DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE RETAIL PURCHASE PROCESS IN THE LUXURY FURNITURE MARKET

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AY: 2018/2019

ABSTRACT

The continuous growth of digital technologies is changing offline processes and activities, as well as people's behaviour. Physical stores have been joined by virtual ones and even the human touch in customer services has fount a "digital counterpatrt": online reviews and feedbacks.
In fact, since the beginning of "Web 2.0", dated in the first half of the the 2000s, web has stopped being a place for static knowledge and showcases, turning into an unlimited space of interaction across people.
This has pushed brands and companies to find new ways to reach their audiences, their target, their perspective customers: the commercial messages had to join the social media conversation, getting as close as possible to a two-ways interaction without compromising their core objectives.

The aim of this thesis is to understand how digitalization is affecting the retail purchase process of the Italian luxury furniture sector in order to develop a design proposal to create a strong bond between a brand and its customers, that goes beyond the physical retail limits.
This specific business sector's values, enclosed in each beautiful piece of furniture, became alive in the space of a store, making a difference for the customers and ensuring an unique experience to them.

Digital tools are playing an important role in enriching customer experience across multiple channels, taking advantage of a personal interaction between people and brands. The evidences of the digital transformation are visible also in the luxury furniture sector, which is building its "2.0" future on its glorious history made of beauty and meaning.
Service design has all the tools to bring a user-centered innovation able to create intuitive user experiences enriched by values and meanings, by listening to customers' needs and, at the same time, integrating exclusivity and high quality into luxury brand services. Service design solutions, furthermore, can build a strong brand experience even in situation where the space can't be adapted to embrace corporate values, such as multi-brand furniture retailers.

To provide a design benchmark, in this work the state of the art of communication of luxury furniture brands and retailers will be analysed, on both traditional and new media touchpoints. Then, an integrated and interactive design solution will be displayed as a concept to help a traditional Italian furniture brand making a difference: taking advantage of digital innovation and contemporary digital tools will enrich their customers' experience, providing them transparency and detailed information to be autonomous and conscious on their choices.

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INTRODUCTION

The spread of digital technologies has deeply changed many aspects of everybody's life, affecting also the companies' activities as they have had to modify their structures around this new digital context. This impact is so strong that it has been called "Digital Revolution".
The increased use of the Internet has not only allowed information to spread but it has also made it overall more accessible to everyone.
Internet allows anyone with a laptop and a browser to connect to a network and access all the information contained. The network can shorten distances and overcome geographic boundaries, allowing people to exchange messages, information and all kind of opinions from everywhere. This phenomenon has made it so that companies are changing their approach towards their customers that are, thanks to the use of the internet, always more conscious, informed and able to evaluate the products that have been offered to them.

In the online world, consumers are able to exchange opinions about products in a public way. Digital technologies have altered the relationship between brands and consumers, and have also strongly affected the means that companies use to build a relationship with their customers.
The web has presented itself since the beginning as an extremely popular tool, promising everyone free information access.
When talking about accessibility, connection, freedom to comment and about sharing and expressing our own opinions, we are talking about democracy, a concept that sounds far away from the Luxury world, which is based on privilege and elites. *Luxury Brands have based their image and authority on the past and the tradition, and therefore it is difficult for them to adopt mass and democratic new tools. Until recently, the luxury industry showed low commitment towards integrating advanced Internet technologies and its accompanying interactive and digital tools in the sector's marketing and overall business strategies.* (Okonkwo, 2009).

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The very idea of two-way communication with consumers was something that, for these companies, seemed unnatural.
While online digital marketing has become decidedly mainstream, luxury firms have been slower than many non-luxury firms to embrace the Internet's potential. Part of the reason for this reluctance is what some have termed "the Internet Dilemma." The Internet Dilemma is a term coined to describe the challenge luxury firms face as they seek to maintain the image of their brand, sustain a personal link with customers, and retain an aura of exclusivity as they simultaneously seek to provide their products and services to increasingly technologically astute customers.[11]

Companies have been pushed to embrace internet business by the evolution of consumers and their new needs and expectations. Paradoxically, luxury clients are the most smartphone and technology-oriented and as a consequence, their purchase behavior has totally changed.

Luxury consumers are no longer just looking for one-way communication from brands; rather, consumers desire two-way interaction that comes in the form of dialogue, exchanges, sharing, entertainment, and engagement (Okonkwo, 2009).
Luxury brands are now moving towards digital technologies and new ways of interaction and communication. In the Luxury Market, there is, more than in the other markets, a focus on the user experience that has to be the most exclusive and immersive, aimed to maximise the customer's satisfaction.
Internet has proven itself to be a valid tool to amplify the sense of omnipresence of the brand: we have seen that one of the characteristics that consumers associate with luxury brands is their global character and, thanks to the use of social media, luxury brands, have the opportunity to ensure a capillary presence not only in every part of the world but potentially in every moment of the consumer's life.

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The use of social media maximizes the effects of communication campaigns and stimulates consumers to have an even stronger relationship with the brand. In addition, digital tools can be used in conjunction with "offline" tools for improving customer satisfaction and develop a more lasting and profitable relationship with them.

Digital technologies can help the brands in building this experience and make it more effective.
The boundaries between the Online and the Offline purchase process aren't separated anymore because one world is contaminating the other in a continuous interaction.
The network and the new digital technologies can, in fact, help and facilitate the creation of a better interaction and relationship with the consumer, which can contribute to creating a unique shopping experience. The various digital and physical experiences that the consumer encounters will be increasingly integrated and connected, so it will be essential to make the technology applied

1 The Internet Dilemma: An exploratory study of luxury firms' usage of internet-based technologies

to the retail channels functional and usable, in order to create further support for the purchasing process. The key to success is the perfect balance between human factors and technological factors, between offline and online, such as the implementation by companies of an omnichannel strategy, defined as the combined and integrated use of the various channels (physical stores, online and mobile) to support the process of company-consumer interaction (pre-sales, purchase and after-sales phases), is now the focus of retailers. They are potentially in fact, many opportunities are due to the adoption of an omnichannel approach, especially when the retailer promotes a change not only in technology, but also organizational and cultural. Adopting an omnichannel approach is a radical change of mentality aimed to place the client at the heart of the sales strategy and offering a truly integrated shopping experience, fluid on all the channels[22].

The luxury market encompasses many additional sectors, however, ranging from automobiles to watches, and from yachts to jewelry. These sectors vary significantly in terms of the products and their attributes (Caniato et al., 2011), and there are differences in the way Luxury sectors have embraced digital technologies in the commerce process.

One of the less studied Luxury sectors, that is also seen as the less advanced and the most traditional from the service and commerce point of view, is the furniture market. In particular, our attention will consider the Italian Luxury Market as, in fact, "Made in Italy" Brands are well known worldwide and they have been exporting their excellent design and manufacture for years.
Even if this sector is very important for both Italy's economy and for the importing states' economies, there is a lack of scientific references that deal with this topic; furthermore, luxury marketing case studies rarely belong to the furniture market.
The reason for this lack of interest might be because of the fact that when we talk about furniture we immediately associate it with utility goods, useful commodities that every householder needs.

Even if the luxury furniture market is still far from the adoption of an omnichannel approach, because of its peculiar distribution characteristics and sectoral limits and because of the lack of innovation evidence in scientific papers; companies in the furniture industry are starting to move towards multi-channeling and this presence in different levels of the web world is becoming essential to contact and interconnect users through digital systems.

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Furniture Brands are meeting their customers' new expectations by improving the services available on their website (personalization, download areas of all product information, shop locator) and their presence on social media.
The aim of this thesis is, after analysing the literature regarding the luxury sector in general, to understand the key characteristics, consumers and distribution, and how digitalization is affecting the retail purchase process. After defining which are the key characteristics of the "Made in Italy" luxury furniture market, the intention is to develop a design proposal able to create a strong bond between Brand and Customer that goes beyond the physical retail limits.

The aim of this thesis is to understand how digitalization is affecting the retail purchase process of the luxury furniture sector in order to develop a design proposal able to create a strong bond between Brand and Customer that goes beyond the physical retail limits.

To do so, we will focus on the trends of the furniture sector through the analysis of 14 case studies belonging to this market, divided into 7 Brands and 7 Dealers.
The analysis underlines how, during the purchase process user journey, the private customer interacts with different channels and touchpoint.
We will also understand in which phase of the purchase process, digitalization is linked with automation, intended as the possibility for the customer to explore, act and choose on his own. The main objective is to allow the client to reach complete awareness about the product he is buying, thanks to a link between physical and digital interaction.

The purposes of the literature and case studies research is in the end implemented with the application of a design proposal to a real case: EXTETA.
Exteta is a luxury furniture Brand of "Made in Italy" high-quality products for the outdoor. During my curricular internship and after, as a regular employee, I have been developing a research on company processes, sales network, and customer relationship. Thanks to the insight gathered from the company analysis, we will present a design proposal able to create direct interaction and a strong relationship between Brand and its final client.

Service Design has an important role in bringing a user-centered innovation. Thanks to design tools such as customer journey map and user testing, it is possible to translate the proposal application from this specific case to a larger scale. The user journey analysis

2 Osservatorio Innovazione Digitale nel Retail, un mosaico ancora da comporre

LUXURY MARKET

LUXURY DEFINITION

The word "luxury" is part of everyday language and it can be associated to a multitude of meanings. It is one of the most used word and it is very common to hear "luxury" next to lifestyle, experiences, products..
But what does luxury means exactly? The dictionary definition depicted luxury as a condition of abundance or great ease and comfort, something adding to pleasure or comfort but not absolutely necessary, an indulgence in something that provides pleasure, satisfaction or ease.
Investigating in the etymology of the term, we can understand that luxury comes from the latin word "luxus" that literary means overabundance, excessive lifestyle. Can be defined as an evidence of wealth, splendor, magnificence; habitual tendency at superfluous, uncontrolled expenses, for the purchase and use of objects that, either for quality or for ornamentation, do not have a useful utility corresponding to their price, and are to satisfy ambition and vanity more than a real need. In the most common language, It is also referred to all the products that involves great expense that just few people can afford to buy. (Treccani, 2018)

In contrast with necessity goods, luxury goods are typically more costly and are often bought by individuals that have a higher disposable income or greater accumulated wealth than the average[3].Luxury goods have always existed and considered as goods destined for a social elite, the only able to understand their value.
Luxury is not an industry like most others, which are defined by the nature of their products such as cars, electronics, and food, or of their services such as communication, insurance, and transportation. Rather, it is understood as a particular segment of the market, and it can include almost all kinds of goods or services. Consequently, the task here is to properly delimit this segment.
The interest is more focused on the characteristics linked to the "marketing mix" (product, price, place, promotion) created specifically for these goods, and on the set of elements through which it is possible to achieve a status of prestige. In this way, "luxury goods" are identified as those goods that have a limited distribution, are directly or indirectly controlled by the producer, have a high price compared to the market average and which, usually, benefit from a certain level of assistance and service at the point of sale. The brand is perceived as desired or aspirational and the quality of the good is generally considered to be of the best standards[4].

3 Business Dictionary http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/luxury-goods.html

4 Datamonitor Report, (1998). Global Apparel

One of the most famous theoretical elaborations concerning the mechanism by which needs are transformed into motivation factors and influences the behavior of individuals is Maslow's "Hierarchy of needs" (1943), who provided a categorization of the main human needs, placing them within a hierarchical structure that starts from the most basic and primitive needs, up to the highest and most mature ones. Maslow (1943, 1954) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behavior. When a deficit need has been mostly satisfied it will go away, and our activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that we have yet to satisfy. The Maslow's pyramid has five levels, from bottom to the top: Physiological and Safety needs that are considered as basic needs, belonging and esteem that are considered psychological needs, the self actualization that is on the top of the pyramid and it is considered as a self-fulfillment need[5].

According to this theory, the order of needs is not rigid but instead may be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences.
Since the '50, when the capitalistic economy has its boom and the un necessary goods become diffused and always more requested by the middle class, psychologists and economists starts to investigate the reason that lead people to desire a certain product or service.
One of the most important contributions on the topic of the motivations that lead customer to purchase and own a specific product or service is "The Hidden persuaders" by Vance Packard. Even if the sociologist wrote this book in the 1957, is still totally contemporary. Packard identified eight "compelling needs" that advertisers promise products will fulfill. According to Packard, these needs are so strong that people are compelled to buy products to satisfy them.

EMOTIONAL SECURITY
Everyone keeps seeking emotional security, as we all start out as fragile emotional beings and it is difficult to achieve stability.

REASSURANCE OF WORTH
It is easy to lose the sense of who we are and what we are worth in this connected world. Therefore we want to know that we are adding value and that we deserve our place in society.

5 Maslow, https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

EGO GRATIFICATION
We all need our egos to be flattered. For example, we want to be praised when doing something right.

CREATIVE OUTLETS
People like making and creating things. Many of us have jobs that don't involve much creativity and therefore we seek to be creative in other parts of our lives.

LOVE OBJECTS
We all want to love and be loved, whether we are children or adults. As we grow up dolls and teddy bears are replaced by people, cars, pets and gadgets. If we don't have something to love we will buy or make one.

SENSE OF POWER
People feel powerful when they are able to choose things and direct others. They want to move up the social order and feel safe.

ROOTS
Roots are an important part of our sense of identity as they make up who we are. However, while we seek to fulfil our needs, we loose our roots as we tend to live mobile lives.

IMMORTALITY
One of our biggest fears is the fear of death. We are afraid of ceasing to exist and so we try to find ways to live beyond death. We also strive to look younger and in health.

In contemporary society, the symbolic meanings associated with objects are amplified thanks to the work of signification conducted through brand communication strategies. The brands become a symbolic expressions of values and meanings that, associated with objects, justify their use and explain their popularity. Today, with the technological development the companies that are able to offer high quality products are increasing and there are many branches of market where it is possible to find the considered luxury product. The values or needs or motivations that lead the consumer to he ownership of those products might change according to the kind of luxury sector.

THE LUXURY PYRAMID

Researchers who study luxury very often come up against a difficulty linked to the confusion that exists between three concepts: upmarket products, expensive products and luxury products. According to Alleres (1991) , luxury is composed of three domains: inaccessible luxury, intermediate luxury and accessible luxury, constituted by how the brand is marketed.

INACCESSIBLE LUXURY
Within the category of inaccessible luxury are all those goods that are characterized by a high stylistic and creative content, to the point of making these products almost unique and very exclusive. The products of this sector are produced in limited quantities and, very often, are made to measure to meet the needs of the customers. This category includes products such as jewels, commissioned furniture pieces, mega yachts and luxury homes. This type of luxury is also called, "uncompromising luxury". The spread of these goods is limited to a few people, as well as due to the high purchase price also by a "cultural" factor, given that many of these goods are produced for a few connoisseurs, who possess the knowledge necessary to appreciate and recognize them. the quality.

INTERMEDIATE LUXURY
In the intermediate luxury category belong the products that, while presenting a quality level comparable to that of the products of the superior category and showing, in the same way, a selective distribution and a high sale price, are produced on a larger scale and do not have almost no level of customization. These products are generally destined to consumers particularly sensitive to the brand that, even if they do not have the possibility or the will to spend too much money, are still willing to make an economic sacrifice, even if more limited, to have a trendy product belonging to that brand originally of inaccessible luxury.

ACCESSIBLE LUXURY
The last category, called "accessible luxury", includes those goods considered "non-standard" because, although qualitatively sophisticated, trendy, able to offer excellent functional performance and able to create a particular emotional involvement with customers, they are obtainable at prices that are not prohibitive, or that do not require a particular economic effort on the part of the buyers[6].

6 MDe Barnier, V., Valette-Florence, P., Falcy, S. (2012). Do consumers perceive three levels of luxury? A comparison of accessible intermediate and inaccessible luxury brands. Journal of Brand Management. Vol. 9, No. 7, (2012) 623-636.

LUXURY SECTORS

In order to understand the common features of the luxury products is it crucial to analyze different categories of luxury.

An attempt to categorize luxury sectors can be done for dividing symbolic luxury product from technical luxury products. The first area can include for examples fashion, cosmetics, jewelry but also gastronomy and wines. because they are valued more for the lifestyle they project than for the particular capability or functionality they embody.
Instead, some products are primarily recognized for their technical features. For example automotive, yachting, technology, furniture. The internet dilemma: An exploratory study of luxury firms' usage of internet-based technologies.

One of the most evident and advertised luxury sector is fashion. In this market there are many luxury brand both for women and men. Within this category, all those brands that opt for an exclusive or selective distribution can be included in the luxury sector. For marketing purposes the luxury brand can choose to have its stores in the most prestigious streets of the most luxury cities. At the top of the rankings we find the Kering Group, Hermes, Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel[7].
Sectors high in fashionableness include those that have aesthetic requirements that vary over time. Fashion items such as apparel, shoes, bags, and accessories, for example, are typically subject to seasonal fashion trends[8].

Another important segment that makes up the luxury sector is that related to jewelry and watchmaking. In this context, we can generally find highly selective distribution choices and the products have a high level of customization. Always in relation to the product, it is easy to find a strong link with tradition and the use of artisanal processing methods is frequent, especially in jewelry. Cartier, Mont Blanc (Richemond Group). But also the accessories companies such as Luxottica

A category in its own right is that made up of the automotive sector. Luxury cars are a special segment, given that the "automotive" sector has some structural features that would risk making most of the "players" label luxury. In fact, if we limit ourselves to observing the distribution strategies, the sophistication of the product or the quality of the sales and after-sales service.

7 Luxury goods in Europe – Statistics & Facts, retrieved from https://www.statista.com/topics/4754/luxury-goods-in-europe/

8 Baker, J., Ashill, N., Amer, N., Diab, E. (2018). The internet dilemma: An exploratory study of luxury firms' usage of internet-based technologies. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. 41, (2018), 37-47.

A field that is possible to compare with the automotive is the Yachting sector. In this sector, an important factor is the level of personalization and the expected readiness of the goods. A Yacht can cost 4 million euro and takes 4 years for the making. The yachts sector had a significantly higher mean score for customization relative to autos, jewelry, and watches.
Also some brands in the technology sector aren't considered just utilities but as luxury goods. One clear example can be the on of Apple:
"If change is happening at Apple, it … seems like it's moving from high-end electronics company to something more like a luxury fashion brand, moving away from focusing on user experience and magnificent industrial engineering as driving forces, and moving toward a company that offers trendiness, status, and individuality first, then nailing down the mechanics of the things."[9]

Another sector that is mostly consider as an utility but is totally in the luxury world is the furniture market. Luxury Furniture Market Design is becoming one of the most relevant industries in the world. People are willing to spend more and more on expensive furniture brands.

Lifestyle of consumers, especially in urban areas, is changing significantly due to increased disposable income. Luxurious product is becoming an essential part of their life; as a result, they are ready to spend more to be constantly surrounded by high quality and design furniture[10].
Luxury furniture is the third most expensive thing that an individual will buy, right after a home and car. Sofas, Tables, Kitchens and all furniture from the luxury segment are very costly, they have to be configured according to the environment, the materials can be selected to have an unique item that can take months to be produced and will be changed by the customer just after some years. For this reason the decision of how furnish your house is usually well evaluated and it is not a fast impulsive purchase, it can be compared to a purchase of a Car or of a Yacht.
There are significant differences in the various luxury sectors.
We will proceed dealing with some of the main theoretical elaborations that have been presented in the literature to identify the types of luxury that have common characteristics in terms of distribution choices, price range, image and other characteristics related to the production method and quality of the service offered.

9 Is Apple a Luxury Brand? http://www.thefashionlaw.com/home/is-apple-a-luxury-brand-it-depends-on-who-you-ask-

10 Luxury Furniture Analysis https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/luxury-furniture-market

LUXURY KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Even if there are peculiarity and differences from one sector to the other, it can be helpful to underline the common characteristics founded in the previous analysis to have a general idea of what a luxury product is.
All the different definitions of luxury share a common core of six criteria:
(a) a very qualitative hedonistic experience, (b) offered at a price that far exceeds what the functional value would command, (c) tied to heritage, unique know-how and culture, (d) available in restricted and controlled distribution, (e) offered with personalized accompanying services and (f) representing a social marker, where the purchaser feels special with a sense of privilege. Ultimately, the concept of luxury is built on consumers' perceptions, and is determined by personal and interpersonal motives and is strongly influenced by culture[8].

PRICE

Just because a product is expensive, does not mean it is a luxury product. But conversely, all luxury products are expensive. Expensiveness intensifies rarity and gives reason to believe that the product delivers on excellence.
Studies have shown time and again that higher-priced products are automatically perceived as performing better, in many cases pointing toward the fact that customers who pay more have a tangible interest in making sure that their product performs better than its lower-priced alternative.
https://www.redlounge.com.au/blog/luxury-brand-traits/

Nevertheless, it is important to realize that a product or service does not have to be expensive to be a luxury good or is not luxurious just because of its price. Some items may, for example, be regarded as luxury goods not in terms of a price tag or label, but their sentimental value (i.e., a wedding ring as part of personal history, ancestral heirloom). Thus, consumers can and do distinguish between objective price (i.e., the actual price of a product) and perceived price (i.e., the price as judged by the consumer)[11].

QUALITY

Such as the expertise of the manufacturer and the complexity of the manufacturing, as manufacturing luxury products can require a considerable effort.

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8 Baker, J., Ashill, N., Amer, N., Diab, E. (2018). The internet dilemma: An exploratory study of luxury firms' usage of internet-based technologies. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. 41, (2018), 37-47.
11 Wiedmann, K.-P., Hennigs, N., Siebels, A. (2007). Measuring Consumers' Luxury Value Perception: A Cross-Cultural Framework. Academy of Marketing Science Review. Vol. 2007, No 7.

The material and components of luxury products are key as there are materials that are generally associated with a higher value.
The construction and function principle of luxury products is especially well thought-out as it is seen as a prerequisite for durability.
A luxury product requires absolute perfectionism in workmanship as flaws are not to be tolerated.
Luxury products also offer more features than ordinary products, but only if they are desired by the target group and do not reduce product usability.
Customers seek products with value and durability, as they want the products they purchase to be everlasting.

CUSTOMIZATION AND PERSONALIZATION

Luxury products are good at fulfilling people's needs and make so that everything feels specifically designed for the customer. It is as if they were made to serve the needs of each individual customer.
Luxury products turn personal as they allow themselves to be custom made or personalized. This turns the purchase process into an experience which brings a sense of connection for the customer to the brand. (Klaus Heine, 2012)

BOUNDARIES WITH THE PAST

Another feature that is often associated with luxury goods is their link with the past, cultural or geographical. In many luxury products it is possible to find, under different forms, geographical references, or cultural references that are linked to the history of the brand or to that of the country of origin of the same. These elements positively define the brand identity and develop a national identity in a global context. As regards, then, the fashion sector, it is easy to see how most of the haute couture houses bear the name of the founding designer. Some brands enjoy a history of prestige and some of their products have become, over time, real icons, become part of the collective culture. Emphasizing these elements allows luxury homes to reinforce the positioning of their products.

INTERNATIONALIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION

When it comes to products and luxury brands, an important component is the global dimension. At first, this aspect may seem contrary to what has just been said compared to the "link with the past", given that we have seen how many luxury brands try to maintain a strong link with their country of origin. In reality these two concepts succeed in coexisting, strengthening one another. In fact, The purchase of a Ferrari, a Mega Yacht, a Rolex watch, a bag of Chanel or a bottle of Dom Pérignon have the same meaning almost in every part of the civilized world . Each of the previously listed products corresponds to a precise representation of a lifestyle and, by virtue of their notoriety, almost everyone is

able to recognize and appreciate their meaning.
This phenomenon is strengthened by the fact that luxury brands are being present in the "Luxury capitals" such as Paris, London, Milan, New York, Rome, Dubai etc. Consumers have become accustomed to the international presence of these brands and expect their presence in these places.

THE EXPERIENCE VALUE

Reconnecting with what has just been said above, it is worth pointing out that the concept of luxury products is strongly linked, and could be inseparable, to an experiential component that has a preponderant importance in the eyes of the consumer. The consumption of luxury products, in fact, is able to create strictly subjective experiences related to the individuality of each user. The pursuit of personal pleasure increasingly passes through experiences and emotions and, consequently, we also see in the practice of many companies the attempt to offer their customers added value through the presentation of positive and memorable experiences. Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experience memorable.
Since the early years of the new millennium, there has been an increasing number of companies trying to offer experiences added value based on the needs of different customers. The experiential component, in fact, proves to be particularly important in the luxury sector, given that customers are particularly demanding in this regard at all stages of the purchasing process: when a person goes in search of a luxury product, he expects standards service at all times and expects the overall experience to reflect the quality of the products purchased and the identity of the brand. Today the concept of selling experiences is spreading beyond theaters and theme parks, experiences are not exclusively about entertainment; companies stage an experience whenever they engage customers in a personal, memorable way.
New technologies, in particular, encourage whole new genres of experience.The growing processing power required to render ever-more immersive experiences now drives demand for the goods and services of the computer industry[12].

