Don Alfonso 1980	Restaurant/catering
E. Marinella	Fashion
Fabbriche Riunite Torrone di Benevento	Confectionery/merchant wholesaler
Gruppo Petrone	Pharmaceutics
Giovanni Ascione e Figlio	Coral craftsmanship/jewellery
Giuseppe Bottiglieri Shipping Company	Shipping

Company	Industry
Hotel Jaccarino/Hotel Imperial Tramontano	Hospitality
Agenzia Marittima Michele Autuori	Shipping
Ottica Cav. Raffaele Sacco	Optics
Pastificio Setaro	Food/pasta
Antica Distilleria Petrone	Distillery
Antonio Sada e F.lli	Corrugated paper/packaging
Ceramica Pinto	Artisan pottery
Ventrella	Jewellery
De Nigris	Food/vinegar
Voghera	Clothes
Umberto	Restaurant
Gruppo Tavassi	Logistics
Castaldo	Agriculture
Amarelli Liquirizia	Food/liquorice
Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria	Hospitality
Savinelli	Pipes
Officine Grafiche Francesco Giannini e Figli	Typography
Guida Editori	Publishing

Table 1.1. The family companies belonging to the I Centenari association

A Journey Through the Associates: Historical Information

Besana

The company was founded in 1921 when Emilio and Vincenzo Besana realized they could make a profit from exporting their walnuts and hazelnuts cultivated in some fertile areas in Campania, the Italian region where the company is located. Thus, the two brothers started their own business which was given the name of Emilio Besana & Co. In a short time, the company managed to become popular around the world. In particular, the introduction

of some new raw materials, such as almonds and walnuts, is observed thanks to their being imported from Apulia and Sicily – two other Italian regions – and other countries. From the 1970s onwards, Besana managed to become a leading company in the production of dried fruit. In 1989, the company opened a retail store in England. Over the years, it has also increased its interest in biological products.

Cianciullo Marmi

The Cianciullo family has conveyed its passion for marble and other precious natural stones such as granite and travertine from generation to generation. This passion favoured a consistent learning process along with the improvement of their skills concerning stone selection and manufacturing processes. Their entrepreneurial activity began with a vessel carrying blocks of marble from Carrara, an Italian town famous around the world for marble production. The turning point occurred when one of the family members invested in a large area east of Salerno in the south of Italy where one of the main distribution points of the firm is located. The core business is based on the transformation of natural stones. In addition to the processing and sale of domestic and foreign marble, travertine and granite, production gradually included facades, interior and exterior coatings, flooring and staircases.

Furthermore, the entrepreneurial spirit of innovation and passion for stone encouraged the family to invest in new machinery and experiment with innovative products in travertine – a material from quarries in Tivoli, a small town not far from Rome where the firm is still located today. In the 1980s, an internationalization process started as the company decided to invest in Spain and the United States. Some changes were introduced thanks to the presence of the company in some other international countries and continents such as India and Brazil. The latter introduced some new technologies aimed at improving the processing of marble. The company is now in its fourth generation. Its expansion and growth have been possible thanks to the inclusion of experts and advisors in its team and the strong collaboration with architects and popular interior designers famous around the world. Thanks to its team of experts, Cianciullo managed to be part of valuable projects and promote the use of its precious marble in some famous

shopping centres in Miami, Greece and Naples, and in hotels in New York, Morocco and Sorrento. Thanks to its strong family values, such as integrity, loyalty, honesty and respect, the company managed to build a solid reputation and a sustainable competitive advantage.

Cilento M. e F.llo

Maison Cilento was founded in 1780 by the Cilento family. Before that, the family was famous for its presence in the textile industry of the time. The introduction of innovative production processes related to the spinning and weaving of natural fibres strongly contributed to the economic development of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in Italy. In particular, two spinning mills were built by the family at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Since then, the company has strongly believed in the culture of “tailor-made” suits, shirts and ties, along with the creation of unique products rigorously made from rich and elegant fabrics, which still represent the “manifesto” of this company. The latter was attended by famous clients, such as nobles from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, who used to visit the shop to buy the excellent clothes produced by the Maison. Today the company is run by Ugo Cilento, who has strengthened the image of excellence of the company, which is today one of the most popular businesses producing tailormade products in the world. He has also created an authentic company museum with garments and accessories made and worn by ancient gentlemen of the past.

