

The role of Cultural Management and its social and narrative relevance

Descrizione

In his last book *La phrase urbaine*, the French philosopher and author Jean Christophe Bailly wrote that the city is like a sentence whose meaning we can understand only if we know its grammar.

The city is not only a web of functions and services, but also a narrative fabric that needs to be read and told, explained and shared.

Every city has its own urban grammar, requiring a common alphabet in order to generate webs of narratives, of humanity, and of cultural action and citizenship.

Today more than any other time in the past there is a need to be *civis*, and sense is created from partaking what it means to inhabit, work and be a citizen, from the shared meaning of education, civil law and civil rights, dreams and needs, values and of doing and being as culture.

Culture is the primary building block of meaning man has ever found, and we must start from culture to help citizens find their own sense, as individuals and as a collectivity.

Generally things are no different today than 70 years ago, during the age of totalitarian regimes, or 50 years ago, during the age of counterculture. What is different is the relationship with authority. Today one can no longer trickle something down from above and impose it as a truth for it to be welcomed.

Present-day authority is no longer recognized as such – it requires consensus for what it does and not simply for what it is.

A city's grammar cannot be generated from the top-down, from the administration or from private institutions, whether they are businesses, universities or research

centers. The role of politics is to create time, location and information opportunities so that the city's residents can build together their vocabulary, and along with it their own narratives, from the bottom-up.

Politicians must open up, listen and facilitate processes, not simply propose models.

The words participation, inclusion and sharing have become part of the collective vocabulary and acquired a meaning that they didn't have just a few years ago. When there is talk of great participative projects, specific projects come to mind, and when there is talk of inclusion one no longer refers to abstract academic formulas but to concrete experiences. This is true in Europe as well as in Italy.

Making culture together from the bottom-up is a winning model that changes the role of the politician from planner to planning facilitator, with results that are much more appreciated by those whom these results are aimed for.

From this point of view, creative businesses, manufacturers and associations play a fundamental role, because they become the civic, non-political activators of culture and innovation.

Today these entities have the task to recognize the collectivity's feelings and needs, and to present a cultural offer that will help people develop behaviors aiming towards the innovation and change that the present time demands.

In order to do so, creative businesses need not only a technically and economically skilled management, but also and especially individuals that are able to listen.

Listening is the foremost soft skill for cultural managers in the 3.0 era. In this era of smartphones, emails, social networks, long-distance communication and augmented reality it has become increasingly pressing to train individuals who are able to listen inwardly and outwardly, who stop and talk to others and are able to see people's needs and to transform them into wishes. Listening is the foundation for an emphatic

leadership, which is exactly the leadership that contemporary culture endorses. The more we learn to listen, the better we will be able to respond successfully to the new urban narratives.

Campi meta