12 Pine II, B.J., Gilmore, J. H. (1998). Welcome to the Experience Economy. Harvard Business Review. 7-8, (1998).

LUXURY CONSUMER

Based on our conceptualization and empirically verified principles, marketers can improve purchase value for different cross-cultural segments of consumers who may differ in their luxury orientations and prefer that a certain luxury brand or product satisfies either their cognitive or emotional needs. To some, the social dimensions such as the conspicuousness, popularity or exclusivity of the luxury brand might be of particular importance as they signal wealth, power and status, and strengthen membership of peer groups. To others, luxury goods might serve as a financial investment or have to meet their individual standards of superior quality. Another segment's luxury brand consumption might stem from hedonistic or materialistic motives that express their individual self. In sum, luxury brands have to encompass the consumer's values to justify the purchase. Since the world of luxury brands is not homogeneous, the product category and situational characteristics play an important role. From the consumer's perspective, each luxury product can provide a certain set of values and may be more appropriate in certain situations than in others[11].
Measuring consumers' luxury value perception: a cross cultural framework, Lens on the Worldwide Luxury Consumer

Referring to personal and interpersonal oriented perceptions of luxury, it is expected that different sets of consumers would have different perceptions of the luxury value for the same brands. Furthermore, this differentiated perception of luxury value may be dependent on the cultural context and the people concerned. Since consumer behavior does not abruptly change when national borders are crossed and segments of consumers across national boundaries might be more similar than those within the same country, the major challenge companies are facing in an international marketplace is to identify and satisfy the common needs and desires of global market segments.
Regarded as a common denominator that can be used to define consumption across cultures, luxury is a main factor that differentiates a brand in a product category, and a central driver of consumer preference and usage.

11 Wiedmann, K.-P., Hennigs, N., Siebels, A. (2007). Measuring Consumers' Luxury Value Perception: A Cross-Cultural Framework. Academy of Marketing Science Review. Vol. 2007, No 7.

DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES

For the sale of their products, companies have several solutions available to choose from. Here below it is possible to have a simplified idea go the principal strategies:

WHOLESALER: It is the solution that requires the presence of at least two intermediaries. The former is identifiable in the wholesale distributor ("wholesaler"), which buys the products directly from the company, while the latter is the retailer (retailer), which buys the products from the distributor and resells them to final customers through the own commercial network.

THROUGH COMMERCIAL LICENSES: It is a solution in which the company stipulates a contract with a distributor to which it confers the right to exclusively sell its products within a specific geographical area. This solution is defined as "one-plus" intermediaries, since it may happen that the licensee can work together with another company specialized in "retail", which would constitute a second intermediary.

FRANCHISES: These are the solutions with only one intermediary. The case of the franchise is very special because, although it is a form of indirect distribution, the company maintains a strong control over the activity of the distributor thanks to particularly stringent distribution agreements. In this case, the company does not limit itself to granting the possibility to sell its products, but provides the distributor with a real "know how" on how the sales activity must be managed and to which it must strictly follow.

DIRECTLY OPERATED STORES: These are the stores owned by the company and represent the situation without intermediaries, in which the company directly manages the distribution of its products.

The first choice to be made, therefore, is to decide whether to opt for a direct or indirect distribution. With direct distribution, a company undertakes to manage its distribution channels on its own account and, therefore, will be the one to manage its "stores" and the sales force. Through indirect distribution, however, the company will choose to entrust management of the distribution of its products to one or more external parties. This type of distribution allows companies that adopt it to spread their product more quickly, marketing it through the sales network of one or more distributors. Faced with a smaller margin, the company avoids having to manage on its own the problems and difficulties related to maintaining a commercial network. In the field of indirect distribution, companies can choose to follow three different distribution strategies:

INTENSIVE DISTRIBUTION: The company aims to sell its products through the largest possible number of distributors. The objective generally pursued with this strategy is that of sales volumes.
SELECTIVE DISTRIBUTION: The company chooses to sell its products through a moderate number of distributors. It is a strategy used to confer greater prestige on products or used in the case of particular products that require specific sales channels.
EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION: The manufacturers make agreements with some carefully selected distributors to whom they assign the right to exclusively sell certain products or brands within a specific geographical area.

With regard to luxury companies the distribution model to be preferred is that of direct distribution for the reasons that will be presented below. Through direct distribution, as well as ensuring higher margins due to the absence of intermediaries, companies can also maintain greater control over their image. This also allows them to maintain direct contact with end customers and to be able to continuously collect feedback from them, so that they can constantly improve their offer.
Currently, as part of the companies in the luxury sector, we can distinguish three main distribution models that range from a completely indirect distribution model to one in which it is managed completely by direct means:

FULL- WHOLESALE MODEL: This is the situation in which a company chooses to entrust the entire distribution to external parties, selling its products directly to the latter. • 2)
"Mixed" model: It is a hybrid model, which constitutes a sort of intermediate phase between a "full-wholesale" model and a "full retail" model. It is the situation in which most of the luxury companies are located, finding themselves directly managing a part of the distribution while entrusting the rest to external distributors.
FULL - RETAIL MODEL: It is a long-term strategic approach, since it requires large initial investments and long time-frames to put in place. The great strength of this model is that of allowing control over all the distribution levers, allowing greater flexibility and adaptability[13].

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13 Chevalier, M., Mezzavolo, G. (2008)- Luxury Brand Management, Una visione completa sull'identità e la gestione del settore del lusso. Franco Angeli, Milano.

TYPES OF RETAILS

After having understood the main distribution models that can be adopted by companies, It is important to to briefly mention the different types of selling points towards which it is possible to direct a direct distribution choice. When we talk about "Directly Operated Store" we refer to a heterogeneous set of points of sale that companies can manage on their own. It is usual to distinguish three basic types of sales point: the "self-standing store" or single-brand store, the "flagship store" and, finally, the set of c.d. "Shop-in-shop", which are subdivided, in turn, between "corner" and "walls".

The term "self-standing store" indicates the typical single-brand store, managed directly by the manufacturer. A type of "store" that, instead, has some peculiar characteristics, on which it is worthwhile to stop, is that of the c.d. "Flagship stores", which can be understood as an extended version of the "self-standing store". The "flagship" are essentially shops that must represent the brand in terms of merchandising and in which the consumer must be able to find the entire offer of the brand, including extensions of the brand. The name "flagship" derives precisely from the fact that these stores represent real "insignia" to show the public what the brand is and what it has to offer for the market. Traditionally, the first "flagship store" is created in the city of origin of the brand and, generally, only one is opened for each city, selecting only the largest and most important in which the brand operates. These stores have a mainly communicative function and often act as real "showrooms" in which journalists, foreign distributors, licensees, etc. they can see the entire collection and get an idea of how it will be presented and promoted to the public.

These stores are designed to amaze the public, becoming real attractions, allowing the brand to increase its reputation and create new and more opportunities for contact with customers.
In relation to the "flagship stores" it is possible to identify three fundamental dimensions that must be considered:
1. Dimensions and position: they are normally placed in the larger cities and in the most prestigious streets.
2. Distribution hierarchy: As we have seen, the "flagships" must contain the entire brand assortment, for all categories and lines.
3. "Flagship" Language: It is customary to offer value-added services, such as VIP lounges, spaces reserved for particular clients, clubs, etc. In this way, the "store" becomes a place in which to create continuous opportunities for meetings and interactions with customers.
To conclude our digression on the types of "Directly Operated Store", we must briefly consider the category of "shop-in-shops". They are spaces, generally, of modest dimensions, which can have walls on three of the four sides of the store and an open "door" that allows access to and from another wing of the "department store". In the traditional model, the brand remains the holder of the goods until the moment of sale to the final customer and deals on behalf of the sales force management.
The risks for the "luxury brand" are constituted by the fact that there is no possibility to carefully choose the "brand environment". In the shop, therefore, will also enter groups of consumers that the brand does not want to address[13].

Two particular types of "shop-in-shop" are constituted by the "Walls" and "corners". The "walls" are spaces generally used for the sale of clothing items, consisting of wall portions inside a "department store" on which a brand can exhibit its products. The "corners", however, are small exhibition spaces, generally consisting of a display case and a simple counter, placed inside a "department store". They are mainly used for the products of the c.d. "Hard luxury" (cosmetics, accessories, perfumes). They have a limited ability to communicate the identity of the brand, as they remain part of the preparation of the "department store" spaces, offering few ways to personalize the "layout" .

A last digression that we have to considеer is concerning the phenomenon of the "Temporary stores" (Pop Up Stores) , ie stores that remain open for very short periods and which, usually, are placed in unconventional positions. This type of sales points have a duration of about two months and provide for the payment of a rent to take advantage of a large space positioned, out of the ordinary, in non-commercial areas. These stores are also referred to as "Guerrilla Store" or "Propaganda Store", as they mainly pursue communication purposes, with the aim of creating an opportunity to meet customers in places where they do not expect it. They are usually installed during special events or at certain particular periods of the year. Another case in which they are used is that of launching new products. They can also be used to test new "retailing" concepts and collect "feedback" without involving regular customers who turn to traditional store.

13 Chevalier, M., Mezzavolo, G. (2008)- Luxury Brand Management, Una visione completa sull'identità e la gestione del settore del lusso. Franco Angeli, Milano.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

With the widespread dissemination of digital technologies and the increasingly intense use of the Internet as a means of communication, companies have opened up new opportunities to manage their business model.
The impact that digital technologies have had on daily life and business activity in recent decades has been so strong that it has made people talk about "Digital Revolution". The spread of the Internet has allowed to speed up the circulation of information exponentially and, above all, has made it accessible to everyone. The Internet allows anyone with a computer and a browser to connect to a network and access the information it contains. The network allows you to cancel distances and exceed geographical boundaries, allowing people to exchange messages, information and content of any kind from anywhere in the world. This phenomenon has also meant that companies have to change their approach to consumers who, thanks to the use of the Internet, are increasingly attentive, informed and able to evaluate the products that they are offered to them. In the online world, consumers are not only able to confront each other and exchange opinions about products, but are able to do it publicly, making their thinking potentially accessible to anyone. One of the biggest revolutions introduced by the Internet world is that of visibility: on the Internet everything is accessible and visible to everyone. In this context, companies must pay close attention to the management of their reputation and must change their approach to customers, given that a single dissatisfied customer is able to generate potentially unlimited negative word of mouth. The Internet offers companies the opportunity to interact individually with individual customers and to gather a wealth of information about them that, before their advent, was unimaginable. The activity of users on the Internet produces huge amounts of data that, if organized and analyzed wisely, can provide vital information to keep the relationship of a company with its customers alive and profitable. Internet, therefore, offers enormous potential to companies that learn to exploit it, but this requires that they are equipped with the appropriate knowledge and tools, since it deals with an extremely complex and constantly evolving world.

The second annual Future of Retail Study analyzes how technology has forever changed consumer shopping habits and looks at the technology trends that retailers should be getting on their short- and long-term radars. This report surveyed more than 1,400 U.S. consumers on their online shopping habits to help retail technology companies anticipate consumer behavior in 2015 and beyond. These findings address some of the biggest challenges faced by retailers today:

»» Consumers are shopping online more frequently and purchasing a broader selection of products, but Amazon is still the go-to website for most categories.

»» Free shipping is more important than fast shipping and could incentivize consumers to shop online for products they do not traditionally buy online, such as groceries and luxury goods.

»» Most consumers still carry some cash, but they're using it less frequently and only for select purchases such as street vendors and cabs.

»» The introduction of Apple Pay has accelerated the shift to mobile payments, but consumers still have security and privacy concerns about using their phones at the cash register.

»» As commerce and technology continue to increasingly intersect, consumers will embrace emerging technology such as drones and virtual reality shopping[14].

But how those trends are affecting the luxury market?
The use of digital tools by luxury companies deserves a separate discussion because it presents some peculiarities and some issues that need to be addressed in detailed manner. Nowadays, the diffusion of digital technologies has profoundly changed many aspects of everyday life, also influencing the normal activity of companies, which have had to adapt to the new context. We will see that the transition to an ever-increasing use of these technologies, poses for the companies in the luxury sector not a few implementation problems, which can be identified, in broad terms, in the difficulty of being able to combine a value system based on past attachment and exclusivity with a world of continuous innovation, speed and turning into a mass market.

14 Walker Sands Study. (2015). Reinventing Retail : What Businesses need to know for 2015. WalkerSands Communication

THE INTERNET DILEMMA

Luxury companies have had, over the years, an attitude of extreme distrust towards the digital world, which has enabled them to show a significant delay regarding the use of these tools for business purposes, compared with companies in other sectors. The main reason for this diffidence concerns the very essence of the changes brought about by the diffusion of the Web 2.0: the luxury companies, as we have seen, have always tried to build an image made of tradition and exaltation of the past and have therefore encountered a first difficulty in combining these characteristics with a world of continuous innovation like that of Internet. The web, moreover, has presented itself since the beginning as an extremely popular tool, promising to everyone free access and the possibility to get in touch with anyone.

The luxury companies, in the first instance, saw in this aspect a real threat to their branding policies: they have always had the goal of putting themselves in an attitude of "superiority" with respect to their clients, trying to appear as something to aspire to, but that can never be achieved completely.
The very idea of two-way communication with consumers was something that, for these companies, seemed almost "unnatural": in the traditional luxury sectors, such as the fashion sector, companies were used to being "trendsetters", anticipating trends and proposing an offer that did not derive properly from a process of listening to customer needs. In this perspective, it is the luxury company that has the task of proposing a style and is the customer who chooses to adopt it, influenced by the strength of the brand. The diffusion of the Internet, on the contrary, has accentuated the customer-oriented approach, making it the true protagonist of the marketing strategies of companies, which constantly aim to identify their needs and to prepare an offer able to satisfy them. Many luxury companies considered this approach to be insidious, fearing that in the long run, this would lead them to lose the strength of their brand, being no longer able to drive consumers to the direction of their choice.

Another factor that has slowed the use of digital technologies by luxury companies is found in the fact that the world of the Web has appeared dangerous from the reputation point of view: thanks to the Internet consumers are increasingly informed and have the possibility to communicate and interact with a potentially huge audience. The luxury companies have looked suspiciously at this phenomenon, preferring to continue to communicate through channels that allowed them to have greater control over the flows of communication. The world of the web, moreover, appeared to them as a foreign environment, as it was founded on the concept of immateriality: luxury has always aimed to offer its customers sensory experiences that it seems impossible to replicate in a digital environment. that has pushed them to approach with great delay and sporadically in the world of electronic commerce. This was also helped by the fact that the web had established itself as a low-cost sales channel, in which the main operators in the sector, such as Amazon, offered customers the opportunity to obtain products at significantly lower prices thanks to the lack of the costs of maintaining a physical structure and sales network. The risk was that consumers saw in Internet use an attempt to "aim for savings" on the part of the company.

In recent years, luxury companies are facing, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, the phenomenon of "Democratization of luxury", that is the application of strategies and techniques of "mass marketing" trying, at the same time, to increase the sense of exclusivity of one's own offer. Although a paradox may appear, this result can be achieved by appropriately exploiting the communication lever, so as to emphasize the unique characteristics of the brand, and using the buying experience as a differentiating factor. In this regard, it becomes important that these companies are able to offer satisfying experiences even in digital environments. In fact, consumers are increasingly using digital channels to obtain information and exchange opinions on products, which is then also reflected in purchase decisions: in the case of the luxury sector, in 2016, 78% of purchases were influenced by the information found on this type of channel and purchases made on digital channels involved 8% of the total. Furthermore, this phenomenon is growing strongly and the forecasts indicate that the weight of online sales is destined to increase even further, so as to reach 19% of total sales in the luxury sector by 2025, for a total value of € 74 billion euro.

Initially, luxury companies feared that selling their products on the Internet would diminish their value in the eyes of customers and decided, in most cases, not to make their products available on the web. Many luxury goods retailers fear that online retailing will diminish their brand's appeal by corroding their reputation for exclusivity. Think of expensively furnished shops on the high streets of fashionable cities not everybody dares enter, and exquisitely designed advertisements in high-fashion, high-price glossy magazines.

Only with the passage of time has it begun to realize that the advantages of digital tools could be exploited to their advantage even by luxury companies.

While online digital marketing has become mainstream, luxury firms have been slower than many non-luxury firms to embrace the Internet's potential. Part of the reason for this reluctance is what some have termed "the Internet Dilemma." The Internet Dilemma is a term coined to describe the challenge luxury firms face as they seek to maintain the image of their brand, sustain a personal link with customers, and retain an aura of exclusivity as they simultaneously seek to provide their products and services to increasingly technologically astute customers.

The first issue to be resolved, however, remains the question of exclusivity. As we have seen, exclusivity is one of the characteristics that luxury goods must possess and which, therefore, must be manifested in all the "touchpoints" of the brand.
Two-way communication offers the potential to enhance relationships with customers, but the challenge for luxury firms is to engage in this communication only with a selected portion of the population[8].

The sense of exclusivity is also created through communication and advertising, which have the task of making luxury products perceive as accessible to the few, but desirable for everyone. Furthermore, the Internet proves to be a valid tool to amplify the sense of omnipresence of the brand.
sumers to create an even stronger relationship with the brand. In addition, digital tools can be used in conjunction with "offline" tools for maximize customer satisfaction and develop a more lasting and profitable relationship with them. By monitoring the traffic on websites or on the "social" pages, it is possible to trace the purchasing preferences of individual consumers and, through the use of appropriate tools, it is possible to keep them informed about news of their interest. Internet and "social media" are also a powerful tool for the management of after-sales services and for complaints management: if used appropriately, digital "touch points" can be used as contact points to communicate with customers and take advantage of the ability to solve their problems.

Finally, we can say that a correct management of digital channels can help luxury companies to build a value-added brand experience for their customers, helping them to differentiate themselves from their competitors and increase the sense of uniqueness that surrounds them. The offer of services that take advantage of digital technologies follows the same logic as in stores, such as "flagship stores", where special services are provided for customers: the goal is to take care of the experience as much as possible.

Consumers of luxury goods are characterized by high product involvement and high expectations about product quality. The ability and motivation of employees to solve post-purchase problems are subsumed in the factor responsiveness. Responsiveness has a direct impact on recovery service quality and customer loyalty. Since one of the characteristics of a luxury good is their high-class image, it is obvious that problems in the after-sales stage should be solved as fast and competently as possible in order to preserve this image[15].

The new challenge that the luxury sector is facing is that of trying to bridge the gap that still exists between purchasing experiences in offline and online world, trying to build new tools to bridge the lack of digital elements in physical environments.

The goal that luxury brands must pursue, therefore, consists in designing a digital experience that reflects the attributes of luxury as traditionally understood. The term "digital luxury experience" is used with reference to this type of phenomenon. The luxury brands, in fact, have understood the new needs of their customers and aim to satisfy them trying to offer them an added value even in digital "touchpoints".

8 Baker, J., Ashill, N., Amer, N., Diab, E. (2018). The internet dilemma: An exploratory study of luxury firms' usage of internet-based technologies. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. 41, (2018), 37-47.
15 Türk, B., Sholz, M., Berresheim, P. (2014). Measuring Service Quality in Online Luxury Goods Retailing. Journal of Electronic Commerce Research. Vol. 13, No. 1, 88-103.

UX AND OMNICHANNEL

The changing nature of luxury goods, requires that brands continually adapt to the demands of an increasingly attentive and demanding clientele. Over time the behavior of the luxury consumer has radically changed, also from the point of view of the motivations that lead to the purchase. The ostentation is giving way to other factors and the consumer tends to go "beyond the brand" and to give greater weight to the experiential dimension. This change in the needs of the final customer, together with the transformation occurred in the sales channels of luxury, create the necessity of a change in the business model of the leading companies in the sector.
This change was made trying to put the customer at the centre of the experience. This is how brands in the luxury personal goods segment are oriented towards ever greater control of their distribution network. The rediscovered centrality of the use of "directly operated store" finds its foundation in the need to reach, intrigue and finally conquer the customer, establishing a "one-to-one" relationship aimed at increasing not only the traffic, but also the permanence inside the shops.
However, after a prolonged period of "store" openings in the main streets of luxury on a planetary level, today there is a direct race towards other spaces: virtual ones. The online channel, as pointed out above, is developing at great speed, becoming increasingly important within the company strategies. The network and the new digital technologies, in fact, can help and facilitate the creation of a better interaction and relationship with the consumer, which can contribute to creating a unique shopping experience. The various digital and physical experiences that the consumer will live will be increasingly integrated and connected, so it will be essential to make the technology applied to the retail channels functional and usable, in order to create further support for the purchasing process.
The key to success will be the perfect balance between human factors and technological factors, between offline and online, ie the implementation by companies of an omnichannel strategy, defined as the combined and integrated use of the various channels (physical stores, online and mobile) to support the process of company-consumer interaction (pre-sales, purchase and after-sales phases), is now the focus of retailers. They are potentially in fact, many opportunities are due to the adoption of an omnichannel approach, especially when the retailer promotes a change not only in technology, but also organizational and cultural.
Adopting an omnichannel approach is a radical change of mentality aimed to place the client at the heart of the sales strategy and offering a truly integrated shopping experience, fluid on all the channels[16]. Osservatorio Innovazione Digitale nel Retail, un mosaico ancora da comporre

The new modern digital consumer proves to be a flexible buyer, able to move between different channels and devices during the evaluation phase and, consequently, the boundary between traditional economy and digital economy become extremely labile. Therefore, it becomes strategic for brands to be able to know and capitalize on the wealth of information that gravitates around the customer's decision-making process, with the aim of transforming it into a competitive advantage. The orientation towards this type of customer requires an "omnichannel" strategy, so as to be able to satisfy the needs at 360 degrees.
The omnichannel consists in giving the possibility to this new flexible consumer to get in touch with the brand in any way he wishes, without any division between what happens in the "physical" space and what happens online. An "omnichannel" strategy can be identified by the presence of the following elements: the first consists of the unified management of the distribution, making the distinction between the various channels increasingly imperceptible. From this first character derives another fundamental aspect of this perspective, namely the creation of processes based on interaction, communication and interdependence between the teams dedicated to the individual channels within the company.

The perception of luxury in the online world (correspondent to the physical store) can be identified by three fundamental logical components:

PERCEPTION OF QUALITY: It is the fundamental element that is associated with the concept of luxury and, therefore, is certainly used as a parameter of evaluation of the luxury of a product or service.

PERCEPTION OF EXCLUSIVITY: The exclusivity is an element unequivocally associated with luxury products.

EXPERIENCE: With this expression we do not refer only to the experiential side in the physical sense, but rather I refer to the complex system of psychological elements involved in the consumption of luxury products.

16 Osservatorio Innovazione Digitale nel Retail. (2014). Innovazione Digitale nel Retail: un mosaico ancora da comporre. School of Management. Politecnico di Milano. Dipartimento di Ingegneria Gestionale.

LUXURY FURNITURE

OBJECTIVE OF THE WORK

Once we have understood the traits of the digital transformation in the purchase process in luxury brands and how this transformation is affecting the retail, changing the modalities of interaction between the consumer and the store, we will focus our attention on a particular sector of the luxury market: the furniture market.
Italy has maintained its leadership as the major exporter of manufacturer excellence an quality products.
Federlegno Report points out that Italy is positioned in the market segment with the highest price compared to all the countries with a significant Luxury furniture market. The Italian style is particularly appreciated in all the world for its traditional characteristic of beautiful and mastery did. In particular, Italian's furniture is appreciated for their special capability to embody the feeling and taste of "bella vita"[17].

"With a total turnover of 41,5 billions of euro in 201 7, the furniture macro-system is a significant contributor to the whole Italian economy. In Italy the furniture sector is constituted by more than 76.000 companies, the employees that work in this sector are more than 318.000. Those data underlines the growth of 2% in comparison to 2016. 39% percent of the total turnover is derived from exports."

Even if this sector is very important for both our national economy and for the importer's states economy, there is a lack of scientific references that deal with this topic, furthermore, luxury marketing cases study rarely belong to furniture market.
The reason for this lack of interest might be that when we talk about the furniture we immediately do an association with utility goods, useful commodities that every householder needs. Furniture is usually chosen by the average customer because of their quality, resistance during the time, easy care. They are not seasonal goods such as clothes or items that you can keep buying and collecting.For someone are even considered a once-in-life investment.
Furthermore, we can say that almost all fashion companies are marketing oriented while almost all the furniture companies are product oriented. A reason for this difference can be that in fashion there is a fast change of collection while furniture can be, potentially, eternal.
Another reason for this lack of interest can be that furnishings are hidden inside the domestic walls and they are harder to flaunt compared to a Chanel bag or a Lamborghini and so they are considered less desirable. Furnish an entire house with luxury products, instead, is definitely much more costly than a Lamborghini, it can create a dream environment that constantly reflects customer habits, culture, and taste.
Even less interest is given by the researcher to the purchase of digital transformation in the luxury furniture market. We will see, instead, how this trade it is not static, it is evolving and the digital revolution is affecting stores and customer interaction.
According to Eurostat 2016, the Italian companies using e-commerce are 13%, generating 10% of revenues. If we compare this data to the furniture industry, the percentage of European and Italian companies that makes online sales is above the average with the 27% of the total, but even if this percentage seems to be high, the revenue derived from online sales is only 0.5%.

Even if the evidence is not reported in scientific papers, is emerging that the furniture industry companies are moving towards multi-channeling and that this presence in different levels of web world (website, social media, web marketing) is becoming essential to contact and interconnect users through digital systems. From the survey conducted by Fedrlegno Arredo, in fact, 86% of Italian furniture companies have an e-catalog, the 59% does web marketing, the 50% have the website configured also on different devices (phone, tablet), 32% has an online chat to support customers in real time, 9% have an online payment, 6% an e-commerce, 6% direct logistic and the 3% an online warehouse. Those percentage will be increasing every year and the global market will create new opportunities for commercial development, bringing millions of potential customers. To take advantage of this it will be necessary to face a significant variability in consumer demands.