Coelmo

Coelmo has been working for over a hundred years in the energy sector, thus representing the excellence of Made in Italy worldwide. The continuous commitment by the company family to promptly satisfy any needs related to energy has been recognized by many prestigious clients, such as the Italian Army and the UN, who chose Coelmo as their official supplier of energy systems. One of the main strengths of the company is undoubtedly represented by its ethical behaviour and corporate social responsibility. Their commitment has allowed them to survive over time, despite some difficulties encountered during the years. Today Coelmo has a certificate management system according to the Ohsas standards, which

includes both the process and product certifications. Its success is also the result of the efforts made by the family every day.

De Luca – Industria grafica e cartaria

De Luca is a family business which has been producing paper for more than one century. The company is located in Amalfi, one of the two coastal gems of Salerno in the south of Italy, which is well-known worldwide for its famous paper mills. Andrea, the founder of the company, emigrated to America where he lived for fifteen years and learned the art of printing. Once he had acquired his professional skills, he decided to come back to Amalfi permanently. He bought an old typographical works, where he had worked for a short time in the past, and started his business there. In the meanwhile, he also created a marketplace in the supply of wrapping paper, paper bags, hotel supplies and commercial printing, thus increasing the number of its customers. A turning point occurred in the mid-1960s when the company moved their factory to Salerno. De Luca is today one of the most successful companies in the international scenario.

Ristorante Don Alfonso

The story of Ristorante Don Alfonso started with Alfonso, who inherited his love and passion for cooking and researching high-quality products from his grandfather – a hotelier and a gifted chef. His passion encouraged him to open Ristorante Don Alfonso 1890, with the help of his wife Livia. For many years, they devoted themselves to both the hotel next to the restaurant and the restaurant itself, with a great passion for good-quality products. After the first great success and recognition of important clients, Alfonso and Livia decided to dedicate themselves completely to the management of the restaurant, so they created a high-class restaurant in an area not easily accessible and away from the main roads of communication between the centre and south of the country, which offered a unique experience to their clients. Over the years, they cultivated their love for cooking while respecting nature and its produce. Thanks to Luigi Veronelli – a famous Italian winemaker – they also started to appreciate wine, and decided to buy Le Peracciole – a farm where they cultivated the original San Marzano tomato and other typical products according to artisanal techniques, without

using chemical substances and with great respect for nature. The restaurant is now the “ambassador” of Italian cuisine in the world thanks to its care for the quality of raw materials. The property has been furnished in nineteenth-century style. It includes a library and a cellar dating back to pre-Roman times, alongside the most prestigious wine labels in the world. Many reviews have been delivered by famous newspapers such as *The New York Times* and the *International Herald Tribune*, from the Michelin Guide to the *Delice*. Today the owners, along with their children, believe in the same strong traditional values, such as respect for the geographical area and its beauty, scents and colours of nature. These values contribute to creating a cultural bond with the land as the company has always tried to combine innovation with tradition. Many talented young people have learned from the cooking school of Don Alfonso.

E. Marinella

In 1914 Eugenio Marinella began his entrepreneurial activity by importing London brand names to Naples. He was deeply fascinated by the elegance of English men so launched two main brands – one specialized in the tailoring of shirts, the other for the production of handmade ties. Later, Luigi, Eugenio’s son, decided to abandon the tailoring of shirts and devote himself to producing ties, which indeed had no competitors. Thus, the Marinella shop was started. It has been the symbol (and legend) of masculine elegance in the world for a hundred years. Today, Maurizio, Luigi’s son, is running the company with a great entrepreneurial spirit and market orientation. Today, the company is recognized as one of the most famous things of the city of Naples, along with Maradona, a well-known football player, Totò, a very popular Italian actor, and San Gennaro, the patron Saint of Naples. As can be read on the I Centenari website, “Marinella’s loyalty to Naples also means awareness and appreciation for what it represents today in the world” (<https://www.assocentenari.it/en/associato-marinella.php>).