To maintain a competitive advantage, companies will, therefore, have to exploit the development of digital technologies to increase the opportunities for customization and offer at the same time the possibility of maintaining the economic efficiency of the production allowing to differentiate the product/service only in the last phase production chain.

In addition to the new digitization technologies, the materials will remain a critical factor for the competitiveness of any furniture manufacturing company. The scarcity of many important materials will continue to push the search for new solutions. More and more intelligent materials will be used that are able to modify the properties based on the surrounding environment (for example temperature, ph, light, magnetic field, etc.).
By 2025 the furniture industry will be in the digital production era: companies will use the information made available by the network with the same skill with which they now use talents and machinery capable of providing high-value products, implementing new solutions and new materials for customers in different countries.
Today the phenomenon of mass digital connectivity is increasingly widespread and within 2025 the IoT will be a consolidated reality,

17 Federlegnoarredo (2018). Rapporto Federlegnoarredo 2018 2a edizione. FLA.

made possible by standardized and interoperable technologies such as the Internet, cloud computing and advanced hardware communication technologies. Social networks and other innovative tools will play an important role in sharing and generating knowledge.
In the coming years, manufacturing companies will work closely with service providers to build ad hoc solutions for each consumer, which combine product and related services.
The number of niche industries that will work in partnership with other companies will increase to offer the different combinations of products and services required by consumers. These partnerships will drive change in production processes, leading them to become protagonists of mergers and acquisitions.
By 2025 the services will cover an increasingly important role within the offers of furnishing companies: the products will no longer be the only dominant driver on the market; consumers will increasingly demand products with embedded digital services.

“By 2025, with a strongly connected and globalized economy, the furniture manufacturing industry will offer intelligent, customized and integrated products with different services, made by companies characterized by digital production, intelligent sales, and logistics systems. They will be sustainable and efficient companies in the use of resources, with an immense need for digital skills that guarantee a competitive transformation.”

Emanuele Orsini (2018), Federlegno president

The aim of this work is to bring evidence to prove that the luxury furniture sector is already transforming thanks to the digitalization. We will see that the digitalization can affect the product itself, the back end and the front end. In my thesis, I will focus on the interaction with the store and how and in which quantities the digital is linking with the physical purchase experience.

In order to do so, it is crucial to underline what differentiate the furniture sector from other sectors (such as fashion and jewelry), specifying to which consumers are addressed and which are the most relevant limits and challenges from product, distribution and experience point of view that have to be considered in order to build an argument about the digitalization.

THE PRODUCT

Furniture product can be bought singularly but most of the time the furniture purchase is about a furniture system, the whole house furnishing. Every item has to be coherent with the environment, the dimension and the colors of the room where they have to be located and the other items present in the room and in the house. Furniture isn’t easy to buy because there are a lot of constraints and variables to consider. For this reason, the decisional process can be extended, in the most extreme of the cases, to years. If the decisional process can be long, production lead times can be even longer according to the manufacturing process, quantities and personalization demanded from the client. One other peculiarity of this product is the dimension that requires an appropriate logistic service.

PRICE

From the market analysis of Federlegno Arredo 2018 emerges that Italy Is positioned in the market segment with the highest price with a particularly significant share in the most quality-conscious markets.
Italy is the first European supplier for the richest countries such as USA. With High prices and high exportation levels, Italy places itself as a Leader in the highest end luxury furniture market.

MATERIALS AND MANUFACTORY

Luxury products are characterized, as the products of other market sectors, by high-quality materials, might have hand made production process or on the other hand have very high technologic components according to the brand dimension and philosophy.
Materials can be selected among the most high quality and because they are certified and sustainable.

Nowadays many are the digital innovation introduced the back end, also because that kind of innovation has a sure and quick economic return.
the different production areas interact with each other and, above all, are able to dialogue with the outside, translating the immense amount of input (the so-called big data) into production models. It is, therefore, a matter of redesigning the schemes (costs, time, quality) by regaining the necessary efficiency for future development.
But it is not just a question of investment capacity. Certainly, from the industry it is necessary to continue, if not accelerate, the process of dimensional consolidation started in the last two years. But above all, there is the need to find the courage to re-shape our craft culture.

The factory of the future will be a smart factory, based on the integration of digital technology in every part of the production process, up to logistics and sales.
Artificial intelligence applied in factories will drastically reduce the time elapsed from design to production, satisfying consumer needs in terms of assistance, customization, and delivery.
Moreover, the intelligent digital factory will have production and supply chains distributed all over the world, linked together by advanced digital communication infrastructures.
The use of these tools will ensure good reliability of the procurement and shipping process, shorter delivery times and a reduction in inventory in the warehouse.
Consumers will also be increasingly involved in the design and prototyping of products and services. New practices, including the phenomenon of "social and open innovation", will be implemented to make maximum use of input from consumers.
By 2025, for the smart factories, the design and production phase will merge into one highly integrated process. The digital simulation of the products will provide accurate predictions on the behavior of the different elements leading to a drastic reduction of design and production errors.

The worlds in which the furniture market is moving are accelerating their transformations like never before in history, driven by the entry into the everyday life of electronic thought. And above all, the Internet. The Internet of Things. This applies to domestic settings, where the watchword is "domotic". It is valid in the workplace, where a dominant concept is "smart working".

And it is valid in industry, where success 4.0 is now a shared mantra, not only from the point of view of the efficiency and effectiveness of production: robotics, remote management, connections between plants and between elements of the supply chain. But also from the point of view of environmental and social sustainability. This technological revolution allows immediate and evident gains in the environmental field (lower energy consumption, greater recycling capacity, reduction of waste), allows a notable leap in terms of living (better workplace, better integration of the company) and translates, in its most complete meaning, in new opportunities for relations with the company's stakeholders (creation of online sharing systems with suppliers and customers; greater transparency; opportunities for participation). And finally, in new business opportunities to get out of the flattening of the price competition.
The design is part of this process and holds important cards for its future positioning, to make the most of the "know-how" in a new and innovative way. The Italian "know how" can be interpreted as 'sustainable' and this will characterize the industry of this new century.

Today it is not just the production process and the logistic that is going towards advanced technology and digitalization but also the product itself is becoming responsive and user-centered. The furniture sector that mostly takes advantage of those innovations is the lighting sector and the technologic device sector but in every area, it is becoming important to have products that can be controlled and configured by humans.

The password for the design world is to be smart. From house to lighting, the needs of the individual became the center of every project. Technology and home automation meet a renewed and dynamic relationship between the person and the surrounding space. For examples, the HCL (Human Centred Lighting), or the lighting that places the individual at the center of the lighting project, is always taking a more important role in society and in everyday life. Lighting becomes a tool for humans well-being, not only biological or perceptive but also relative to the advanced controllability of their environment[18].

18 Pambianco. (2017). Il futuro è smart e pone l'individuo al centro. Retrieved from https://magazine.pambianconews.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/04/design_II_n2_2017.pdf (Anno II N°2)

DESIGN

The design of the product has a crucial impact on the product aesthetic, every line and feature have to be perfectly balanced to be seen as something pleasant by the observer. The design is always linked to the material and the production process that, thanks to the advanced technology available today, can give designers more creative freedom. The product can't be just beautiful and functional but have also to embody the Brand's value in order to be totally coherent with its Identity. A customer chose a product and a Brand because it is supposed to reflect His personality and lifestyle, for this reason, is very important to maintain a visual / product coherence. Luxury products are aimed to provide extraordinary experiences and moments being introduced to the customer's environment, in perfect harmony between functions of beauty.
In the furniture market, those factors may not be enough to make a product desirable by a Luxury Customer. What customers seek are actually art pieces designed by well-known Designer/ Architect. A signature can change the meaning of a simple chair and transform it into an art piece.
Brands with higher revenues cooperate with names such as Stark, Urquiola, Rashid... For a furniture company, especially if is not so well known and considered in the worldwide market, it is crucial to collaborate with the famous designer to expand its market and to address to a larger consumer range[19].

Companies who cooperate with big Designer there is always been the doubt of where it ends the designer's role and when it starts the company's one. Today we can say that this relationship is both ways true. A product has a father and a mother. A lamp is an intuition conceived by a Designer and developed by a company, the same idea presented to a different company will dive a different result.

Carlo Urbinati, Foscarini(2017)

Made in Italy companies are always more looking towards collaboration with international designers with strong fame and credibility, and at the same time, famous Italian Designer (Castiglioni, Magistretti, Giovannoni..) got in touch with an international brand and became worldwide appreciated and well known. Design is undoubtedly linked with history and culture, for this reason, nowadays we are assisting to a re-edition trend: companies buy the rights of products designed by masters from the past and produce them with current techniques, bringing them back into the market. This phenomenon continues to grow because it has a double return, of the image and of sales. Those products are mainly addressed to a cultured customer, able to recognize their historical value but there are also appealing for who discover them for the first time and it is just attracted by their aesthetic.

The Italian companies most closely linked to re-editions are fighting to communicate commitment, research, and cultural activities rather than commercial intention that drives them to re-propose historical objects to the contemporary public. The shared objective is to renew the concept of creative avant-garde of the originals by introducing new elements from a functional, technological and material point of view, from fabrics to finishes. The desire is to put into production proposals that are still valid and suitable for the market. In Italy there are customers who are sensitive to this niche proposal, but also re-editions work abroad, although much depends on the markets. For example the Collection 'I Maestri' by Cassina, which includes replicas of archetypes designed by the most significant exponents of the Modern Movement such as Le Corbusier, Mackintosh, Frank Lloyd Wright, in fact, represents 40% of the company's turnover[20].
For Italian brands re-editing means being witnesses of the design quality of the past, bringing it back to life and putting it back into production. It is not just a commercial or trendy operation but it is a journey to discover the designers who made the history of Italian design to bring them to the attention of customers. (Sanguinetti, Alias, 2018)

CONFIGURATION

The way modern consumers shop for furniture has dramatically changed in recent years, the final customer always looks for a product tailored on his taste and needs and the personalization became a must have. This feature is even more important in the furniture market because every environment is different and we seek products that can adapt.
People have unique tastes when it comes to styling and decorating their homes, every interior is different and very personal, must reflect individual traits and style. A wide range of furniture can be customized in the tone and texture of fabric that suits your interior design scheme best. A universe of materials and color combinations can transform a product is unique and perfect for a room environment. Each product can be transformed and created on individual request, meeting the customer highest expectation and needs.
An important trait of Italians Furniture brands is that they give to their customers the opportunity to visualize in-store and online plenty finishes available and configure the product as they wish.
Sales point nowadays offer also exclusive digital in-store experience using 3D modeling and augmented reality. Through VR it is possible to digitally recreate the customer environment

19 Pambianco. (2017). Tre Strade per il Retail, dimensione, monomarca e 4.0. Retrieved from https://magazine.pambianconews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/design_II_n4_2017.pdf (Anno II N°4)

20 Pambianco. (2018). Il riciclo conquest il design. Il futuro è circolare. Retrieved from https://magazine.pambianconews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/design_III_n3_2018.pdf (Anno III N°3)

and navigating in it, understanding what the relevant piece of furniture will look like in the space where you plan to put it and if the configured products would be suitable or not for the customer. A highly personalized product and customer experience is a key factor in the luxury furniture market[21].

CUSTOM

Even if the configuration allows already to have a unique product, the luxury consumer could be not fully satisfied. Nowadays the custom made can be considered a trend diffused in almost every kind of market segments, but in the furniture luxury market belongs to two peculiar factors.
First of all, very often there is the necessity of a custom product to perfectly meet the client's expectation and spatial requirements. In this sector, the custom is often necessary to fulfill the client's needs. According to the space available and the type of interior, the custom-made furniture has to adapt to the existing collections and dimensions to the client's tastes and requests. A very common request can be to have a product in another dimension but in the luxury sector, the requests can be plenty and much more eccentric. From the choice of another material and color to the complete change of design and shapes.
The Custom option is the most expensive because requires personalized design and production process and it has always been chosen by the richest customers since it can cost 50% more than the starting product. Custom design is the heart of the Made in Italy design tradition, which is based on excellent creations and productions, high-quality materials, ambitious and high-end projects.

SPECIAL CARE

We already mentioned that furniture is not easily shipped products because of their dimension and of their need to be assembled: Luxury furniture are valuable items that require very special care. Those items require white gloves delivery and assembly, even this after sale stop have to go beyond the standard expectation and being done by a technically prepared equipment. By definition, white glove services refer to the handling of care used when moving products in which the staff literally wear white gloves to protect the product. In shipping means to take every precaution necessary. White glove services don't stop when the goods are dropped off outside the residence of the customer but, instead, requires staff to place the furniture wherever the customer requests and involve as well the set up of the products.

21 Bannister, K. How personalisation is transforming the furniture and homeware industry, retrieved from https://www.pure360.com/personalisation-furniture-homeware-industry/

BRANDS

Made in Italy luxury furniture brands, even if they are different from one to the other, have some common traits. One of the things that mainly characterizes family business is that they are family business based. The most relevant Brands still on the market right now have been founded in the post-war period, from the 60' and the 80' and are now at their third generation. Their success and quickly grown have to be found in the entrepreneurial spirit of the founders and the family value.

Since the beginning of the '90s, they had to deal with profound changes in the technological system and transform themselves to approach new markets and international business.

With the advent of the new millennium, companies had to face another challenging transformation adapting to the new customer's expectation, start speaking the digital language, launching flagship store and position the customer at the center of the brand and retail experience.

The emergence of digital technologies, social media, and mobile devices has led to significant changes in the retail environment and provide opportunities for retailers to redesign their marketing and product strategies. Today, customers tend to be looking for information in the physical store and at the same time, they are getting additional information from their mobile devices about offers and possibly better prices. Omni Channel allows organizations to allocate inventory availability and visibility across locations vs. each channel holding specific units.

Omni Channel is an expansion of multi-channel.Rather than working in parallel, communication channels and their supporting resources are designed and orchestrated to cooperate. Channels communicate so that not only do they not cannibalize one another, but, indeed, they work together and integrate improving each other effectiveness.

The Omni Channel concept not only extends the range of channels but also incorporates the needs, communications and interactions between customer, brand, and retailers. The experience of engaging across all the channels someone chooses to use is as, or even more, efficient or pleasant than using single channels in isolation.

"The family is a great value, an important legacy of resources, stimuli, knowledge. Roots allow us to look to the future. Without awareness of our history, we cannot imagine future scenarios. It is true that only he who knows where he comes from can know where he is heading. It is an honor and a commitment for all of us in the third generation to continue the work of our predecessors. To keep alive what we like to call the "we attitude," i.e. the awareness that it is the team – and therefore the brand – that is the real player, not the individual. [..] So continuing to think in collective terms for the benefit of the brand is the most important challenge for our family business."

www.flexform.it

At the touchpoint level, of course, companies recognize the importance of web communication and digital tools, precisely because of the greater possibility of acquiring relevant information that they offer and to guarantee a fluid and continuous experience to the customer.

The starting logic of the major Italian companies is still multi-channel, Brands limits themselves to develop more points of contact, without however taking on integrated management of all the information, data and behavior of users passing through these touchpoints. Omnichannel goes a step further because it not only puts the consumer at the center but also provides for an interconnected system between all points of contact.

Italian Companies, even if just in few cases have enough financial resources to invest in directly-operated flagship stores and can't have e-commerce to protect their distributor, are improving the services available on their website (personalization, download areas of all product information, shop locator) and their presence on social media.

Pambianco Design classified the most active companies on Facebook and Instagram, showing how the importance of the social dimension for furniture brands. This analysis was aimed to know the customer anticipating his needs and tastes.

Lago, Scavolini and Kartell are the brands with the highest number of followers on Facebook and Instagram, on the first places of the top 15 that Pambianco Design extrapolated from the top 60 Italian players with the highest turnover in 2015. To legitimize the gold medal of Lago there are over one million followers on Facebook, reached and engaged by a digital strategy
that focuses on the quality and timeliness of content. Browsing through the ranking, from fourth to seventh place, we find Magis, Natuzzi, B&B Italia, and Moroso, with the last two companies that, together with Kartell, affirm themselves as best in class on Instagram. Instagram, the social media of images, confirms itself as a growing channel and particularly suitable for the presentation of products, capable of intercepting a more skimmed audience of styling and photography enthusiasts, as well as the designers themselves.

It is an interesting message, in this phase in which the world of distribution is facing a social epochal exam, projecting itself into a new dimension: introducing the online and social dimension but at the same time to find a balance with the traditional offline dimension.

This revolutionary wave is already distorting assets in multiple commercial environments, forcing new and different positioning, as well as innovative retail strategies.

But this "revolution" hides a great potential advantage for

TOP BRANDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

1.LAGO

2.SCAVOLINI

3.KARTELL

4.MAGIS

5.NATUZZI

6.B&B ITALIA

7.MOROSO

8.TURRI

9.POLTRONA FRAU

10.CASSINA

11.MINOTTI

12.FLEXFORM

Pambianco Strategie di Impresa, 2017

companies in the Italian furniture market. It remains true, in fact, that the dimensional growth and the greater structure inside groups is a key factor to approaching International markets, overall for a market moving sofas and furniture systems and not shoes and clothes. However, while the real market is facing a global expansion, a virtual space where distances can be overcome with creativity and quality is born. In this space, a niche reality can create orchestras and play their own music able to rivals the giants. (*Lago, 2017)*

If for fashion brands it is also possible to purchase on social media, directly linked to e-commerce, for Italian luxury furniture brands the social channels mostly represent the brand reputation and can create relations and emotional engagement with fans.
The relation is very important also because the company is able to "listen" to customers. Social media can contain people's identity because they are mostly accessed by smartphone, a tool that can register both the user intention and attention.

"Social media companies break down the barriers between brand and public by opening a very direct and informal communication channel, and represent a very immediate way of sharing with
our fans the passion for design."

Lucia Nadal, B&B manager (2017)

Interaction platforms could build in the future the ideal antechamber for online sales options, even though most furniture brands do not look at pure e-commerce as much as forms of web and physical channel integration. Before taking marketplace actions, companies aim to get to know well their community. The common goal is to offer an increasingly personalized brand experience[22].

22 Pambianco. (2017). I like sono di casa e le aziende scommettono sui social. Retrieved from https://magazine.pambianconews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/design_II_n3_2017.pdf (Anno II N°3)

DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of the top furniture Luxury Brands is crucial and has some peculiar characteristics that differentiate it by the rest of the Luxury Market.
A diffused retail network without the ability to well distribute in the world makes vain any attempt to produce quality objects.
This is the strong message at the center of the speech by Roberto Gavazzi, CEO of Bo Group at Palazzo Mezzanotte for the 3rd Design Summit of Pambianco - Elle Decor.
Does the value of the service in retailing also be recognized by the ability to retain the customer?
That's right, and the timing of our products, kitchens, and bathrooms, are very long indeed
limit cases up to 5 years to go from the first contact with the customer to the delivery of the finished and customized product. Needless to say, the importance of structuring oneself to be able to keep the customer close to him, or provide unparalleled service at the point of sale. To do this, it is necessary to have well-trained staff who perfectly know the brand's price lists and can explain them to the customer.

Until a few years ago, the only way to commerce was trough Dealers. Today also in the furniture we can see brands slowly moving to an omnichannel direction and the most relevant furniture brands are opening flagship stores. Those mono brands are generally operated by dealers and just in few cases by the Company itself.
The tendency is to prefer partnerships with local multi-brand retailers rather than direct distribution. And even behind a single-branded sign, in the vast majority of cases, there is a trader who is not part of the company but is, in fact, a client or a partner.
Specifically, the research reveals, the premium segment of the sample of 80 world players is worth 9% for a turnover of 7 billion dollars in the world, 69% of sales are made through the wholesale channel, franchising, and contract, for 29% through direct single-brand stores and the remaining 2% through e-commerce.
On the Italian market, direct retail accounts for 14% of turnover for premium companies. *(Federlegno Report 2018)*

Below we will see the main differences from the sales point of view between Multi Brand Dealers and Mono Brand Store.

MONO BRAND

The single-brand stores have very high costs, also because usually the shops are located in the central areas of important cities, but they work better than the multi-brands in making known the specificities and the range of the brand and the product. The distribution strategies are selective or exclusive, they are normally

placed in the larger cities and in the most prestigious streets. The "location" is fundamental and is used to ensure that you get in touch with the right consumer target.
Mono Brands, for the few Italian Brands that opted for this kind of distribution, are led by Dealers. The staff and the services offered in the Mono Brand are the ones of the dealer because the company will be impossible to directly manage the distribution both from the economic and logistic point of view. Even in this case the Brand experience and the brand value perceived by the customer is stronger. It is important to build loyalty with the customer that can see in one unique space the Brand collections.

From a qualitative analysis, it emerges how direct distribution is lived in a different way between companies of the premium and mass categories. In the first case, this is above all a means of communication and management of contract projects, with a still marginal sales function (14% of turnover). In the mass segment, vice versa, the weight of sales is higher (31% of turnover) and higher margins thanks to more careful management and lower costs.
The multi-brands are positioned between these two company logics, taking the best of both.
In the future of distribution, the system will be a mixed system. *In the world, there is space to have mono brands, which among other things are the face of the company. But one cannot think of having 50 stores in the United States, 50 in China and so on, but rather having 20-25 single-brand stores in the world. These must be combined with alternative sales models that immobilize less capital.* (*Dario Rinero, CEO of Poltrona Frau Group, 2017)*[19].

"In the future, the importance of direct single-brand stores can only grow both because direct contact with the consumer is increasingly fundamental, and because technological innovations will improve yields and profitability. The multi-brands will maintain their role, especially in the premium segment, although there will be greater selection and growth in size, keeping pace with a wider offer and growing design capabilities."

Pambianco (2017)

DEALERS

As we already understood, the luxury furniture market mostly works with indirect distribution, The indirect distribution channel, represented by independent Dealers, is the favorite of design companies for a series of mainly economic reasons. Cultivating a direct sales network, in fact, involves expensive and risky investments that few companies in the sector want or can afford. Because of the high fixed costs, the costs of rent and after-sales

19 Pambianco. (2017). Tre Strade per il Retail, dimensione, monomarca e 4.0. Retrieved from https://magazine.pambianconews.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/design_II_n4_2017.pdf (Anno II N°4)

assistance, the size of the products and the necessary technical and managerial skills to rely on, only a small part of companies face the risk associated with hypothetical initial losses.
Moreover, from a strategic point of view, the competition of large-scale retailers and giants such as Ikea - which can count on their ability to concentrate in a single space an unattainable range of products for a single mono-brand - is also a matter of fear; of the large-area unspecialized trade, which increasingly includes furnishing goods in its offer.
On the other hand, relying on an indirect distribution network translates into less control over the effectiveness of sales, and greater exposure to competitors.

The accurate selection of the commercial partner is always more important:
There is no doubt about Renzo Minotti, sales manager for Italy of B & B Italia, one of the most solid furniture groups of the made in Italy that even has only one flagship store: "In perspective, rather than thinking of mono brand, design will look for a smaller but more profiled number of customers: we will see a sort of natural selection ". The dose Marillina Fortuna, owner together with the brothers of the high-end kitchen Arclinea, which has five single-brand stores and none owned: "To sell the kitchens in a direct way, you have to be entrepreneurs, not producers. can improvise sellers, at the extreme you can do training on the product and design ". The same opinion is given by Vittorio Renzi, general manager of Scavolini, the furniture brand with a network of 90 single-brand stores managed directly or in partnership with a network of 1,000 customer resellers in Italy: "The trend to follow is the specialization: serve focus on the flagship stores and even a small number of exclusive dealers who are able to exalt our brand "[23].

"Certainly the single brand makes more in terms of image, in addition to being able to generate a turnover higher than a corner in a multi-brand, but the investments and efforts to put it on their feet are still too much high to think about a more organized network of flagships."

Fortuna, Arclinea (2017)

The retailer can offer to Brand to expose their product in the showroom mixing them with products of other Brands or, according to the relation between Brand and Dealer, a corner in the store.
The corner shop communicates to the customers a brand identity since it is possible to visit a display of the same Brand and get a more homogeneous feeling.
If we think in terms of the top end, the pride of every retailer has always been to be able to show off the noblest brands of Made

23 Pambianco, Monomarca si ma con partner, retrived from https://design.pambianconews.com/monomarca-si-ma-con-partner/

in Italy furniture, with some rare Northern European incursion. No one would have dreamed of developing collections, dealing with supply chain processes and going out on the market with his name. Today the wind is changing and there are the first Italian retailers who have felt the need to create their own furniture lines. Why? Who thinks they did it for reaction to the development of their suppliers' increasingly frequent single-brand projects, it is probably off the road. This is not a commercial retaliation, but rather a necessity linked to the identity of the retailer, who has developed over time his own philosophy and sometimes does not find it in the manufacturer's offer.
As for the direct single-brand store, often interpreted as a form of brand competition vis-à-vis the retailer, forms of collaboration have also been created between the producer and the seller that becomes a partner, so this is not the problem. At the basis of everything, underlines Mamoli (Confcommercio, a federation that brings together 17 thousand distribution companies and 21 thousand specialized furniture stores), there is the choice of the retailer to focus on the advisory service to the final customer rather than on the brand itself, and this choice has a meaning: having a big brand is not a guarantee of survival, contrary to the past, because in other retail sectors (see what happens in fashion) it has not protected the signs from the crisis, and this is even truer in the era of e-commerce because the consumer could buy the same products at a lower cost. This is happening more slowly even in the furniture.

"This is the historic diatribe between those who sell and those who produce, with the first convinced that it is the consolidated presence of the brand in the area that attracts customers and the second is certain that instead, it is the force of the brand to lay down the law."

Mauro Mamoli, Federmobili(2018)

The retailer creates a private label and chooses productive partners, who become a sort of subcontractors. "I see it as an innovative strategy compared to the traditional way of selling a brand and I believe that it is a win-win system for the merchant like those who supply it, he was also a producer who has his own brand ", says the president of Federmobili, confirming that the private label examples of high-end furniture are few and all quite recent[20].

20 Pambianco. (2018). Il riciclo conquest il design. Il futuro è circolare. Retrieved from https://magazine.pambianconews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/design_III_n3_2018.pdf (Anno III N°3)

THE CUSTOMER

The Furniture purchase it is not fast and easy and it might involve different characters:

PRIVATE

The private is the final addressed of luxury furnishings and can purchase personally without intermediaries. From the previous analysis of the distribution, it appears that the private customer can only turn to distributors and not directly to the brands, except to obtain general information on the products. The end customer chooses independently where to buy the products.
Often the end customer already has a clear idea of what he would like to buy and for example if it is just a single chair or lamp he does not need particular assistance but in the case, he has to furnish an entire house or environment, luxury dealers provide design support as well. They have a team of designers who can help the client in the product's configuration and selection. The private client often interfaces with family, friends or his architects to reach the final decision that in case of a furnishing system requires many steps an appointment with the Dealer.

ARCHITECT

The Architect or Interior Designer is not the final target but they are work on commission of the private customer, assisting him in all the purchase stages. The client can ask his architect to include certain products in the project, but it is often the architect who proposes furnishings to the customer and also where to buy them based on the client's budget and requests but also on his personal economic interests, according to for example on the relationships he has with certain brands and retailers that generally provide a professional discount or commission. From technical knowledge to costs, the skills of an Architect must be suitable for the purpose, function, and budget for the consumer, in order to satisfy his desire in term of aesthetic, budget and time.

CONTRACT

To define what contract project are we can use the definition "large turnkey projects", or the provision, on direct commission or tender, of an articulated set of products, designed ad hoc or custom made, and the related services needed to install them within the date established by the existing contract between client and company, where the realization of products and services is normally outsourced.
The credibility of suppliers is a critical success factor, together with the contractual price. Responsible for the entire project and the management of merchandise supplies for residential projects,

hotels, airports, museums, cruise ships, etc., is the general contractor: a role of such complexity that it is not within the reach of all Italian manufacturing companies. However, the contract represents a real opportunity for furniture Brands, depending on the different activities that they are able to undertake - from the general contractor to the simple supplier or subcontractor - based on management capacity. Compared to the retail market, consolidated by Italian manufacturing companies in Italy and abroad, the contract is the only channel to develop markets in emerging countries. The inclusion of the contract channel, also for Made in Italy companies represents a market need. "Retail - continues Marabese - is facing a profound change and selection. As a result, those who remain in the market tend to choose the most popular brands because they are requested by the end customer. Getting in touch with the designers, offering them customized lighting solutions, helped us find a space in a market where a new chapter opens. Today it is worth about 30% of the business and we will reach higher percentages, through an increasingly dedicated production"[24].

This opportunity might involve complex management processes for company management.
In the contract sector, the company dialogues with architectural firms, real estate project developers, landowners, general or interior contractors. The example of a hotel contract is useful to explain the profile of the actors, and first and foremost of the client: he is the owner who owns the building area and develops a project with the developer, also relying on the operator. The architectural firm and interior design studio are involved in defining the specifications of the contract (specifications). The first deals with structure and architecture, interior design, interior design studio. Interior Designer can send to the Brand involved in the project a quotation for the product selected by the contractor and present it to the tender. The general contractor is at the top and can be supported by procurement company and cost controller (which depends on owner and operator). Finally, there are the producers (Brands), suppliers and subcontractors, who will provide, for example, the furniture.

The contracting sector, due to its characteristics, have extended payment and production times.
Even if the tender is successful for one attendant and he passes the order to the brand, the order confirmation will take long times as well since the buyer will have to settle de financial resources. For this reason for a Brand, contract commissions do not produce income immediately but will produce it subsequently[25].

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24 Guolo Andrea, (2018), Architect@Work, focus sul progetto, retrieved from https://design.pambianconews.com/architectwork-focus-sul-progetto/
25 Sengalla, G. (2013), Cosa si intende per contract, retrived from https://www.ambientecucinaweb.it/cosa-si-intende-per-contract/

CASE STUDIES

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, we will analyze the private client purchase process in 7 Brands and 7 Dealers.
The Brands Selected are Made in Italy, worldwide distributed and with a high-end target. They are the producer of indoor and/or outdoor furniture.
The Dealers considered are multibrand dealers of the most important made in Italy luxury furniture Brands that work both with national and international clients.
The Cases have been analyzed according to their market, distribution, services, website, social media and e-commerce (if present).
The Data are gathered on that basis: Desk Research, Field Research, Users Interviews, Sales Assistant Interviews.
Those Data have been analyzed and clustered in order to build customer journey about the purchase process. The client is at the center of analysis and research, the research of the purchase process focus in particular on his perspective.

Every single case study has different channels and characteristics, furthermore according to the kind of product requested and on the project, the purchase processes can be a very different one from the other. We already mentioned that the furniture purchase can be a very long process and might take years in the most extreme case. Because of that consideration, the user journey maps created for each case are the most representative and synthetically described.

This phase's aim is to underline the actual common trends in the luxury furniture market and to use that insight to develop a design proposition that considers the client needs and the valuable services that are offered by Brands and Dealers during the purchase process.

The purchase process phases have been simplified as follows:

BEFORE SALE

EXPLORATION

DECISION MAKING

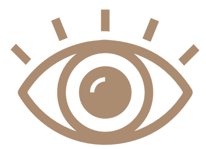
PURCHASE

AFTER SALE

7
BRANDS

7
DEALERS

DESK RESEARCH



FIELD RESEARCH

INTERVIEWS

I used those purchase steps according to the format given by Osservatorio Innovazione Digitale nel Retail, School of Management of Politecnico di Milano and adapting them to the Luxury Furniture Market.
The research of the information and the paths of the purchase process has made possible to frame the Made in Italy luxury furniture sector and its distribution on a large scale.
The desk research was carried out thanks to the analysis of the material found on the case's website and on articles and magazines of the furniture sector, mainly from Pambianco News and Fedrelegno Arredo.
Qualitative data were instead collected thanks to field research carried out analyzing and observing showrooms and customers, doing interviews with customers and store's staff.
Important information that allowed me to definitively select these 14 cases was obtained thanks to the work I currently do in this sector.
After having explored and collected all the valid information to draw up a complete picture of the topic, we moved on to the selection and aggregation of these sources and their data, comparing them
between them, eliminating the superfluous ones. Only after this information screening phase,
we moved on to the aggregation and interpretation phase with subsequent visualization.
The visualization of the chosen user journey map allows identifying the different touchpoints that are found in the different phases and group them into digital, people, product, space.
The main focus of the analysis is the client, his path, the steps taken in the process and the services offered to him. The objective of the analysis is, therefore, to understand in which moments of the path there is interaction with the store, digitalization, and automation (understood as the actions that the user is able to perform independently).

STORE INTERACTION: considered as any form of interaction between the user and the store, including e mail and phone calls

DIGITALIZATION: considered as action and processes that include digital touchpoints

AUTOMATION: considered as action and processes that the customer is able to develop by himself

B&B ITALIA

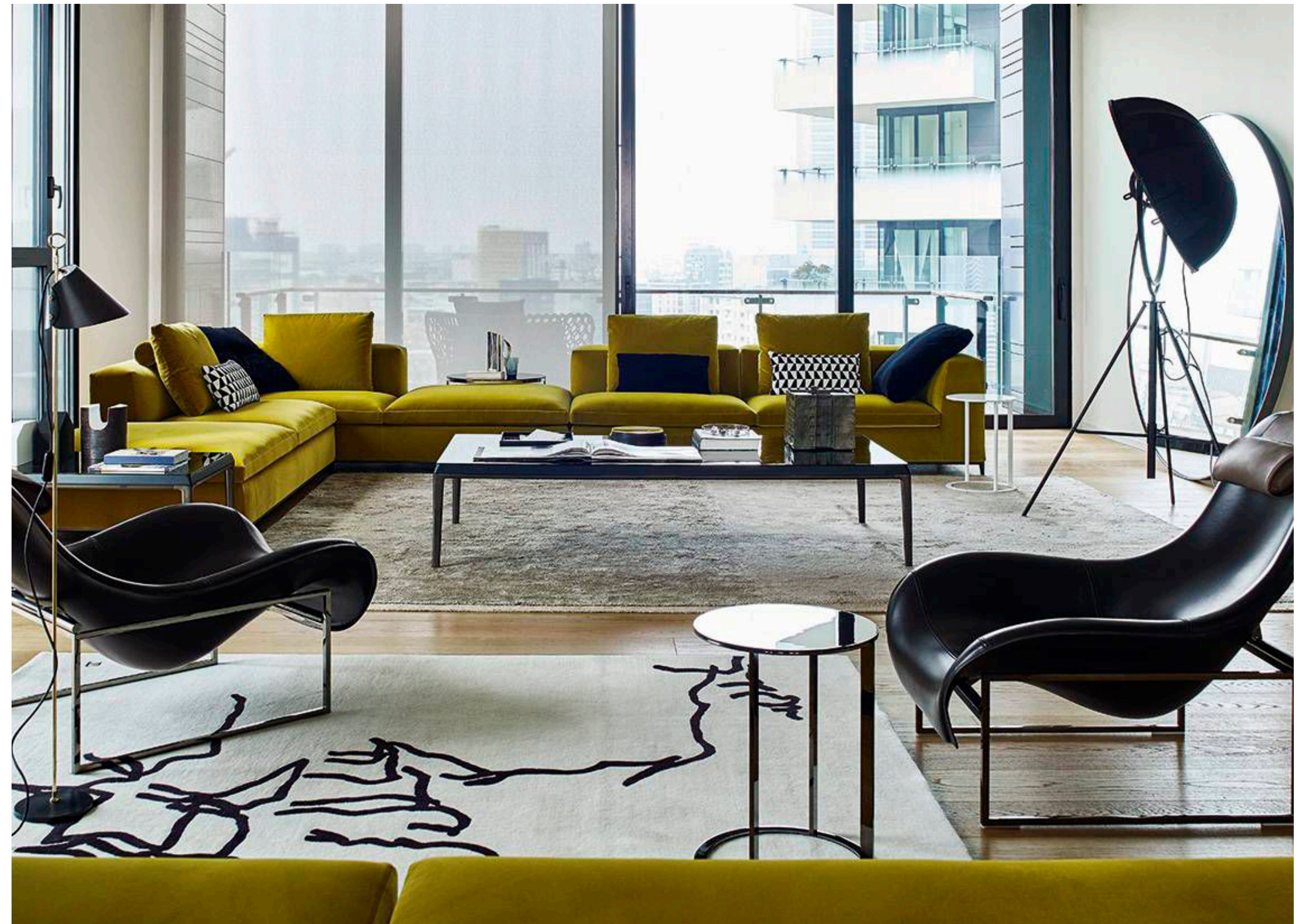
HISTORY

Founded in 1966 by Cesare Cassina and Piero Ambrogio Busnelli, the company takes the name of C&B until, in 1973, Busnelli takes over the Cassina shares and changes the company name to B&B Italia.
The company has distinguished itself since its origins for its industrial vocation, introducing a managerial approach in the company organization, in contrast with the typical craft and family logic of the sector.
The headquarters, located in Noverdate (CO), boasts a prestigious site designed in 1972 by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers.
In September 2016, B&B Italia enters the high-end kitchen segment by taking over 70% of Arcilinea.
The B&B Italia and Maxalto products are manufactured in the production facilities of Noverdate and Misinto.
The Noverdate factories are developed on a total of 27,000 square meters and host all the phases of production of upholstered furniture, famous for the technological process of the cold-foamed polyurethane in stamens with which they are made, developed in 1966 by the company.
At Misinto, on the other hand, all the phases of wood processing are carried out, for which the Maxalto brand stands out.

Another element of pride for the company is the Research & Development Center, strongly supported by the founder Busnelli. It houses offices dedicated to graphic design, communication, design, laboratories for product development, historical archives, training areas, and the company showroom.

PRODUCTS

The company is present on the domestic furnishing market and operates with two divisions: the Home Division with the B&B and Maxalto brands, and the Contract Division, a service entity that deals with managing and coordinating the most complex and complex furniture orders in the entire path of the product, from design to installation. It operates in various sectors such as hotels, retail, cruise ships, offices.
B&B Italia products are divided into three categories: B&B Italia for residential furnishings and B&B Italia Project for offices. Recently, with the increasing demand of outdoor luxury products, opened also the B&B Italia Outdoor for outdoors.B&B products are characterized by high quality, elegance and perfect design. B&B Italia, like Cassina, was one of the most important Brands of the Postmodernism and produced Design Icons designed by Sottsass and Gaetano Pesce (example the “Serie Up”, still in the market). The 50 years of the company have been celebrated with


B&B - Michel Club by Citterio


B&B - Serie Up by Gaetano Pesce


B&B - Outdoor

an exhibition in Triennale Design Museum in Milan in 2016, place that represented the importance of B&B for the design Culture in many occasion (for example in 2013 with the exhibition "Design. La sindrome dell'influenza").

COLLABORATIONS

There are numerous reports, including the 4 Compassi d'Oro, the most prestigious of which and the first ever awarded to a company, in 1989, "for the constant integration work carried out in order to combine the values of technical and scientific research with those necessary for the functionality and expressiveness of the products ".
B&B Italia collaborated with national and international very important designers. The already mentioned Sottsass and Pesce but also Lissoni, Scarpa, Citterio, Marcel Wanders, Jasper Morrison, Patricia Urquiola...

DISTRIBUTION

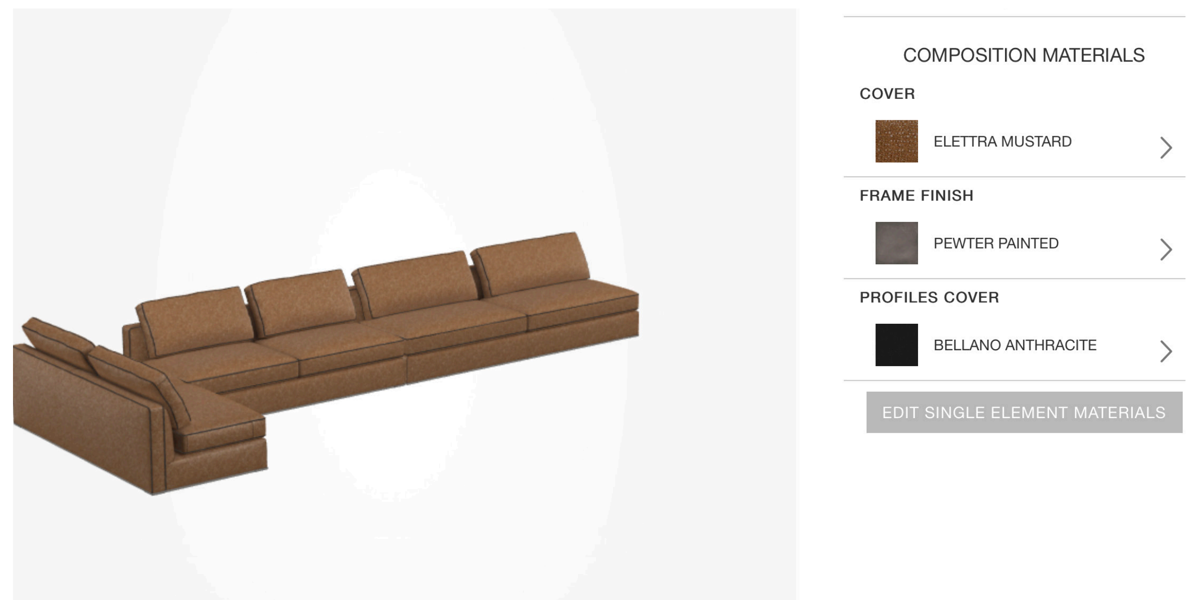
Present in 80 countries around the world, over time the company has built an extensive sales network that has 8 flagship stores, 44 single-brand stores and 800 authorized dealers, establishing and gaining international recognition, becoming one of the founding members of Altagamma, foundation that brings together Italian companies of international reputation that operate in the highest market segment and that express Italian culture and style from marketing to products.

On the website, it is possible to discover and connect to the retail network of the company and compose every item and select the finishes. The customer is at the center of the Brand experience, creating his own composition[26].

26 B&B information, retrieved from https://www.bebitalia.com

DISCOVER MORE:

B&B - Showroom



B&B- Online product configurator

B&B - USER JOURNEY MAP

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION					DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about B&B	customer goes on the Website	product exploration	product 3D configuration	save configuration	find and contact store	go to store	product exploration	discover samples and configurations	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	Website	Website	Website Email		Website	Product Pictures	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	Email
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service		Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Dealer Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture, Smartphone	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION												
DIGITAL INTERACTION												
AUTOMATION												

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer configurate B&B Products online and then go to the Flagship store to try, see phisical samples and purchase the product.

CASSINA

HISTORY

Cassina SpA is an Italian company founded in Meda in 1927 by brothers Cesare and Umberto Cassina, operating in the contemporary furnishing sector. After the great crisis caused by the war, in the Fifties that the company makes the first leap in quality, moving from the laboratory to the industry thanks to a commission concerning the creation of environments and author's interiors for cruise ships. In this time the Cassina brothers meet Gio Ponti, one of the most important Italian designers and architects that will contribute to the revival of post-war design.
Brand and symbol of Italian design, with the attitude of research and innovation, Cassina marked the transition from hand made production to serial production in Italy.

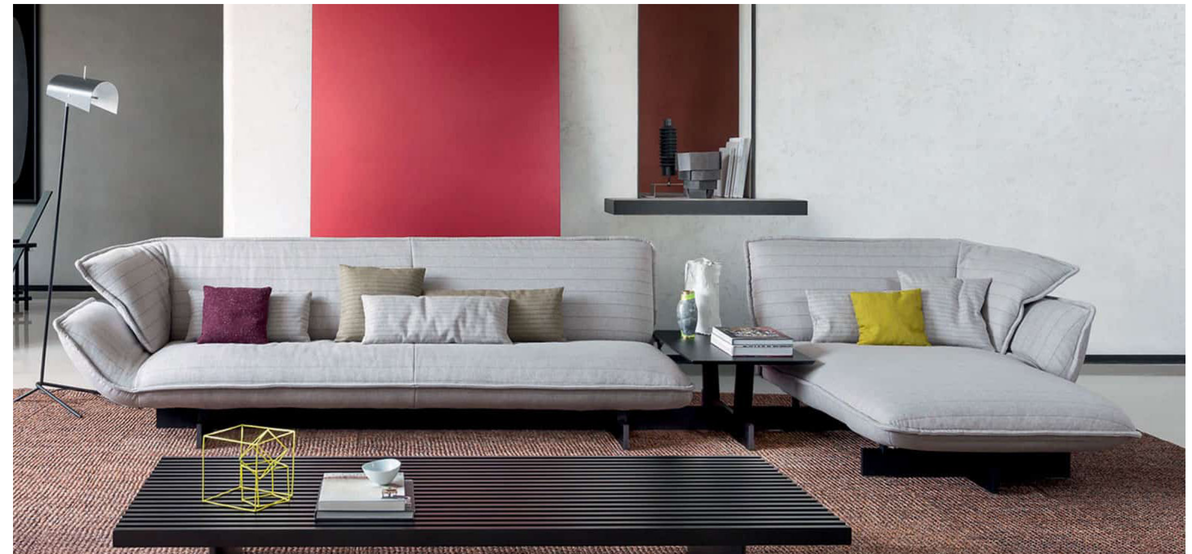
COLLABORATIONS

Following Ponti, there are different collaborations with important figures including Andrea Branzi, Mario Bellini, Rodolfo Dordoni, Phillippe Starck, Patricia Urquiola.
A very dear subject to the company is also that of re-editions, restoring value and life to iconic products from the history of architecture and design designed by very great figures of the past such as Le Corbusier, Magistretti (Nuvola Rossa bookcase, one of the best seller) but also the Veliero Bookcase designed by Franco Albini and the Superleggera Chair by Gio Ponti.

PRODUCTS

Cassina produces indoor and outdoor furniture mainly for the lounge area such as sofas and a furnishing system. Collaborating with different designers with their own creativity, and having in the finishes selection both noble materials such as fine leathers and the latest generation technical materials, Cassina's style is certainly elegant but never monotonous. Classic lines are combined with eccentric colors and patterns giving movement and personality to the interiors.

The entire production process is subjected to strict control through a bar code-based system, which allows the identification of the product and its components in all processing phases. At any time, the customer can be informed of the progress of his order.
Much of the production is absorbed by foreign markets.
In 2005 the company was acquired by Frau group, controlled by the private equity fund Charme Investments, in which one of the main shareholders is the family of Luca Cordero di Montezemolo.



Cassina - Showroom

Cassina - Veliero by Franco Albini

Cassina - Zig Zag by Rietveld

DISTRIBUTION

Cassina's distribution policy can be defined as selective, in fact the sales points are relatively limited and strictly controlled by the company's sales staff. Cassina's directly operated mono-brand stores are only nine and are concentrated in the cities of Milan, Paris, New York, Aoyama (Tokyo), Fukuoka, Nagoya, Osaka, Sapporo, Shibuya (Tokyo). There are also mono brand stores managed by Deaers, Such as the one in Como by Gerosa Design, and of course a dense network of multi brand Retailers.

On the website of the brand it is possible to find all product information and the sales point selecting monobrand, corner and Dealer. Cassina's monobrand (*reference to the one in via Durini, Milano*) stands as a hybrid between museum and store, exhibiting books and historical pieces. The environment is not saturated with products but rather, you can admire the products from multiple perspectives as they were art pieces. On the entrance floor, there are offices as well and an entire room dedicated to samples and materials for product configuration. From the entrance you can see the majestic spiral staircase that leads to the upper floor where the exposure continues, illuminated by the glass dome, which is particularly scenic. The outdoor area that connects the interior with the room dedicated to the contract, another driving force of Cassina, is not missing: Cassina's distribution policy is also characterized by the use of the "contract" channel, with which large customers are purchasing furniture for particular applications, such as cruise ships, hotels, restaurants, large spaces for community use and so on.

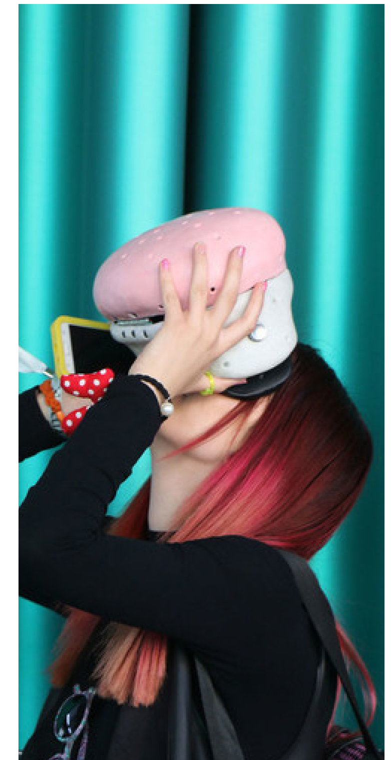
EXHIBITIONS

Cassina is a landmark for Design culture and for made in Italy and its crucial role has been celebrated in many occasions such as exhibition in Triennale Design Museum.
On the occasion of the Fuorisalone, Cassina celebrates its 90th anniversary at the Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation with an installation designed by Patricia Urquiola that relates the past and present of the company through a vision projected towards the future. Cassina 9.0 refers to progress and evolution as a necessary resource for reinterpreting the company's historical heritage. The exhibition explores scenarios and contexts of future living, experimenting with the forms and languages with which we will relate to spaces and objects involving also virtual reality[27].

27 Cassina information, retrieved from https://www.cassina.com

DISCOVER MORE:

Cassina x Feltrinelli Foundation (90th Anniversary)



Cassina Future Living

Cassina - Showroom/ Museum Durini Milano

CASSINA - USER JOURNEY MAP

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING					PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Cassina	customer goes on the Website	product exploration	find and save the items he likes	find store	contact store	showroom exploration	discover samples and configurations	personalize the products	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	Website, Product Sheets	Website	Website, email Product Sheets		Website	3D/2D models	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	Email
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant, Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Samples, Catalogs, TV Screen, Retailer PC, Furniture	Samples, Catalogs, Retailer PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, Retailer PC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer get in touch with Cassina online and then is invited to visits the showroom and see the products he likes. Thanks to the information available online the Customer can discuss about specific information with the Sales Assistant imporving the purchase experience.

KARTELL

HISTORY

Kartell is an Italian company founded in 1949 in Noviglio (MI) by Giulio Castelli that produces furniture and objects with a sophisticated plastic design. Today presided by Claudio Luti, he presents himself as one of the symbol companies of made in Italy planning through the production of furniture, furnishing accessories, lighting systems, home accessories.
The activity of Giulio Castelli, a chemical engineer, begins with the production of plastic car and household accessories. Over time, the brand increasingly consolidated its success, also recognized internationally in 1972 thanks to its participation in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, dedicated to Made in Italy furniture, of which some pieces still constitute part of the museum's permanent collection.