Fabbriche Riunite di Torrione Benevento

On January 30, 1908, a single large factory producing the famous “torrone” was founded in Benevento, a little town not far from Naples, in the south of

Italy. Despite some difficulties during the two world wars, in 1955 Mario Rosa took over the company, saving it from bankruptcy. The youngest of thirteen brothers, from childhood Mario Rosa learned the secrets of the production of torrone and confectionery from local craftsmen.

The early years of his administration were characterized by heavy investments in machinery and a radical restructuring of the plant. Thanks to the support of his family, the entrepreneur introduced some relevant innovations, thus succeeding in expanding the company's product portfolio. Today, more than thirty-five employees work in the factory, and a wide range of products, including chocolate and ice-cream, are produced.

As stated by Fausta Rosa, chairman of the board of directors, family values, such as passion, sense of responsibility, selflessness, dedication and sacrifice, are the key values which encouraged the longevity of the enterprise. The company produces some different types of products, including "copeta" (an ancestor of "torrone"), the "torrone del papa" (torrone of the Pope) and the "torrone della regina" (torrone of the queen). The strong relationship between the company and the land is confirmed by the claim, proposed by the company several times in the past, that "Benevento la città del Torrone – Il torrone siamo noi" ("Benevento the city of Torrone – Torrone is us"), which reinforces the importance of the cultural bond between the company and its land. In 1971, Mario Rosa received the "Ercole d'Oro" prize and the well-known "Gladiatore d'Oro" prize. The latter takes its name from a Roman bas-relief dating back to the imperial era preserved in the Museum of Sannio in Benevento, not far from Naples.

Gruppo Petrone

The Petrone family has always lived in Irpinia, an area in the south of Italy. There, in 1892, the founder of the company, Raffaele Petrone, opened his first pharmacy not far from Avellino, devoting himself to the health of his customers. After the Second World War, the pharmacy was moved to Naples where the family had the opportunity to acquire more knowledge concerning the pharmaceutical industry and experiment with new approaches dealing with customer care. The Petrone family had entrepreneurial intuitions. In particular, thanks to their meeting with Achille Lauro – the owner of a famous Italian shipyard – they began to supply drugs to the ships of the

Lauro fleet. Later, the introduction of support services for the logistics and distribution of new products encouraged the growth of the company. In 1983 they succeeded in purchasing the Farmacia Internazionale, which is one of the most popular pharmaceutical shops in Naples. Then, the Fin Posillipo SpA was founded, which included about thirty companies interested in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries in European countries such as Spain and Ireland, as well as Singapore. Today the group is also involved in research and development activities through their participation in eight health centres and the creation of a centre for diagnostic imaging, which are all located around Naples in the south of Italy. The company has also contributed to the recovery of some areas of the city, and has always paid attention to the environment when corporate decisions are made.

Furthermore, the Petrone Group has always looked for new opportunities and partnerships to increase and strengthen their position. Its passion for the international markets and opportunities offered by globalization represent a strong push to closely monitor the opportunities for their cooperation with new countries and markets.

Finally, economic and social innovations are some of the top priorities of the company along with its attention to customers' needs.

Ascione & Figlio

The official story of the Ascione family began with Domenico Ascione, the owner of fishing boats in coral-reef areas, whose ancestors had handled coral since before the eruption of Vesuvius in 1794. In 1885, Giovanni, Domenico's son, decided to create one of the most popular manufacturing companies in Torre del Greco, which is devoted to the processing of coral, cameo, mother-of-pearl, semi-precious stones and precious metals. The company has been representing a story of love and passion, combining art and design, for five generations. Today the company is led by the Ascione brothers – Giovanni's sons – who devote themselves to their job with passion and dedication. They strongly believe in the identification of business with family values as the key for their success. A museum was created by the company to celebrate 150 years of the enterprise. Today the museum is also a showroom, a unique place, also intended for famous

concerts, cultural meetings, charity events and much more. The current fifth generation has expanded the offering with household items and accessories while introducing new collections of more accessible jewellery. Thus, the exploration of the new trends based on traditional taste has maintained a strong brand identity and combined tradition, culture and history by projecting the company into the future.