The peculiarity of Kartell is the use of plastic in furnishings in a completely original way and with the use of processing technologies traditionally used in other industrial sectors. Kartell products are totally produced in Italy, even though the largest sales market is the United States.

PRODUCTS

Kartell produces Chairs, Stools, Poufs, Containers, Tables, Lamps but also dining complements. Everything is in plastic perfect for outdoor and fun for the indoor. Kartell has also a fashion collection of shoes and bags for women.
Even if they are less advertised, Kartell has also a more luxury furniture collection that includes padded armchairs and sofas, dinner tables made with alluminium and ceramic.

COLLABORATIONS

The company has collaborated and collaborated with several internationally renowned designers, such as Antonio Citterio, Ron Arad, Vico Magistretti, Philippe Strack and Piero Lissoni. More recent collaboration with designers of the caliber of Patrick Jouin, Marcel Wanders, Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec, Tokujin Yoshioka. In 1999 the Kartell Museum was founded, in addition to several Kartell products were awarded international prizes, including the Compasso d'Oro, the prize awarded annually by ADI (Association for Industrial Design, of which Cartelli was co-founder), considered the most important award in the world in the sector.

Kartell - Precious Collection

Kartell - Bookworm

Kartell - Bourgie

DISTRIBUTION

Today the company has 130 flagship stores, alongside 250 shops in shops and 2,500 retailers.

In Kartell Monobrands, very diffused in the national territory, the visitor can immerse himself in a Brand Experience created thanks to the colorful and playful store layout and the arrangement of the products, parallel to the one on the website. The objects are arranged in a linear display, generally clustered by color in order to create a very pleasant optical effect. The price tag of every single item is shown and it is possible to have an idea of the basic price of each product.
Inside the store, there is also the Kids and fashion sector.

The style of the stores is very playful and colorful, Kartell also makes very impactful collaborations and scenographies, one example is the one it had with Barbie to celebrate the 50th anniversary: during Fuorisalone Barbie's houses were exhibited in every Kartell store (Fuorisalone 2009).
Overall the Kartell store style can be defined as irreverent and contemporary, as the products style.

Thanks to its mono-brand distribution and the possibility of buying online directly from the Kartell website, it is one of the furniture brand analyzed that comes closest to omnichannel. On the website it is possible to discover products price, buy most of them online, configure them and through "find store" it is possible to find the contacts of your nearest store.

Thanks to online research, observations, interviews with the sales assistants of the mono-brand Via Turati and to direct customers, I developed different user journey maps according to the type of channel and the kind of product.

Thanks to online research, observations, interviews with the sales assistants of the mono-brand Via Turati and to direct customers, I developed different user journey maps according to the type of channel and the kind of product[28].

28 Cassina information, retrieved from https://www.cassina.com

DISCOVER MORE:

Kartell - Flagship Store, Turati Milano

Kartell - Scalo Milano Display

KARTELL - UJ A - PRODUCT A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING		PURCHASE	AFTER		
	customer gets to know about Kartell	customer goes on Kartell Store	product exploration	information about product he likes	discover configuration	product personalization	buy	order information	go to the store	bring product home
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social		Website		Website, Social	Website	Bank App, Invoice	Website, Email		
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues			Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Sales Assistant	
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, Furniture	Catalogs, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, Samples, Furniture	Retailer PC, Samples, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, Retailer PC	Smartphone/ Laptop		Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Store	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

This user Journey Map starts from the store, where it is possible to see the products, configurate them and personalize them. Personalized product cannot be found directly in store so the Sales Assistant will order them for you, you can ask for the Home Delivery or, as in this case, get the product delivered in the store.

KARTELL - UJ B - PRODUCT A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING		PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Kartell	customer goes on the website	product exploration	product and price comparison	product configuration	contact store for further info	buy	information about the order	delivery
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	Website, Other Websites	Website	Website, Email	Bank App, Invoice	Website, Order Conf.	Website, Order Conf.
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service			
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

This User Journey Map is the one related to fast deliverable product that can be purchased online, in this case the client know what he wants and doesn't go to the store. The product you buy in this way have standard finishes and cannot be personalized.

KARTELL - UJ C - PRODUCT B

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING					PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Kartell	customer goes on the website	product exploration	product and price comparison	product configuration	find store	contact store	go to the store and see product	personalization configuration	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	Website, Other Websites	Website	Website	Website, Email	Website	Website, Pictures on Instagram	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	Email
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues						Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop, Product Sheet PDF	Samples, Catalogs Product Sheet PDF	Smartphone/ Laptop, Retailer PC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

This User Journey Map is the one related to products that cannot be bought online because require also delivery and assembly and can take longer production lead times. The online sales service is available only for "light" and complementary products, easy to pack and ship and that are already in stock at their warehouse, for the other category of products instead it is possible to view online the available finishes and the price but then in order to buy it you need to go to the store. In this case it is possible to view some finishes and product compositions online, find technical information and price but then the store interaction is necessary.

LAGO

HISTORY

LAGO was founded at the end of the 1800s by a craftsman, it has grown into the logic of a family business. Since the guide passed to Daniele Lago in 2014, the choice has been to focus on innovation at 360 ° reinforcing the internal managerial structure. LAGO means design as a tool for social transformation that can improve people's lives, generating empathy between the interior and those who live there. LAGO has always believed in digital as a tool to convey its values and over time has built an active and expanding community, thus increasing Brand awareness. The same community has allowed LAGO to listen to the needs of the market and guide its strategies.

PRODUCTS

LAGO is specialized in interior design and furnishing creation for all areas of the home, also suitable for public spaces: practical bathroom furniture to organize the environment according to customer needs, modular sofas, kitchens, elegant tables, and complements. LAGO products are designed to create furnishing systems that allow people to experience the space at their maximum functional and aesthetic potential.

A strategy of Branding and articulated Retail, which integrates the digital community, the sales network, private homes and public spaces valued as showrooms, to make the LAGO experience a 360 ° experience.

DISTRIBUTION

The LAGO distribution network includes various types of sales points: from 30 single-brand stores LAGO STORE (for example in Rome, Milan, Paris) to multi-brand stores and LAGO Specialists - stores completely dedicated to a single area of the house. The company has also developed new retail formulas, such as LAGO The Other Store, a hybrid concept, of which an example is Open - More than books in Milan, a fully furnished LAGO space that integrates library, cafeteria, and co-working.
All the stores, as well as the other public spaces furnished by LAGO, are created with a 'Home Feeling' atmosphere, where customers can feel at home and live an advanced purchase experience, immersing themselves in the imaginaries of living and of living that characterizes the Brand.
The most innovative retail format is Appartamento LAGO, a real apartment-showroom in which to experience the products. The Clients themselves become Brand Ambassador.
Appartamento LAGO is an example of Horizontal Retail, a

Lago - Bathroom design

Lago - Furniture Systems

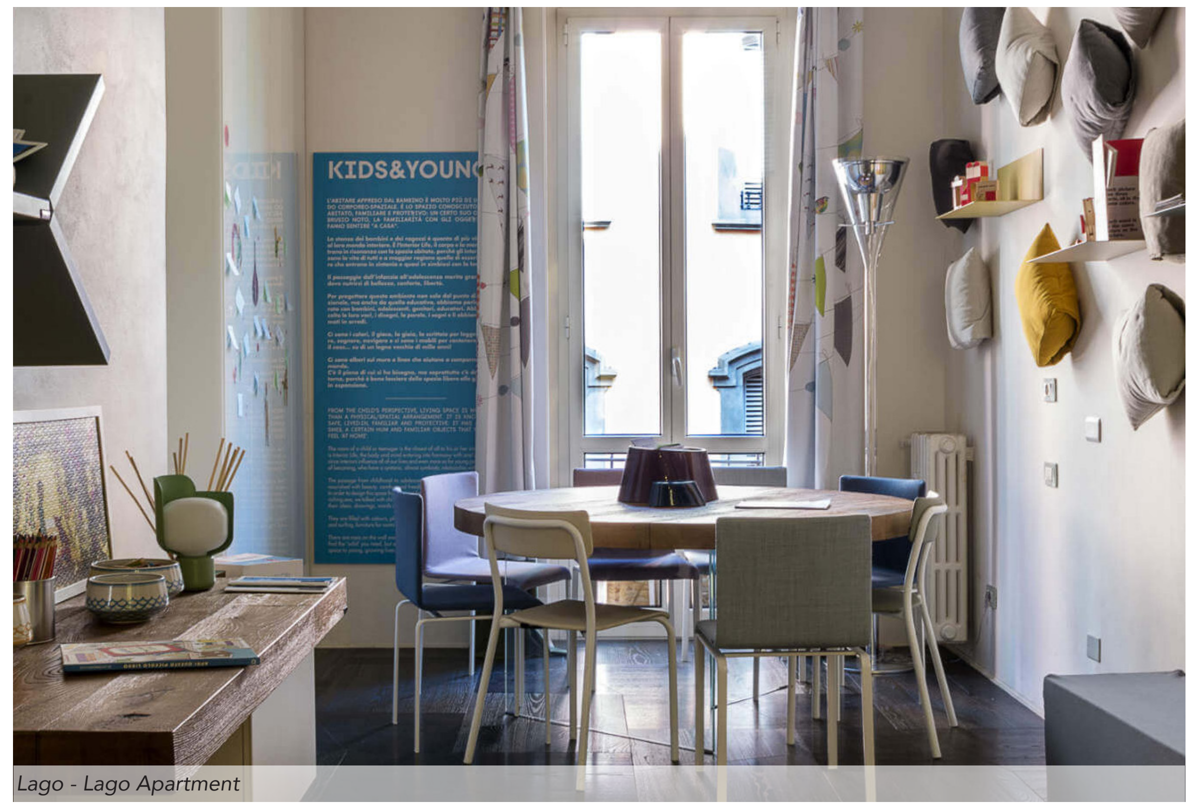
project in virtuous partnership with designers, architects or design enthusiasts to use their home as a 'showroom', furnished mainly with LAGO products. The partner realizes a LAGO style living project, confronting himself with the company, and agrees to open his own house to the public during events or visits by appointment. In this way, LAGO manages to bring to life the quality of its projects and products in real, life-lived content. For partners, events are opportunities to expand their network of contacts and generate new possible projects and jobs. Starting in Milan in 2009, during the Salone del Mobile, the model was then extended to other Italian and foreign cities and to other formats such as hotels, restaurants and offices, which in turn become showrooms for the Brand.

LAGO experience is also digital, thanks to the 'Talking Furniture' project, born in 2015 from the combination of design and internet of things. Through the use of NFC technology, a chip on the furniture is able to interact with the smartphones on which the LAGO Design app is downloaded, allowing customers to instantly obtain product information or make more engaging experiences how to save their own memories in the specific memory of the furniture through images, texts or sounds or read additional contents, such as recipes in the kitchen or fairy tales in the bedrooms.
One of the most important channels of LAGO is Instagram and in general the social media.
"Online and/or have to dialogue and aim at an equal and direct relationship with the consumer", Daniele Lago, CEO of the company, told Pambianco Design, ready to create a real digital orchestra. For the future, hybrid sales formulas are being examined, where e-commerce coexists with the tangible experience of the product in the store[29].

DISCOVER MORE:

29 Lago information, retrieved from https://www.lago.it


Lago x Open Milano


Lago - Lago Apartment

LAGO - USER JOURNEY MAP

BEFORE | EXPLORATION | DECISION MAKING | PURCHASE | AFTER

	customer gets to know about LAGO	customer goes on the Website	product exploration	LAGO home and project exploration	contact the Brand	get in touch with the Brand Ambassador	discover LAGO home	go to Store	discover samples and configurations	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website/ Social	Website	Website, Email	Website Email	Social, Project Pictures	Talking Furniture App	Talking Furniture App, Social, Project Pictures	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service, Brand Ambassador	Brand Ambassador		Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Dealer Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture, Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture, Smartphone	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	LAGO home	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

Customer can find product online and also sales point and LAGO apartments. Getting in touch with the nearest Brand Ambassador he can visit his home having a complete idea of LAGO spatial possibilities and application in a real case. In the Store thanks to the APP "TALKING FURNITURE" he can discover interesting information and stories about each single product. The Sales Assistand and Design team then can help him to configurate his final selection before to purchase.

MINOTTI

HISTORY

Minotti is an Italian company recognized internationally for the excellence of "Made in Italy" in the contemporary furnishing sector and interpreter of a modern classic lifestyle concept in the residential and hospitality sector.
Born in 1948 in Meda from an intuition of Alberto Minotti. The initial artisanal character soon changed and, starting from the Sixties, took on an industrial footprint and dimensions. The next step is due to his sons, Renato and Roberto Minotti, who have been in charge of the company since 1991 after his father's untimely death, which are starting a process of growth and expansion towards international markets.

COLLABORATIONS

Responsible for corporate strategies, since 1998 they share the creative line and aesthetic principles of the products with the architect Rodolfo Dordoni, to whom they entrust a strategic coordination role in the Minotti collections.
The collaboration between the company and the Milanese architect and designer continues, collection after collection, to reinforce the identity of a brand that has made continuity its hallmark.
The concept devised by Studio Dordoni Architetti is inspired by the project of a contemporary villa in which the domestic environments are harmoniously integrated with terraces and hanging gardens.
Minotti Studio gives shape to the designers' ideas and design instances, channeling the creative energies also characterized by different cultural matrices, in the development of indoor and outdoor collections for the home and the community.

PRODUCTS

Minotti is specialized in indoor product and recently have also outdoor collections. The Minotti living can be created mixing furnishings belonging to different collections, obtaining a final result of refined and warm elegance, in absolute harmony with the style that characterizes the interiors. The key formula of Minotti identity is the bridge between tradition and artisanal know-how with modern technologies. The products can be personalized and made with luxury and noble materials. Minotti interiors reflect the company values of aesthetic sobriety, timeless elegance, continuity in tradition, artisan savoir-faire with sartorial attention to detail.

Minotti - Showroom

Minotti - Lifestyle

DISTRIBUTION

Thanks to the Minotti third generation family, in particular Alessandro and Susanna, the company have taken up the challenges of the third millennium, of the digital and multicultural world.

Minotti's international vocation has resulted in a widespread presence in 63 countries, through 34 flagship stores (operated by Dealers) and a network of over 300 qualified distributors all over the world, places where to experience the company's refined and international lifestyle.
Interesting the focus of the Brand in the Asian Market: China, Hong Kong, Japan and Corea among the countries where it is possible to find Minotti flagship stores.

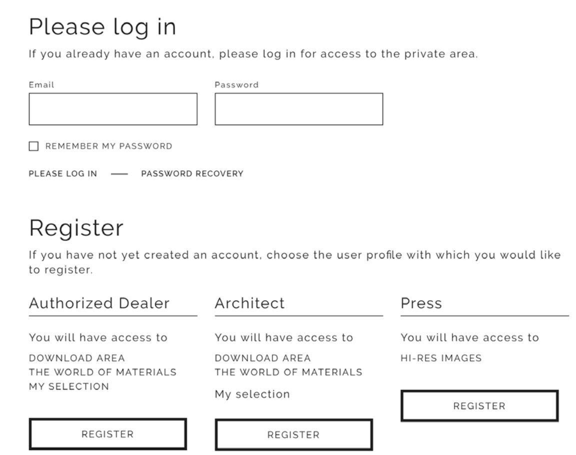
Online it is possible to visualize the products and the collection and also discover every product possible configuration in the environment. It is interesting how the Brand is mixing in the digital space different products that the user can directly see and find information about them even if they belong to a different category of the one he was looking for (example in the picture the sofa is presented also with complements and side accessories that can be accessed by the user). It is very important that, also in the digital environment, the furniture is not to be considered just as single pieces but as a system and dialogue of products. In this way, the client can have a better idea of the possible solution available for his own space and to explore the "related item" in a different way. It is not possible to access to "the world of materials" as private customers but just for professionals. The private client can explore the samples physically getting in touch with the closest retailer[30].

30 Minotti information, retrieved from https://www.minotti.com

DISCOVER MORE:

Minotti - Flagship Store, Tokyo

Minotti - Online Layout Suggestion



Minotti - Professionals log in to discover materials

MINOTTI - USER JOURNEY MAP

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION				DECISION MAKING				PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Minotti	customer goes on the Website	product exploration	see display proposal and discover config.	save configuration	find store	go to store	product exploration	discover samples and configurate product	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	Website	Website, PDF	Website		Product Selection	Product Pictures	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues							Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Dealer Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture, Smartphone	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION												
DIGITAL INTERACTION												
AUTOMATION												

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer can see different products layout on the website and which are the suggested items for a living room display. In the store he can see the display for real having already in mind what to see. He coudn't access the samples and materials online but the Sales Assistant shows them.

POLIFORM

HISTORY

Founded in 1970 as an evolution of an artisan company founded in 1942, the company immediately invests in new production technologies, evolving the proposal towards modular systems, thus becoming an industry. The proponents of this change Alberto Spinelli, Aldo Spinelli and Giovanni Anzani, still at the helm of the company, have always worked with the aim of ensuring that Poliform retains its family dimension and also the link with the territory, Brianza, not forgetting however to pay constant attention to the transformations of the market, which is becoming increasingly global.

Over the years, the range of Poliform products keeps the close link with current affairs as a distinctive element, demonstrating a profound ability to grasp the needs and tastes of a heterogeneous and international public and to anticipate and interpret living trends.
Poliform's research for innovation is a great test; modular systems, for example, are the result of a continuous technological and typological research: proposals with great versatility, able to change and enrich themselves, adopting new solutions but always maintaining their proven reliability.

PRODUCTS

The Poliform collection includes systems and furnishing accessories for each area of the house: bookcases, containers, cabinets, and beds. After having expanded the production to the kitchen sector through the absorption in 1996 of the Varenna brand, from 2018 also the latter was signed Poliform, as a demonstration of the precise will to assert even more decisively a single and consistent corporate identity. A typologically complete production that brings with it the idea of a "Poliform house", stylistically coherent in every component.

COLLABORATIONS

One of the fundamental factors that allowed Poliform's growth and notoriety lie in the creative contribution given by collaborations with many famous designers and architects, including Marcel Wanders, Carlo Colombo, Vincent Van Duysen, Paolo Piva, Paola Navone, Studio Kairos, Roberto Barbieri, Roberto Lazzeroni.

Poliform - Showroom

Poliform - Cucine (ex Varenna)

DISTRIBUTION

Poliform is present in more than 76 countries around the world, for a total of over 800 points of sale and flagship stores. Interesting fact and proof of the Brand's worldwide growth is the opening of a Poliform branch in China. China brings to Poliform the 4% of the total revenues and there are 9 showrooms in the Chinese territory (in Chengdu, Shanghai, Beijing and Quingdao). The Poliform Chinese headquarter it is not just a sales office but "a structure that supports Chinese distribution, training designers and architects and giving technical support to the sales network", Marta Anzani asserted.
This clue, with the general monobrands diffusion, clearly show the company's desire to increase its international visibility.

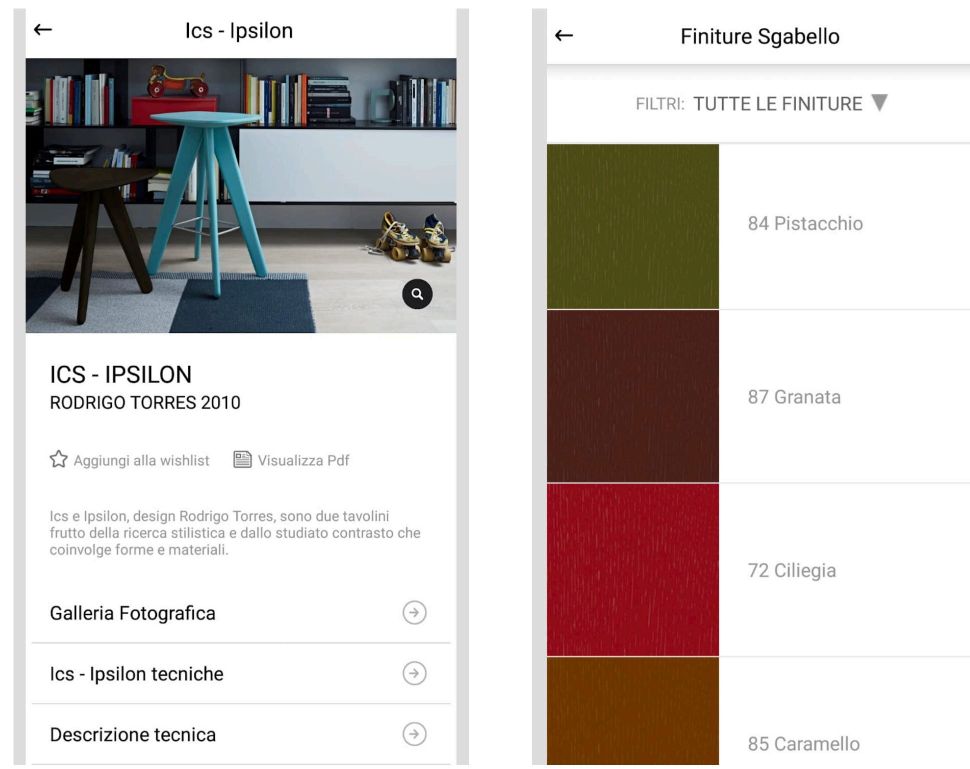
During my visit to the Flagship store of Piazza Cavour in Milan, I had the chance to discuss with the showroom manager about the reasons why Poliform didn't approach the e-commerce and she said that in her opinion furniture cannot be sold individually but Poliform is specialized in furniture systems and every piece necessarily interact one with the other and with the environment. They used to have e-commerce platforms (not owned) but customers taught that the product's prices were discounted but in fact, they weren't. Approaching mass-market channels is a dangerous operation and cannot be done from one day to the other, Poliform customers are not ready.
One other example of customers approaches failure is the opening of the monobrand store in Scalo Milano. (Locate Triulzi) it was supposed to be the made in Italy luxury furniture district but, since it is located next to a fashion outlet, people think to find advantageous prices and discounted products and don't buy. From the other hand, Poliform's clients keep purchasing in the city center flagship store or to the dealers and don't recognize the monobrand based in Scalo Milano as luxury.

Poliform gives to the client the possibility to access to products information and to know where the stores are. Furthermore, Poliform launched "my design selection" app, where it is possible to know all the information and the finishes of every product and save them o a shareable wish list[31].

31 Poliform information, retrieved from http://www.poliform.it

DISCOVER MORE:

Poliform - Flagship Store Milan



Poliform - My Poliform App

POLIFORM - USER JOURNEY MAP

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION				DECISION MAKING				PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Poliform	customer goes on the Website	product exploration	download app	select product and finishes	find and contact store	go to store	product exploration	discover samples and configurations	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	App	App	Website / App Email, Char		Website/ App	Product Pictures	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	Email
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service		Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Dealer Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone	Smartphone	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture, Smartphone	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION												
DIGITAL INTERACTION												
AUTOMATION												

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer discover Poliform app and Flagship store thanks to the website. In Store the Sales Assistant show him the product he is interested in and help with the design configuration of his Poliform environment.

RODA

HISTORY

Roda was born in Gavirate (VA) in 1990 and its founder is Roberto Pompa. Roda was immediately affirmed in Italy and internationally with a production of teak outdoor furniture; in parallel, it deals with the distribution of the products of some companies in the sector including Dedon and Tuuci.
Specialized in the design and manufacture of outdoor furniture, in 2004 it is the first company that turns its thoughts to designs characterized by the same cultural matrix of the interiors, the so-called Interior Garden, which present continuity with the outdoor furniture, eliminating the border between interior and exterior, maintaining adequate harmony.
The exteriors are furnished with the same importance and the same care of the interiors; relaxing in the garden and on the terrace is not just appropriating an external spatial dimension, but becomes another expression of living.

PRODUCTS

Roda deals specifically with accessories, armchairs and ottomans, sun beds, sofas, tables and coffee tables, gazebos and chairs.
The design of Roda's products is very simple and the materials are mainly teak, metal and polyester string or band that characterizes mostly every item of the collection. The fabrics and materials integrate Roda's vision that redraws the boundaries between In and Out, with the maximum possibility of customization.

Roda closed 2018 with a preliminary balance of 16.5-17 million, a slight increase over 2017, with Italy as the dominant market (70% of revenues) and exports growing between the United States, Switzerland and the rest Europe. One of the most profitable markets for Roda is the contract. Among the most substantial projects appears the order of more than one million euros for the two new Costa Crociere ships. Hotels, beaches, large ships and even snow-covered shelters are the places where outdoor furniture thrives.

COLLABORATIONS

Leading figure is the architect and designer Rodolfo Dordoni, Art Director of the company to whom we owe the paternity of the IN and OUT sector. Other members of Roda's creative team include Gordon Guillaumier, Maria Gabriella Zecca, Antonino Sciortino, Adam D. Tihany.

Roda - Arena Collection

Roda - Knot Collection

DISTRIBUTION

Roda has a capillary Multibrand Dealers Distribution in mostly all the countries even if doesn't have a Flagship store. It opened a Flagship Store in 2015 in via Savona Milano but then closed it. If, as we already have seen, for the furniture sector having directly operated monobrand store it is not easy, for the companies operating in the outdoor market it is even harder. In the dealer of the most important cities, it is possible to see Roda's corner display. Furthermore, Roda's larger product compositions can be found in Hotels (for example Savona 18 Suites in Milan) and Cruise Ships projects advertised on the website.

Roda is very active from the digital point of view: on the website, it is possible to configure the products and save the finishes, furthermore, Roda just launched an app that allows to configure not only the products but also the environment and allow the client to "project" the 3D composition in his space.
In this way, Roda is always next to the customers even if to purchase they have to choose among the network of multibrand dealers[32].

32 Roda information, retrieved from https://www.rodaonline.com

DISCOVER MORE:


Roda - Savona 18 Suites


Roda - Product Configurator

RODA - USER JOURNEY MAP

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION					DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Roda	customer goes on the Website	product exploration	configure product and save it	find dealer	go to dealer	product exploration	discover samples and configurations	check how they'll fit in the house	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	Website, Product Sheets	Website	Website, Product Selection		Website / Roda App	Roda App	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	Email
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant		Sales Assistant	Dealer Customer Service	Dealer Delivery and Assembly Staff, Dealer Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Samples, Catalogs, Smartphone, Furniture	Smartphone	Smartphone/ Laptop, Dealer PC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

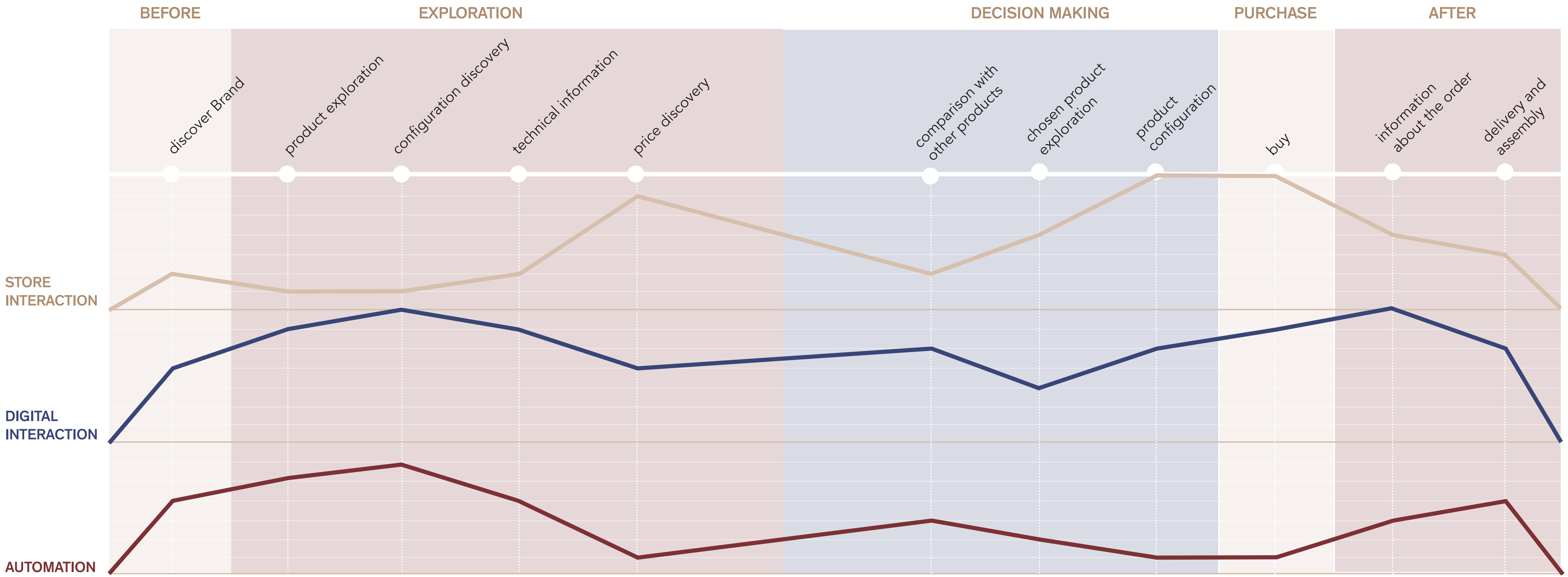
DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer check Roda's Website and then decide to go to the closest Multibrand Dealer. There the Sales Assistant show him how to download and use Roda's app to improve his purchase and Brand Experience: he can visualize how the products will fit in his environment.

BRANDS



COMMENTS

After having analyzed all the user journey maps of the brands, the most representative have been selected and the information regarding store interaction, digital interaction and automation displayed in the graphic in order to represent the average user journey map and observe how the three different curves (store interaction, digital interaction, automation) evolves according to the customer path. We can clearly see that automation and digital interaction are higher in the exploration phase, while store interaction is higher in the decision making and purchase phase. The Digital Interaction is pretty high in all the phases but especially in the exploration and after purchase phase.

DESIGN REPUBLIC

Design Republic is the brainchild of the Mornata family, established retailers of furniture and design objects in Milan, which in 2015 decides to renovate its historic store in Corso di Porta Ticinese and to support it with an online platform, making the selection of products accessible to customers around the world.
After the opening of the first store in Porta Ticinese in Milan, Design Republic opens a second store in Piazza del Tricolore.
The desire of the Mornata brothers, owners of the brand, to open the second store was born first of all from the great success of the first and from the need to have more space to be able to express the full strength of the Design Republic project; moreover, Marco and Giulia Mornata have jumped at the possibility of taking over a space that is now an icon for design distribution in Milan.
"The new store stands out for the proposal of a no-frills design that is absolutely accessible for value for money - explained Marco Mornata -. I did not want a showroom but a real store, where we do not seek redundant luxury but a young, modern and immediately recognizable style by our customers. Let us not forget that our target is certainly a metropolitan customer who knows and appreciates design, with an average age of 25 to 45 years ".

The focus of the new store remains on the New Scandinavian: today Design Republic is the reference point in Italy for brands like Hay, Gubi, & tradition, Muuto, Normann Copenhagen, Playtipe; many of the collections in the store are in fact exclusive for Italy.
In addition to this selection of brands, some brands are added which, although not Scandinavian, are perfectly mixed with the Nordic mood of the store, such as Gervasoni, Campeggi and Zanotta, due to their mood and accessibility.
For the future, Mornata also wants to focus on expanding the Design Republic brand collection with new private label products and to develop new collaborations with designers. The private label is a necessity linked to the identity of the retailer, who has developed his philosophy over time and sometimes does not find it in the manufacturer's offer.
At the same time, the ever-expanding e-commerce designrepublic.com will be developed and further developed. "I am convinced that online sales will be our future, given that we currently have triple-digit growth figures. E-commerce allows us to reach customers throughout Italy and abroad, it is essential to give ample space to this part of the sales too, "said Mornata.
Online, each product is accompanied by a card with descriptions and specifications, which helps the customer in his choice. The Design Republic team is always available for information and clarifications on its products.

DISCOVER MORE:


Design Republic Showroom


Sofa by Design Republic Private Label


Scandinavian Design

DESIGN REPUBLIC - USER JOURNEY MAP - A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING		PURCHASE	AFTER		
	customer gets to know about DR	customer goes to the Store	product exploration	information about product he likes	discover configuration	get help for final decision	buy	order information	go to the store	bring product home
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social		Website		Website, Social	Website	Bank App, Invoice	Website, Email		
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues			Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Sales Assistant	
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, Furniture	Catalogs, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, Samples, Furniture	Retailer PC, Samples, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, Retailer PC	Smartphone/ Laptop		Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Store	Home
STORE INTERACTION										
DIGITAL INTERACTION										
AUTOMATION										

COMMENTS

This user Journey Map starts from the store, where it is possible to see the products and configurate them.

DESIGN REPUBLIC - USER JOURNEY MAP - B

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING		PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about DR	customer goes on the website	product exploration	product and price comparison	product configuration	contact store for further info	buy	information about the order	delivery
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	Website, Other Websites	Website	Website, Email	Bank App, Invoice	Website, Order Conf.	Website, Order Conf.
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service			
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION									
DIGITAL INTERACTION									
AUTOMATION									

COMMENTS

This User Journey Map is the one related to the client know what he wants and doesn't go to the store. The product you buy in this way have standard finishes and cannot be personalized.

INTERNI

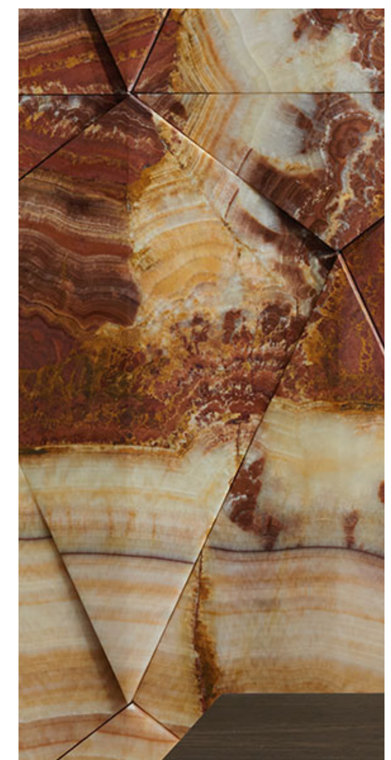
Interni was founded in 1933 by Leonardo Cazzaniga and his wife Giulia Citterio. At the beginning, Interni was a carpentry shop in Verano, in the heart of Brianza.
Soon, between the veins of the finest woods, emerges the idea of proposing prestigious pieces of furniture to a high clientele.
Thus begins a long journey with the passion for the finest quality and aesthetics.
Over time, the craftsmanship of the origins blends with experience in high-level of interior design and the research of selected partners among the most famous Italian and international design companies.
All this with the utmost fidelity to the founder's motto: "By improving the living environment improves the quality of life."
Thanks to the strategic position in the heart of the "Made in Italy", Interni has numerous partnerships with companies, designers and professionals active all over the world. Interni offers also turnkey project services. Thanks to the capillarity of logistics organization and the many showrooms between Milan and Bergamo, Interni is configured as a network able to provide solutions "tailored" for every need, with excellent service in every situation and at every latitude.
Since its origins, Interni has always proved to be not just a furniture store, but a reliable technical and creative partner to design interior projects suitable for any environment, according to the customer's style lifestyle, their environment, the size of their space and their personal taste. The importance of customization and the tailored made are, in fact, keywords that identify the work of Interni and the main reason it is well known and appreciated worldwide.
Interni is in continuous evolution and it has now many showrooms in Milan (Milano Turati, Milano Durni, Arclinea Flagship Milano Durini, B&B Italia Scalo Milano, Kartell by Laufen, Berloni Milano, Ceccotti Collezioni Milano, Atelier Henge via della Spiga, Novamobili). Thanks to the App "Design Tour " it is possible to be guided into every showroom to discover the best of Made in Italy design.
On the website, it is possible to see brands, products and collection, download technical information and request assistance.
The main in-store services are design support, technical drawings, 3D models and renderings and also augmented reality tour in the client's virtual house or project. Interni offers a white glove delivery and assembly service and also an accurate and careful after sale service. To date Interni does not use the e-commerce channel, but on its website, in addition to the consultation of the catalog, it is possible to check the availability of furniture and furnishings for which a quick delivery service is provided[33].

33 Interni information, retrieved from https://www.internionline.it

DISCOVER MORE:

Interni Showroom - Via Turati Milano


Interni - Project Configuration


Custom Project

INTERNI - USER JOURNEY MAP - A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION					DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Interni	customer goes on the Website	products and Brands exploration	send a request about product availability	get invited to visit the showroom	go to store	showroom exploration	product exploration	discover samples and configurate product	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Social	Website	Website	Website, email	Website, email	Website		Brands Website and e-material	Brands Website and e-material, 3D models..	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues			Customer Service	Customer Service		Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture, Catalogs, Store PC	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer get in touch with the store and then get an appointment to visit the showroom.

INTERNI - USER JOURNEY MAP - B

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION					DECISION MAKING		PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Interni	customer goes to the Showroom	showroom exploration	download the app to visit the other interni showrooms	showroom explotation	ask about a specific product / Brand	product exploration	discover samples and configurate product	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Social			Website, APP	Website, APP	Brands Website and e-material	Brands Website and e-material	Brands Website and e-material, 3D models..	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues		Sales Assistant			Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture	Furniture Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture, Catalogs, Store PC	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION											
DIGITAL INTERACTION											
AUTOMATION											

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer goes directly in the showroom and visits other stores thanks to the "Design Experience" app provided by interni.

LUMINAIRE

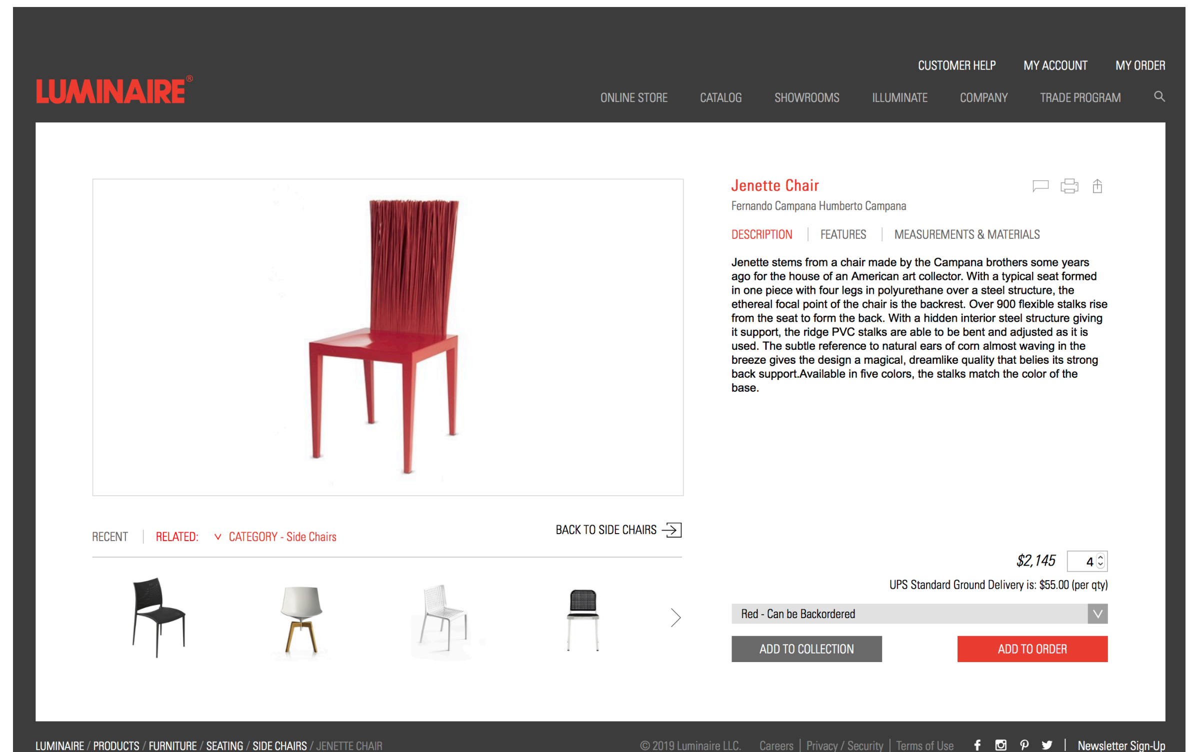
Founders of the Luminaire company are Nasir Kassamali and his wife Nargis. Imagine yourself from Kenya in the United States in 1973, at the time of their arrival in the US, the panorama of domestic furnishings by superior quality was limited to interior designers, who provided consumers with the only means of access to design showrooms, open exclusively to trade.
Their desire to remove barriers and democratize design became concrete with the founding of Luminaire, whose first showroom, specializing in European lighting, opened as a kiosk in North Miami Beach in 1974. Thus began the path that would make available to US consumers, the best offers of international design. Since its inception, Luminaire has continued to expand and respond to the needs of a receptive public, with the introduction of a wider range of products, including made in Italy.
Today, with five locations in Miami and Chicago, and boasting a collection of the best design contemporary interior and exterior furnishings, lighting, kitchen, bathroom and accessories, Luminaire continues to set standards as a "full-service" design resource.
Believing in the importance of creating and consolidating lasting relationships with the companies it represents and with its customers, Luminaire has built important relationships with a number of designers and with the most leading European manufacturers of contemporary furniture, lighting and accessories, including Agape, B & B Italia, Edra, Flos, Flexform, Paola Lenti and Zanotta.
Thanks to these collaborations, Luminaire has the possibility of making available to its customers a wide selection of the most refined furnishings on the international market; on the other hand, the team internal of the company is responsible for guiding customers at every stage of the sale, from the conception of the project to the installation.
Luminaire has e-commerce where it is possible to buy online the products and also to add them to the clien's selection, helpful to have tailored assistance once goes to the store.
Also in this case the e commerce it is not the favorite customer channel for purchasing furniture but help the users to have a clearer idea about the finishes available and the prices.

Many of the products are in stock and immediately available. For items that need to be ordered, Luminaire's computer system checks every request, even while it is in transit. Instead of relying on third parties, Luminaire products are delivered directly to the company warehouse, and once ready, are delivered to the customer and installed thanks to the internal team and the fleet of trucks[34].

34 Luminaire information, retrieved from https://www.luminaire.com

DISCOVER MORE:


Luminaire - Showroom



Luminaire - E-Commerce

LUMINAIRE - USER JOURNEY - A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION					DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Luminaire	customer goes on the Website	product and Brand exploration	product configuration	add products to his selection	ask for information	get invited to the showroom	showroom and product exploration	discover samples and configurations	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	E-Commerce	E-Commerce	E-Commerce Email My Selection	Website Email	Website Email	Website My Selection	Product Pictures E-Material	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	Email, Order Conf.
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service	Customer Service	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Get Products Delivered
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture, Smartphone	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION												
DIGITALIZATION												
AUTOMATION												

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer configurate and explore product online, then get invited to the showroom and proceed with the purchase in store.

LUMINAIRE - USER JOURNEY MAP - B

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION					DECISION MAKING		PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Luminaire	customer goes on the Website	product and Brand exploration	product configuration	add to my selection	ask for information	product comparison	get help in product final decision	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	E-Commerce	E-Commerce	Website Email My Selection	E-Commerce	E-Commerce Email	E-Commerce Bank App, Invoice	Website Order Conf.	Website Order Conf.
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service		Customer Service			Get Products Delivered
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture Smartphone/ Laptop
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION											
DIGITAL INTERACTION											
AUTOMATION											

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer cask for help douring decision making to the custumerservice and then purchase online.

MOHD

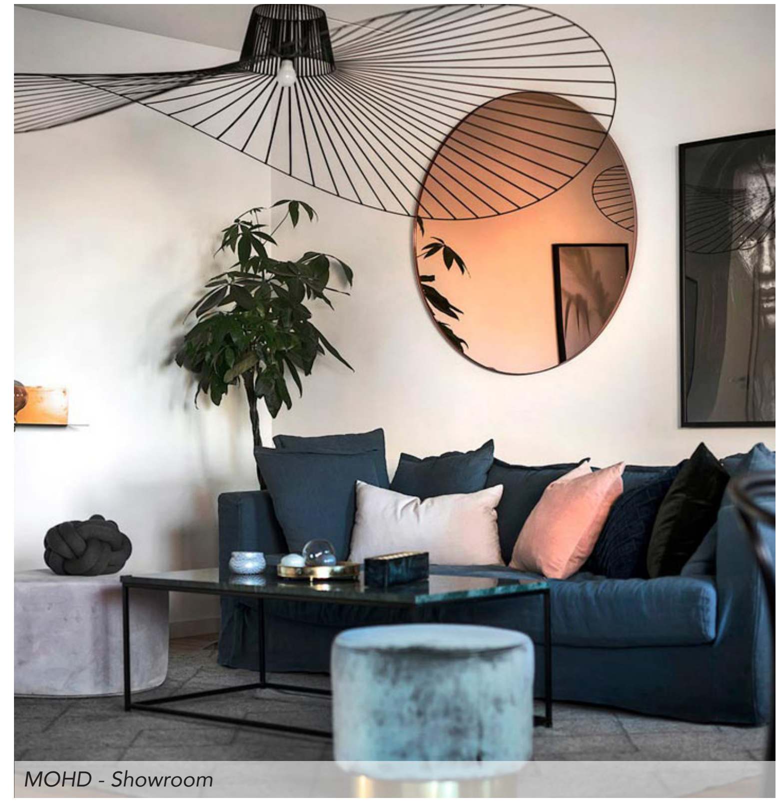
Founded in Messina in 1944 as an artisan factory and continued with the opening of the first Showroom in 1968, under the guidance of Franca Mollura and later of her son Gianluca, Mohd (Mollura Home Design) has over time gained a leading role in the furnishing sector and design in the premium segment.
The first Mohd-Mollura Home Design store was inaugurated in Messina in 2004 with the very precise and very innovative idea of proposing a design language obtained through a mix of brands and products that define a personal taste; subsequently, a second shop is inaugurated in Catania.
Mohd supports important collaborations and stands as the official retailer of over 200 famous international brands including Flou, Kartell, Cassina, Poltrona Frau, Minotti, Boffi, Poliform and Varenna, Artemide, B & B Italia, Molteni & C, Porro, but also foreign signatures including Lasvit or Bocci.

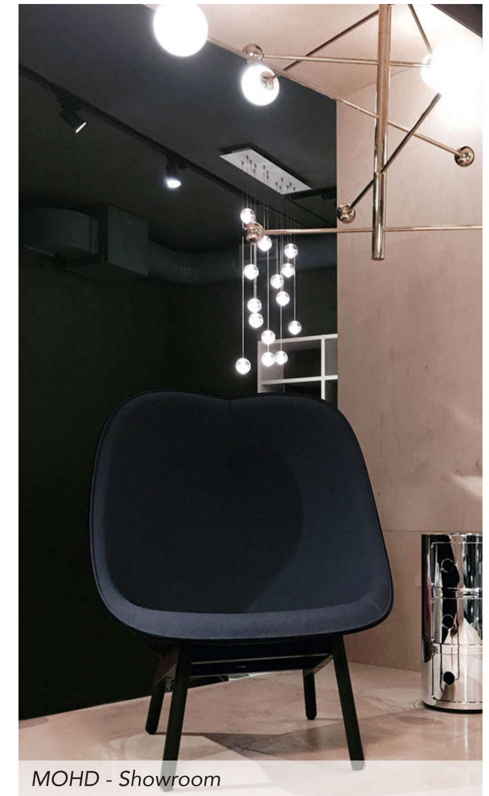
Because of the disadvantageous geographical location (Sicily), the choice of switching to digital media communication and sales was a mandatory choice for the company which, starting in 2011, has them allowed to reach customers all over the world, building the solidity of their future on Network opportunity. E-commerce has in fact led to a process of growth and visibility that gives to the Messina-based company the opportunity to consolidate a turnover of around 20 million euros, with 40% of export. Out of a total of 72 employees, about forty are employed in the digital sector.
Very interesting data is that the impact of e-commerce turnover is still limited (the company did not provide a precise percentage), and it is a tool to bring the customer closer to the physical store: "We note - said Mollura to Pambianco - that customers consult the online catalogs, but then choose the showroom to complete the purchase. The furniture, in fact, must be seen and contextualized in their concreteness ".

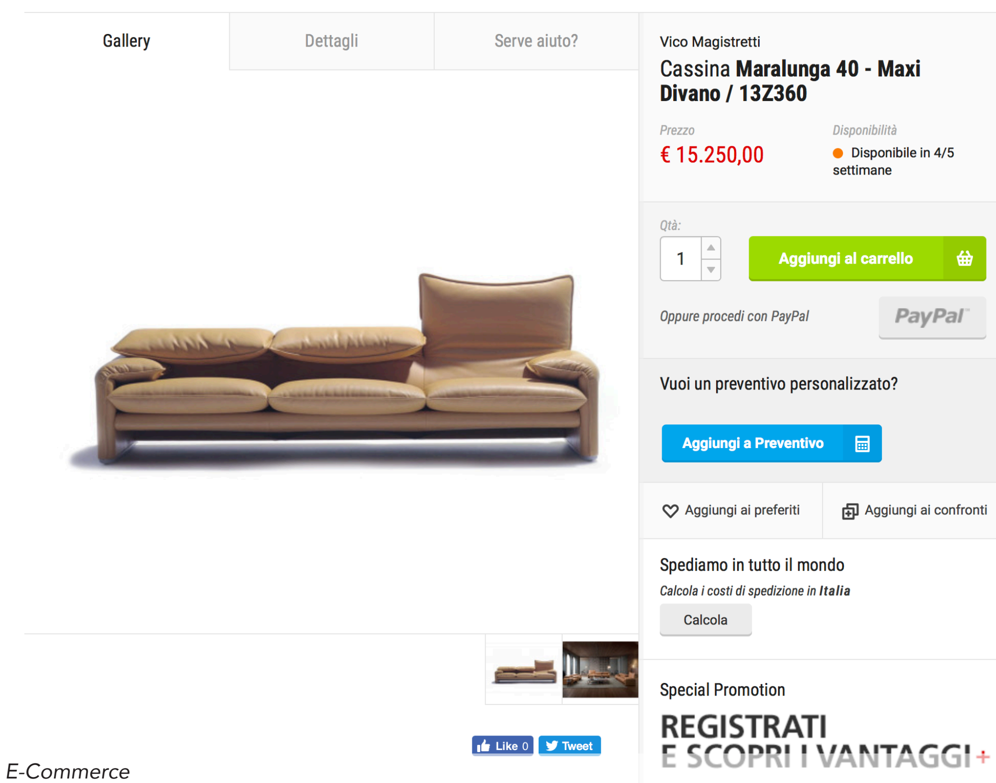
Today Mohd has become a reference point among high-end retailers in Italy and abroad with customers from all over the world (United States, Middle East, Asia, Europe) and projects carried out in collaboration with internationally renowned architects.
Operating in the contract and residential sectors, he follows customers in every step towards the realization of new homes, offices or hotels. Several teams work in total synergy within the company of experts: from e-commerce management to product placement, from design to sales up to customer support services[35].