Giovanni Bottiglieri shipping

Captain Giovanni Bottiglieri started his business activity in 1850 with a small fleet of coral boats, although the family business was founded a few years later with the launching of *Correale Secondo*, their first schooner.

During the world wars, the Bottiglieri fleet had to overcome the seizure of some ships, which were later destroyed. With the end of the Second World War, Giovanni bought Liberty category ships, which were characterized by mass production and innovative technologies, thus relaunching his decimated fleet. In 1968 the company managed to enter into a ten-year contract with the Coeclerici, a famous firm devoted to the transport of coal from Russia to Italy. This experience enriched the family in terms of not only financial resources but also knowledge and experience related to the Russian mining field. In 1968 Giuseppe Bottiglieri began to help his father, Giovanni, with the management of family businesses, sharing with him some important decisions such as investment in the Greek market, where the company had been operating for eighteen years. Today, Mariella, Alessandra and Manuela, along with their father Giuseppe and their mother Ghetty Bottiglieri, are the administrators of an enterprise which is now in its sixth generation thanks to their courage, honesty and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Competence and knowledge are the founding values of the company philosophy. Human resources and technological innovations are the keys of their lasting business success. Furthermore, technological innovation is the foundation of their corporate longevity which has led the company from the coral ships to the post-war Liberty ships and those of the Tin Deckers of the 1950s up to the modern tankers and the Post Panamaxes. Corporate values include reliability and efficiency based on both tradition and innovation.

Despite the choice made by Giuseppe Bottiglieri to move the ship-owning business to Greece, his affectionate bond with Torre del Greco has remained strong as it was the place where the family business was born. Thus, in 1994 the company returned to its native land where he continued his activity while providing travel connections with the Mediterranean Sea and the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

Hotel Jaccarino

The story of Hotel Jaccarino started at the end of the nineteenth century when Alfonso Costanzo, aged only fourteen, left Sant'Agata sui due Golfi near Naples to join his aunt and uncle in the United States. There he started to devote himself to various jobs, including the preparation of buffet food in large hotels in New York. After a few years, thanks to his experience gained overseas, he decided to come back to Sant'Agata sui due Golfi where he bought two rooms in 1890, thus opening *Pensione Jaccarino*, together with Herr Brandmeier – a German partner who was dazzled by the beauty of the coast. His intention was to offer his customers a place where people could feel at home after a long journey, as usually happened at that time. Within a few years, the restaurant became famous thanks to the accuracy and selection of genuine products. Thus, Alfonso Costanzo Jaccarino was able to change the *Pensione Jaccarino* into a well-known hotel overlooking the two bays and offering hospitality to guests, such as the famous Italian writers Matilde Serao, Enrico de Nicola and Salvatore Di Giacomo, and Enrico Caruso – a very popular Italian singer. Alfonso strongly believed in an idea of hospitality which included the wellbeing of the entire territory to which his hotel belonged.

Thus, thanks to the support of Luigi, the eldest son of his thirteen children, he managed to turn Sant'Agata sui due Golfi into an attractive tourist centre in the Mediterranean, mainly thanks to some initiatives for his community, such as the creation of a private water supply and the introduction of the first cinema in the hotel. Today, the Jaccarino family is the owner of Hotel Jaccarino in Sant'Agata sui due Golfi and the Hotel Tramontano in Sorrento. The latter is one of the most prestigious hotels in the Sorrento peninsula, and has welcomed a lot of international guests. Sorrento was also the birthplace of Torquato Tasso. Furthermore, it hosted