DISCOVER MORE:

35 Mohd information, retrieved from https://www.mohd.it


MOHD - Showroom


MOHD - Showroom



MOHD - E-Commerce

MOHD - USER JOURNEY MAP - A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION				DECISION MAKING				PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Mohd	customer goes on the Website	product and Brand exploration	product configuration	delivery quotation	ask for information	get invited to the showroom	showroom and product exploration	discover samples and configurations	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	E-Commerce	E-Commerce	Website Email	Website Email		Product Pictures E-Material	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service	Customer Service	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Get Products Delivered
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture, Smartphone	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION												
DIGITAL INTERACTION												
AUTOMATION												

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer configurate and explore product online, then get invited to the showroom and proceed with the purchase in store.

MOHD - USER JOURNEY MAP - B

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION				DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Mohd	customer goes on the Website	product and Brand exploration	product configuration	delivery quotation	ask for information	product comparison	get help in product final decision	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	E-Commerce	E-Commerce	Website Email	E-Commerce	Website Email	E-Commerce Bank App, Invoice	Website Order Conf.	Website Order Conf.
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service		Customer Service			Get Products Delivered
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture Smartphone/ Laptop
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION											
DIGITAL INTERACTION											
AUTOMATION											

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer cask for help douring decision making to the custumerservice and then purchase online.

SALVIONI

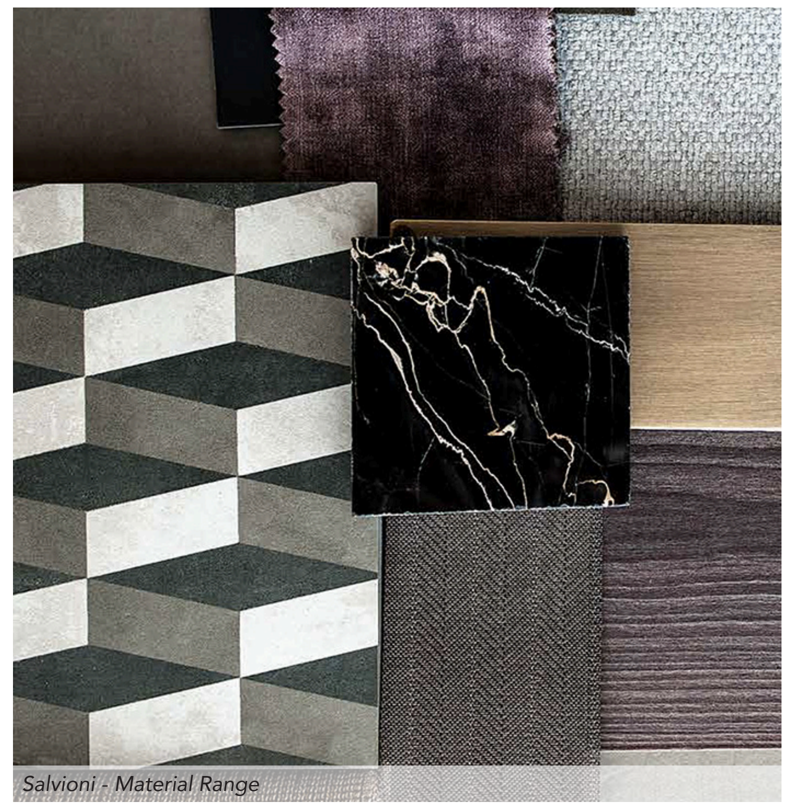
Salvioni's story begins in the 1950s, when Angelo Salvioni founded a family management company, with headquarters in Inverigo (CO), dedicated to the production of furnishing proposals.
Subsequently, in 1986, passing under the management of the Ercole and Gianni brothers, the company moved into an entrepreneurial reality dedicated exclusively to the sale of high-end furnishings.
From 1989 to 2018, many showrooms have been opened.

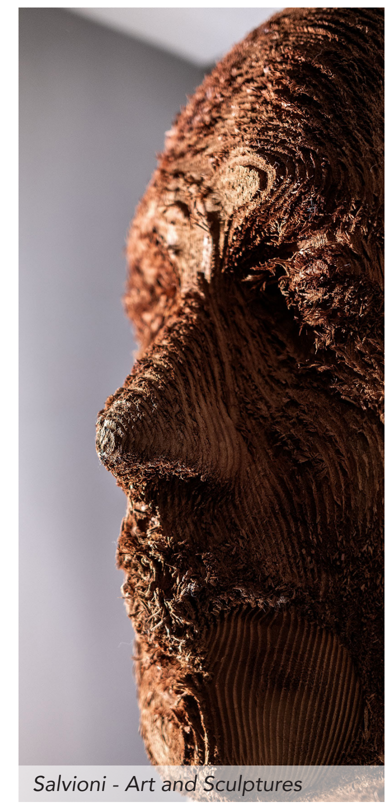
The company has recently opened its first Milanese showroom in Via Durini 3, adding to the headquarter of Inverigo, in the province of Como, and to the showroom in Lugano, Switzerland. "Milan - explained Salvioni at Pambianco Design - is one of the benchmarks of our sector, today it is strategic and essential to be here. In the new 1,100 square meter showroom, we recreate five different independent apartments. The future objective is to be a shop that can take care of the interior design project from furnishings to objects ". A complete proposal based on Italian taste is for Salvioni the competitive advantage of Italian retailers on an international scale.
Present in 70 countries, today Salvioni Design Solutions is a network of multi-brand showrooms whose the main objective is to offer the best to a refined and international clientele design furniture.
Inside the 9000 square meters of exhibition area, it is possible to find day and night systems, beds, upholstery, kitchens, accessories, bathrooms, outdoor furniture, offices, lighting, curtains, doors and carpets. A 360-degree approach that the company also maintains in customer relations with a team of architects who work to provide a unique, customer-tailored solution combining the multiple possibilities offered by the over 100 brands in the catalog. The company also has an export office for support and assistance for foreign customers.
On the website, it is possible to see brands, products and collection, download technical information and request assistance.
The main in-store services are design support, technical drawings, 3D models and renderings, custom projects. Salvioni has also a team of 30 skilled assembly technicians and internal international shipments team. As every luxury dealer, they offer also after sale assistance.
Salvioni doesn't have an e commerce and Ercole Salvioni expressed in Pambianco interview his worries regarding this channel, especially for the managment difficulties created by the furniture returns[36].

36 Salvioni information, retrieved from https://www.salvioniarredamenti.it

DISCOVER MORE:


Salvioni - Showroom


Salvioni - Material Range


Salvioni - Art and Sculptures

SALVIONI - USER JOURNEY MAP - A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION					DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Salvioni	customer goes on the Website	products and Brands exploration	send a request about product availability	get invited to visit the showroom	go to store	showroom exploration	product exploration	discover samples and configurate product	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Social	Website	Website	Website, email	Website, email	Website		Brands Website and e-material	Brands Website and e-material, 3D models..	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues			Customer Service	Customer Service		Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture, Catalogs, Store PC	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer get in touch with the store through the website and then get an appointment to visit the showroom.

SALVIONI - USER JOURNEY MAP - B

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Salvioni	customer goes to the Showroom	showroom exploration	Brands / Product exploration	ask about a specific product / Brand	product exploration	discover samples and configurate product	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Social					Brands Website and e-material	Brands Website and e-material, 3D models..	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues		Sales Assistant		Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture	Furniture	Furniture, Catalogs,	Furniture, Catalogs, Store PC	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer goes directly in the showroom and discovers brands and products available.

SILVERA

Silvera was founded in 1991 by Paul Silvera, today CEO of the company, pushed from the passion transmitted by the father, furniture maker and strong of an experience matured in the preceding years in the United States and subsequently in Paris.
From the day he decided to open, together with his sister Fabienne, the first Silvera store on Avenue Klebler, the group continued to grow. Today his 12 showrooms scattered in the cities of Paris, Lyon, Marseille and even London, represent a favorite destination for architects, interior designers and end customers.
With over 800 brands of furniture, lighting and design accessories available to customers, through the Silvera Design department the company provides the customer with extensive support, through the mobilization of a project manager team, for the design of work areas, offices, areas of welcome, waiting areas, hotels, restaurants, libraries, etc.
The Silvera Habitat department, instead, deals with projects relating to residential areas.
In order to fully satisfy the growing demand, Silvera also provides a
rental service of design furniture, satisfying the different needs for fairs, films, advertising, cultural events, development of control areas or private events. Rents can be a short, medium or long term.

Far from aligning the sofas, every store expresses in their own way a new approach to furniture. More personalized and more in tune with the eclectic profile of their customers.

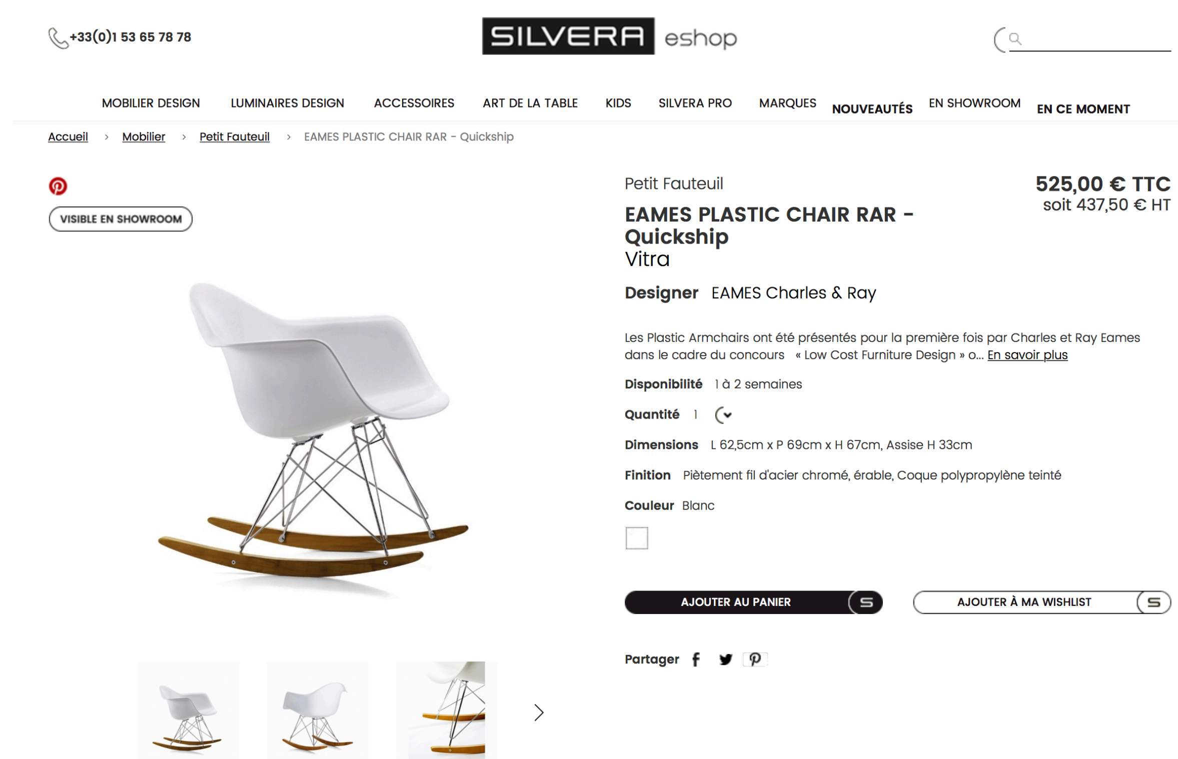
Silvera also has a dedicated e-shop section on its website, available just in France for the moment, where it is available strong and constantly renewed selection of over 100 brands related to furnishing, lighting, contemporary design objects and accessories; among these are some leading brands such as Cassina, Flos, Artemide, Arper, Hay, Zanotta, Vitra, Muuto.

Silvera is differentiated by its competitors because of the breadth of the offer and possible choices. They always select products based on who drew them and who made them. In particular, they match high-end luxurious products of famous brands with contemporary less expensive complements by young designers[37].

DISCOVER MORE:

37 Silvera information, retrieved from https://www.silvera.fr

Silvera - Showroom



Silvera - E-Commerce (just for French Market)

SILVERA - USER JOURNEY MAP - A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Silvera	customer goes to the Showroom	showroom exploration	Brands / Product exploration	ask about a specific product / Brand	product exploration	discover samples and configurate product	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Social					Brands Website and e-material	Brands Website and e-material, 3D models..	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues		Sales Assistant		Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture	Furniture	Furniture, Catalogs,	Furniture, Catalogs, Store PC	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer goes directly in the showroom and discovers brands and products available.

SILVERA - USER JOURNEY MAP - B

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION				DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Luminaire	customer goes on the Website	product and Brand exploration	product configuration	add to my selection	ask for information	product comparison	get help in product final decision	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Banners, Social	Website	Website	E-Commerce	E-Commerce	Website Email My Selection	E-Commerce	E-Commerce Email	E-Commerce Bank App, Invoice	Website Order Conf.	Website Order Conf.
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues					Customer Service		Customer Service			Get Products Delivered
PRODUCT	Magazines, Catalogs, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture Smartphone/ Laptop
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home
STORE INTERACTION											
DIGITAL INTERACTION											
AUTOMATION											

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer cask for help douring decision making to the custumerservice and then purchase online.

ZENUCCHI

Zenucchi furniture has its roots in a country of Bergamo, when in the ‘60s Andrea Zenucchi opens its activity of joinery. Already in the 1970s, there’s the first transformation: from workshop to a real store of furniture, in which the sons Amedeo and Giacomo begin to move their first steps in the activity of the Father, for then take it fully in management. In 1999 they open the showroom in Luzzana, which is subsequently expanded in 2008, up to cover a surface of 3,000 sqm, incorporating therein the project H2D, Home Domotic Design: a real home, in which the interior design of the Zenucchi integrates with the most advanced technological applications of Telmotor and Siemens.
Today the company has showrooms in Brescia, Bergamo and Milan and it is in continuous evolution.

Cooperating with 85 Indoor and Outdoors brands, client offer is highly differentiated. Zenucchi offers custom made projects, suggesting also a textile proposal (carpets, curtains and household linen to wear your house), art pieces and sculptures.

The commitment and research that Zenucchi puts into design emerge from the design and style of the presentation to the customer. In addition to a graphic proposal of 2D drawings developed in detail to define every aspect of the project together with the client, Zenucchi offers virtual reality to give customers the opportunity to immerse themselves in their furnished home and take a virtual tour of the project.

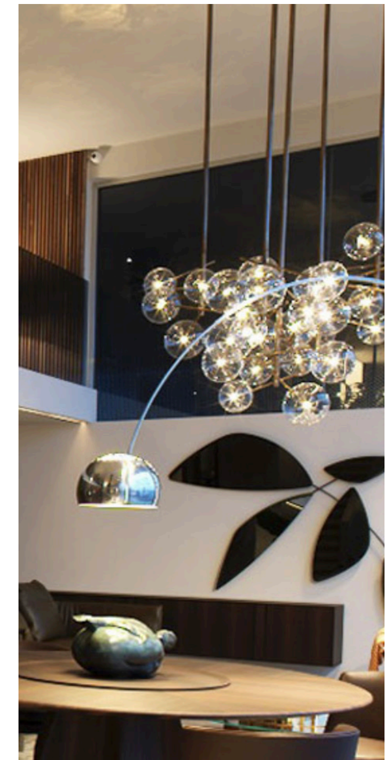
The home has changed and customer needs as well according to the technological evolution of the last decade.
It is from these simple considerations that the H2D - Home domotic design - project was born; it is a real house, in which interior design is integrated with the most advanced technological applications, merging and integrating into a functioning whole, a contemporary house, fully inhabitable, a fascinating, unique architectural and interior project.
The person who inhabits the house is and must always be at the center of every choice; their lifestyle, their needs. Whatever the activity, the technological application must be at their service, to make it truly easy, simple and gratifying to live in your home.

Even if they are advanced for the production technology point of view and well distributed, they have no e-commerce but on the website, it is possible to share and print product information and catalogs[38].

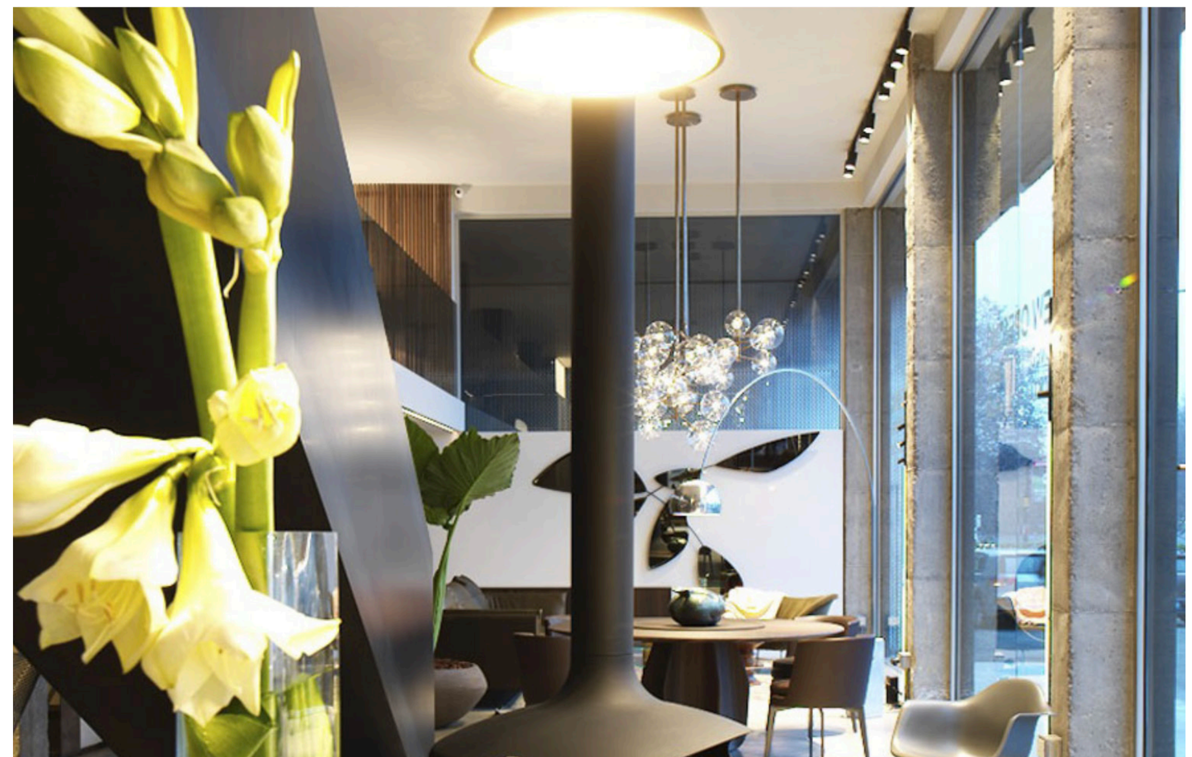
DISCOVER MORE:

38 Zenucchi information, retrieved from https://zenucchi.it

Zenucchi - Showroom



Zenucchi - Showroom



Zenucchi - Showroom

ZENUCCHI - USER JOURNEY MAP - A

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION			DECISION MAKING			PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Zenucchi	customer goes to the Showroom	showroom exploration	Brands / Product exploration	ask about a specific product / Brand	product exploration	discover samples and configurate product	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Social					Brands Website and e-material	Brands Website and e-material, 3D models..	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues		Sales Assistant		Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture	Furniture	Furniture, Catalogs,	Furniture, Catalogs, Store PC	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer goes directly in the showroom and discovers brands and products available.

ZENUCCHI - USER JOURNEY MAP - B

	BEFORE	EXPLORATION						DECISION MAKING		PURCHASE	AFTER	
	customer gets to know about Zenucchi	customer goes on the Website	products and Brands exploration	send a request about product availability	get invited to visit the showroom	go to store	showroom exploration	product exploration	discover samples and configurate product	buy	information about the order	delivery and assembly
DIGITAL	Website, Social	Website	Website	Website, email	Website, email	Website		Brands Website and e-material	Brands Website and e-material, 3D models..	Bank App, Invoice	Email, Order Conf.	
PEOPLE	Relatives, Friends, Collegues			Customer Service	Customer Service		Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant	Sales Assistant Designer	Sales Assistant	Customer Service	Delivery and Assembly Staff, Customer Service
PRODUCT	Magazines, Advertising, Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture	Furniture, Catalogs, Store PC	Samples, Catalogs, Store PC, Furniture	Smartphone/ Laptop, StorePC	Smartphone/ Laptop	Furniture
SPACE	Wherever, Street, Window Dispaly	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Home/ Wherever	Store	Store	Store	Store	Home/ Wherever	Home

STORE INTERACTION

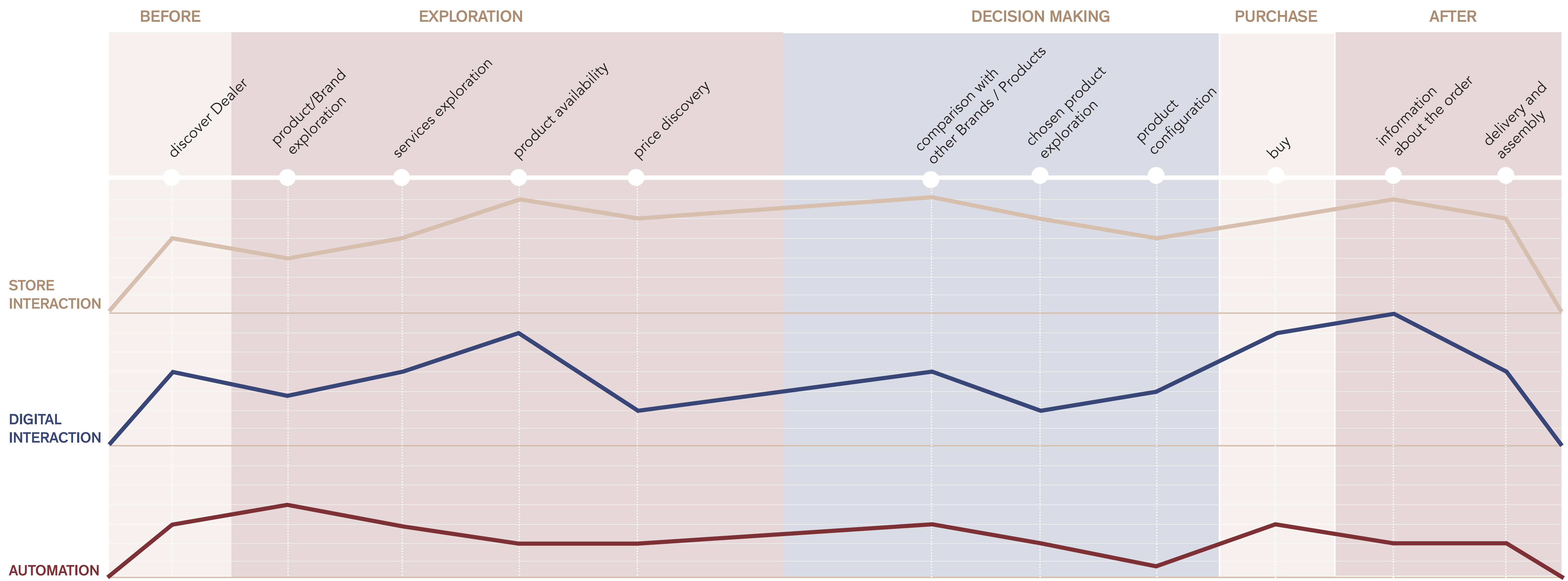
DIGITAL INTERACTION

AUTOMATION

COMMENTS

In this User Journey Map the customer get in touch with the store through the website and then get an appointment to visit the showroom.

DEALERS

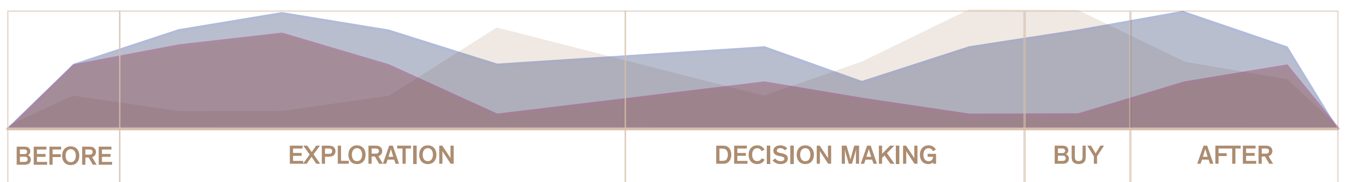


COMMENTS

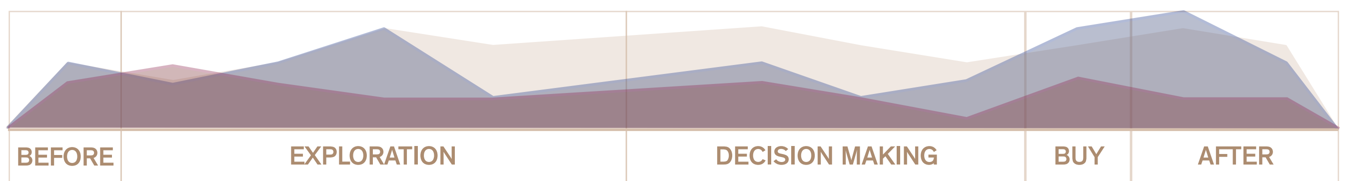
The user journey selected to build this graphic are the ones in which the customer doesn't know already the exact brand or product he would like to buy but goes to the multibrand dealer to get inspired. In comparison to the Brands Graphic, in the Dealer simplified user journey map graphic we can assist to a lower level of automation curves in all the process, with the higher peak in the exploration phase. The Store interaction is pretty high in all the phases and the digital interaction reaches its maximum level in the exploration and after purchase phase. As we saw from the cases before, some of them have also the e-commerce even if this channel is used more like a source of information rather then for its real scope. Customers, in fact, prefer to purchase in store.

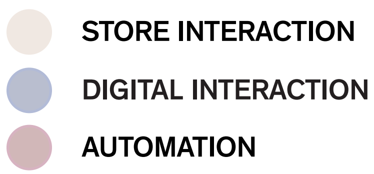
CASE STUDIES - CONCLUSION

BRANDS



DEALERS





Comparing Brands and Dealers we can see that in the first case there is a higher automation level, especially in the before purchase and exploration phase. This is due to the high level of information available on the Brand's website, social media, and online channels.
The Customer can easily access to information such as materials and finishes available, dimension and technical data. The prices, instead, are most accessible in the dealer's case and there is more dealer with e-commerce than brands. This is due to the companies distribution policy, that as we understood from the luxury furniture market analysis is still a multibrand distribution, apart some monobrand stores. To guarantee to the multibrand Dealer their freedom regarding prices, companies usually don't show them online. Once the customer discovers where it is possible to see and buy his favorite Brand products, his purchase journey drives to a better experience since he already has some information about the product, he might have already an idea about the finishes he prefer and in store the sales assistant can guide him better and provide a tailored assistance.
In the case of a customer that instead is not already sure about the product he wants, the multibrand dealers journey the focus goes more on the services provided to customers and how it is possible to guide them and inspire them to make their perfect product purchase. Dealers offer turnkey projects and custom proposition for every single product and detail and from the eyes of a luxury customer, they can be even more valuable than a monobrand store.

In the furniture luxury market sector, we can't say that the choice to go to a monobrand flagship store is better than going to a multibrand dealer, from the customer perspective, product chosen and project.
Those two ways are both relevant, according to the customer needs.
What we can say instead from the case studies analysis is that the digitalization and the digital touchpoints are relevant in all the phases of the purchase process and allow the customer to become more aware and to be more free in the product exploration and in the final decision. Thanks to the possibility to see online the option available the in-store experience and the product trial become more conscious and the final selection better reasoned.
The furniture product purchase decision is not easy and might require the support of relatives or the client's architect. For this reason, is also important to have the opportunity to share information and this is done through sending the information downloaded from the website with e-mail or social media.
More coherent and clear the information on the various channels are, better is the customer experience.

MOVING FORWARD

In the next chapter, we will analyze EXTETA, the company where I am working from the last year, and we will see which are the channel used and how they can be improved in order to make the customer purchase experience more engaging and immersive.
Since EXTETA doesn't have monobrand or flagship store at the moment but just a network of multibrand dealers, we will try to find a design proposal able to differentiate the company from the rest of the brand exhibited in the multibrand store and, overall, to create a boundary that goes beyond the physical retail limits with the customer.
To do so, we will proceed with three steps. In the first we will discover EXTETA's history, products, channels, and distribution, in the second we will propose some improvements that can be quickly implemented to offer a better user experience and navigation both online than in store that will allow EXTETA to reach the average of the case studies above; the last and more innovative phase will not be so easy and immediate to achieve and it will be about a new experience in the stores supported by a survey done by EXTETA's final clients.

EXTETA

HISTORY

Founded in 1999 by Stefano Viani and Stefano Cazzaniga, Exteta was born in Brianza as a start-up with the aim of designing, producing and distributing luxury outdoor furniture products and projects.
The quality of Exteta products lies in the love for uniqueness and in the made in Italy artisan production, full of experience and linked to tradition. In fact, the Exteta furnishings are not created for mass production, but for a custom-made production of an almost artisanal process: conceived in the laboratories located in Brianza, where the great tradition of Italian woodcraft is revealed not only through the care with which they come cutting and assembling the wooden components of the structures, but also paying close attention to the ecology of the glues and varnishes used, without neglecting the continuous research and experimentation of materials and innovative technologies that break down the limits of open-air use.
The strength of the company lies in custom made products, through the realization of projects that break the standard patterns, generating unique ideas starting from the customer's wishes, which can thus make his own spaces.

During the last Italian crisis started in 2008 many small businesses had to close. Instead, Exteta, thanks to collaborations with international retailers and agents, was able to continue its growth relying on the export of its products. The effects of this corporate strategy were visible in the great growth in turnover (in 2015 it increased by 50%), in particular, the foreign market compared to the Italian market: in 2014, for example, it is counted that 75% of the turnover was due to the exports. To date, it appears that 80% of turnover is due to international sales, while only 20% to national sales. Today the network of international collaborations is expanding in many countries including France, Germany, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, England, Poland, Greece, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, USA.
The company also participates in the main international trade fairs of the sector: M&O in Paris, Salone del Mobile in Milan, Nautical Fairs in Monaco, Montecarlo, Genoa.

EXPORT REVENUES 80%

NATIONAL REVENUES 20%

Initially, the production was entrusted to third parties but later, the company reaches a sufficient level of growth that allows it to integrate production. The production unit is introduced in Brenna in 2017.
In June 2018 also the offices moved to the Como area, making the company structure more unified.
After a long and complicated process of improvement, Exteta has received ISO 9001 certification, a recognition that celebrates the constant commitment to imagining and building a company capable of producing sustainable excellence in all its phases.

PRODUCTS AND PHILOSOPHY

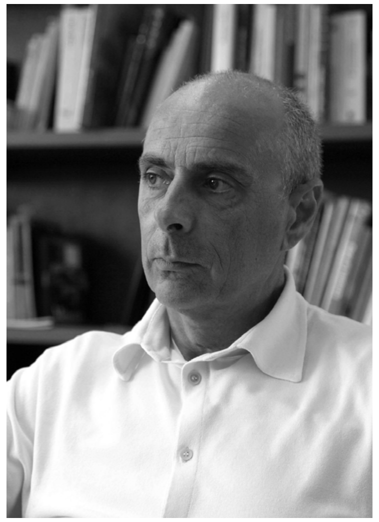
EXTETA starts producing outdoor microarchitectures in Canadian red cedar, now the wide range of luxury products include sun loungers, sofas, chairs, beds, kitchens, tables, lighting and other furnishing accessories for the outdoors.
The names of the products and collection such as Palau, Vieste, Bellagio, reminds to the nautical environment and, overall, to the beauty of the Italian living and style.
The company's philosophy is based on the idea of harmony and continuity between interior and exterior furnishings, leading to the use of precious materials such as solid woods and natural leathers even in the external environment, while maintaining the desire for relaxation, tranquility, and peace as protagonists of outdoor design.
Exteta's aim is to transform the outdoor into a totalizing experience of aesthetics and functionality.

In recent years the outdoor market is on the rise, and many companies born as manufacturers of indoor furniture such as Minotti, Poliform, B&B, Cassina, are discovering and approaching this market. Exteta is one of the few companies born entirely as an outdoor brand and is therefore advantageous in terms of experience, quality, research of materials.

Exteta - 10th Tellaro Sun Lounger

DESIGNERS

The search for excellence and the desire to create unique environments and products have led the company to cultivate collaborations with internationally renowned designers such as Massimo Castagna, Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba, and the Gae Aulenti Foundation.



MASSIMO CASTAGNA

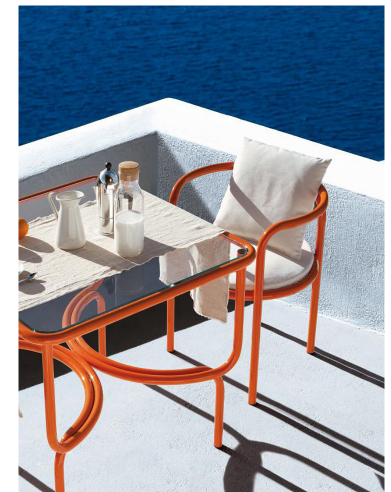
Massimo Castagna is an architect graduated from the Polytechnic of Milan, founder of the AD architecture studio. His collaborations and continuous successes also bring him to the world of design as artistic director of some of the most important brands in the sector and with the creation of always recognizable products. He is credited with the Exteta "10th" collection, created in honor of the 10 years of the brand, distinguished by innovation, uniqueness and which has been able to create a new dimension of outdoor, thanks also to the particular materials used: brass , leather, stones, solid wood.
Today Massimo Castagna follows Exteta as an art director, designing not only the new collections but also the stands and showrooms for the most important events.

Exteta - 10th Collection

LUDOVICA AND ROBERTO PALOMBA

Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba are two award-winning architects known throughout the world who have worked with Exteta since 2014. The label Ludovica + Roberto Palomba collaborates with worldwide design names and they also coordinate exhibitions and architectural work around the world, cooperating and managing the art direction for some of the most beloved brands. They were initially entrusted with the company's Art Direction, and are also authors of many of the Exteta collections, including Paraggi Collection that in 2012 received the Wallpaper Award in the Best Outdoor Lounge category for the Camp Bed product.
An exclusive collection of EXTETA clothing and fragrances designed by this studio will be exhibited in worldwide preview at the Salone del Mobile 2019, in Milan.

Exteta - Paraggi Camp Bed



Exteta - Locus Solus

GAE AULENTI

Gae Aulenti is a genius of Italian architecture, who has left the mark of many cities in the world thanks to his style, and for having brought art outside and inside homes with his design objects. His career is characterized by numerous awards and collaborations.
Exteta collaborates with the Gae Aulenti Foundation since 2016, giving new life to the immortal "Locus Solus" outdoor collection born in 1964, with a re-edition addressed to the most educated and passionate public of design history. The Locus Solus collection has become a distinctive feature of the era due to the eccentricity of the patterns combined with the expressive potential of the colors applied to the metal. With her work, Gae Aulenti has succeeded in transforming the exterior into an iconic paradox to live in all of its sparkling personality.

EXTETA ONLINE

From 2016 Exteta visual image has been cured by a well known art direction studio that follow also the website, social media and all the digital identity of the Brand.
At the beginning on the website it was just possible to see the Brand description, designers and the products. The products weren't well organized and divided in categories and families but there were just clustered in large groups without neccesary affinity.

In the last months, instead, EXTETA improved the content organization online and add the same time added contents.
The changes made include a new download area offering 2D-3D Blocks, catalogs, product data sheets, and other general information; a subdivision of the product categories so as to obtain a simpler contacts visualization; introduction of related products at the bottom of each page allow more fluid and coherent navigation.
The optimization of the website increased the user's access and, therefore, the growth of interest in the company.

The comparison between those two reports is proof that the possibility to have a more autonomous exploration and a better navigation experience increases the customer's interest and interaction.
To improve even more this positive trend and reach the level of the competitors analyzed in the case studies, in the next pages we will propose further content that should be available on the website:

VISUALIZED SALES NETWORK
Possibility to check where to find a dealer to purchase EXTETA's products

IMPROVED PRODUCT SHEET
Remove useless information for customer exploration and improve the visual content

ADDED PRODUCT CONFIGURATOR
Give to the customer the opportunity to configure the product directly from the website and discover in which finishes is it available and visualize how it will look like.

NEW USERS	RETURNING USERS	BOUNCE RATE
+30.22%	+34.51%	10.82%

REPORT DATE AFTER THE WEBSITE UPDATE, which provides for the comparison of data over three months: New users increased by 30.22%, those who returned 34.51%, while the bounce rate dropped to 10.82%. The access from mobile phone increased to 86.48%.

Report date: from 1/1/19 to 3/31/19 Compared to: from 10/3/18 to 12/31/18, Duration: 90 days

NEW USERS	RETURNING USERS	BOUNCE RATE
-20.52%	-20.76%	50.91%

REPORT BEFORE THE WEBSITE UPDATE, within 326 days the statistics are negative: the new users have fallen by 20.56% and also those that have already been on the website decreased by 20.76%; The bounce rate touch the 50.91%: this indicates that half of the visitors as soon as they enter the site immediately exit without interacting and consult any pages. The access to the website by Smartphone is 8.3%.

Report date: from 1/1/18 to 11/22/18 Compared to: from 1/1/17 to 11/22/17, Duration: 326 days

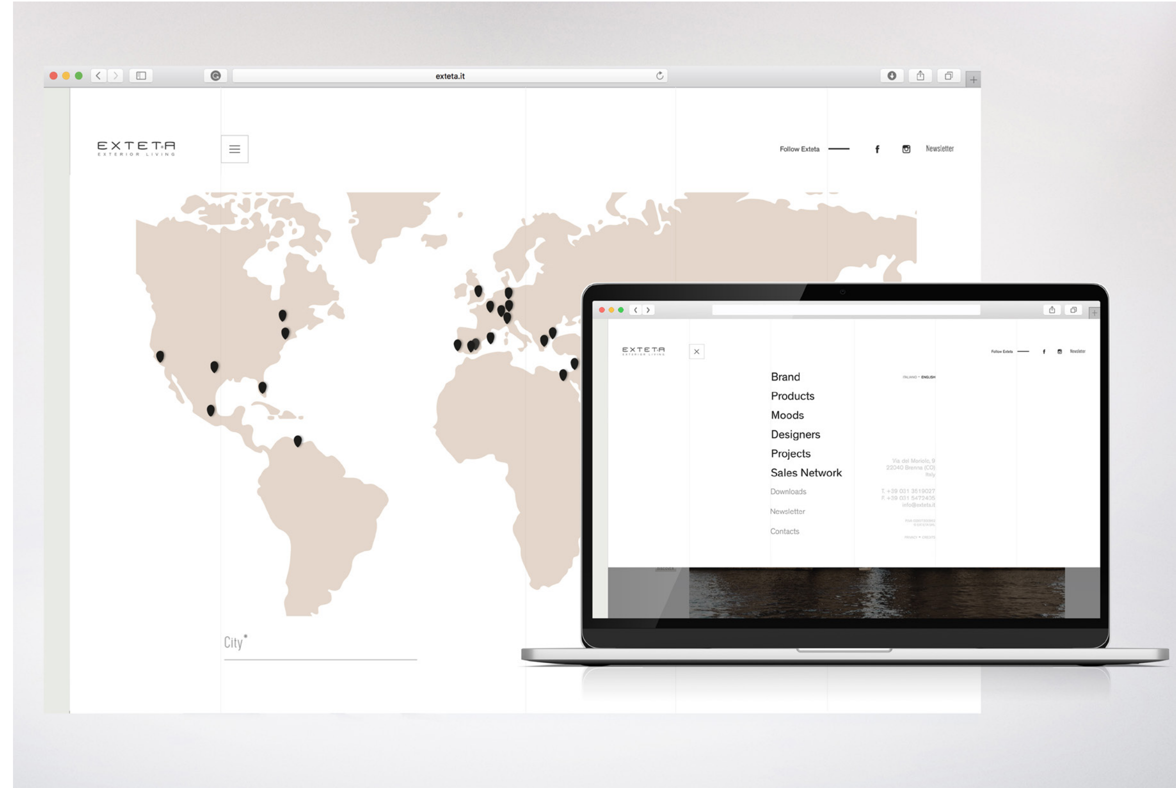
VISUALIZED SALES NETWORK

DEALERS

Exteta works with multibrand dealers and to have a collaboration with the company they must present a display in their showroom. The network is growing year by year and the dealers are now a selected few. They have a worldwide reputation and they resell top made in Italy brand. The location is a very strategic factor, they are in fact positioned in big cities such as Dallas, NY, Miami, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Milan, Berlin, Istambul, Athens, Cairo, Dubai and so on.

AGENTS

The dealers have the exclusivity in their city and the most collaborative change display twice a year. To better support, control and improve the sale network Exteta works with Agents. They have agents in South America, East Europe, Poland, Benelux, Germany, UK, Turkey, Greece, Cipro, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Austria, and Switzerland.



Right now it is not possible to visualize where Exteta products are sold and to know details about the dealers to get in touch with them.
One of the most common customer requests is, in fact, where it is possible to find our product if we have agents or dealers in their area. For this reason, it would be useful to add in the website the function "Sales Network". Entering the city it would be possible to discover sales point. This can make the customer more autonomous in the exploration phase and decide where to go to find our products.
For the moment, as we saw before, the network it is not so solid and developed and there are just a few of important Dealers because Exteta is still emerging and the collaboration can be different year by year.

IMPROVED PRODUCT SHEET

Even if in the Download Area of Exteta's website it is possible to see catalogs, product sheets, digital samples, 2D and 3D blocks, and all product information, there aren't so easy to understand for the private customer. In fact, the information on the product sheets are very technical and the main focus is on products maintenance and precaution of use. In the Samples, it is possible to see all the finishes but not to understand which products are those finishes available. The technical files such as 2D and 3D can be easily used by Architects but not at all by the final client.
The product information has to be accessible and understandable not only for architects, dealers, and professionals but especially for the final customer. It is necessary a tool to help the customer during the exploration phase that can guide him in the decision making.

The main information required by the customer during this phase are:

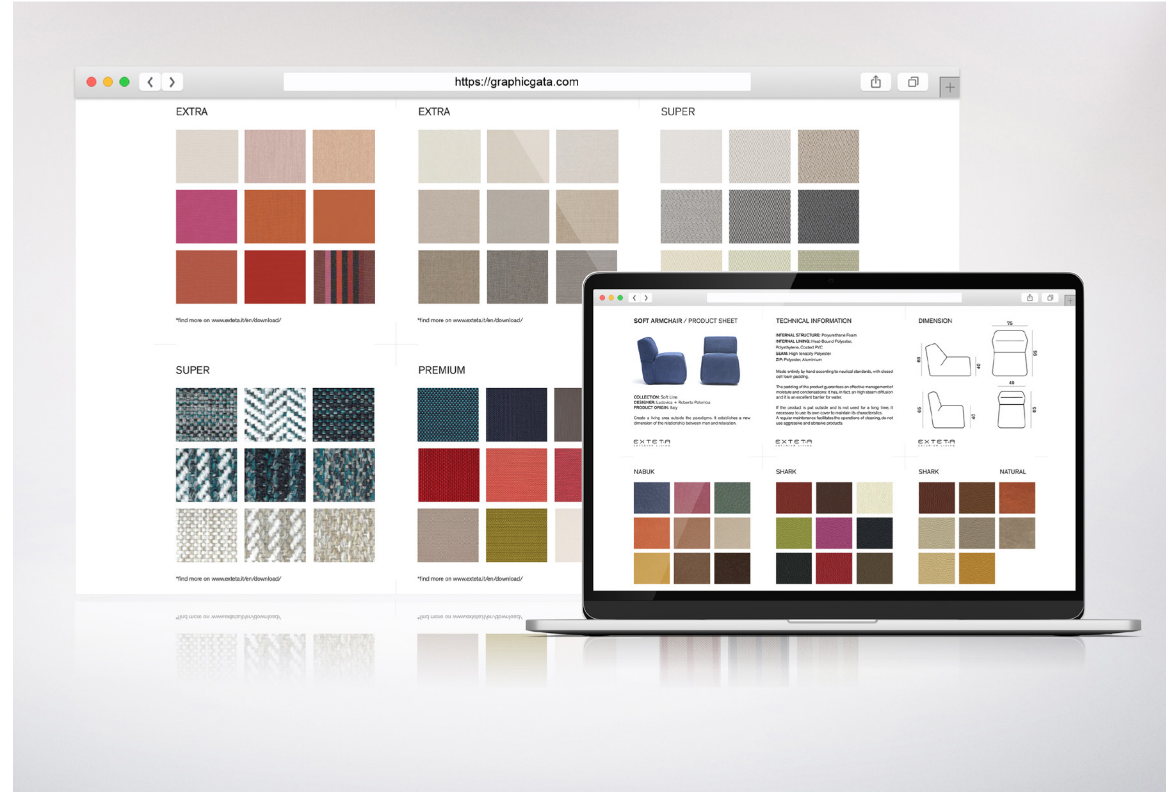
HOW THE PRODUCT LOOKS LIKE

PRODUCT COMPOSITION / MANUFACTURE

DIMENSION AVAILABLE

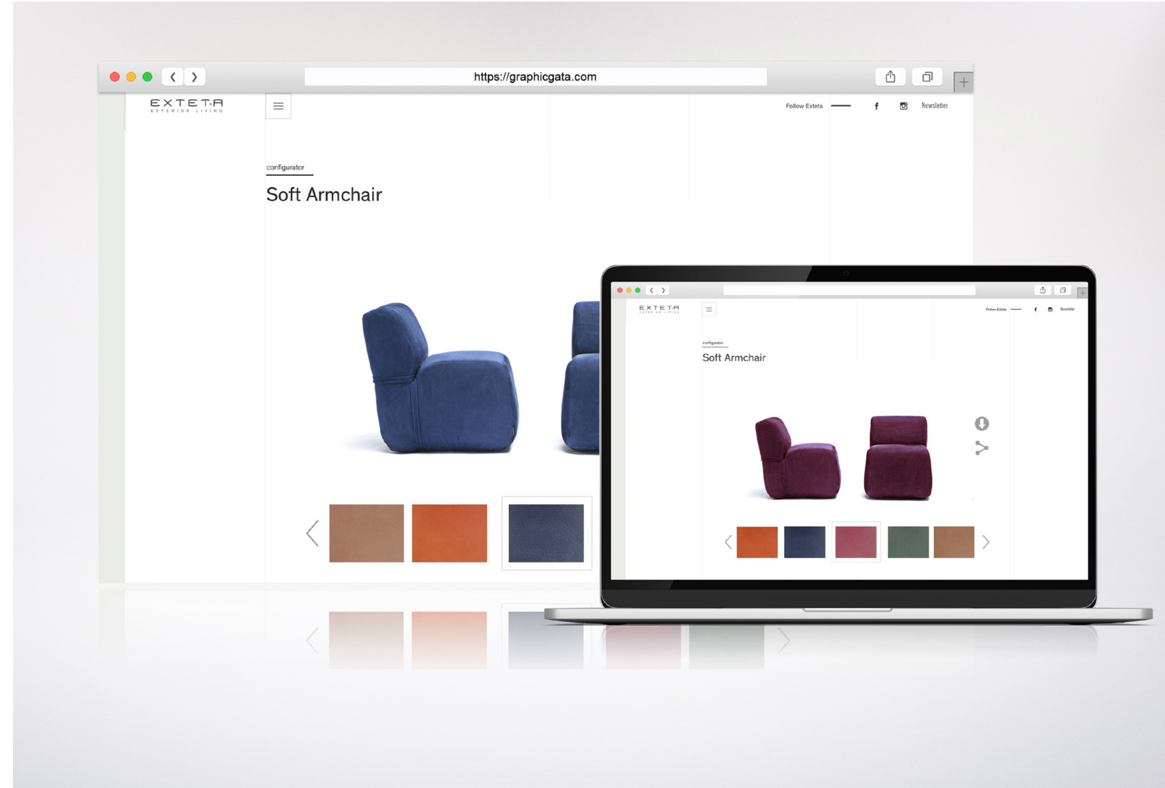
FINISHES AVAILABLE

For this reason, I redesigned the product sheet of Exteta in one-page front and back in the most intuitive and minimal way.
The product sheets have to be accessible online on every device, easy to be printed, saved and shared.



ADDED PRODUCT CONFIGURATION

From the case studies analysis we realized how important is to be able to configure the product for the private customer. It is important to understand which finishes are available and how it will look like. In fact, in the showrooms the product is presented in just one finish since there is not a flagship store with all the collection, it is not always possible to find the preferred product. With the virtual configuration, instead, it is easy to visualize the product in a different kind of leather or fabric.
That information has to be saved and shared, with the dealer as well, in order to have a better in-store experience. Sharing the product we like with an exact finish with the sales point help the sales assistant and designer to offer a better explanation and to show to the customer specific information.
According to the preferences it is also possible to suggest products that will match with the ones already selected and create an Exteta environment.
For a brand that has not flagship store this kind of interaction and touchpoint is crucial to create a direct connection with the customer and keep monitoring the user's preferences.
Having a wide range of finish choice, it is also difficult to provide exact information about cleaning and maintenance. In fact, every fabric and leather is different and require different care.
During the exploration phase, thanks to clear and accessible information is possible to give to the client a better idea of how the product will look like and guide him already in relation to his choices and selection.
This tool can increase both customer and brand/dealer awareness and create a stronger connection from both parts.
The product configurator could be useful also for dealers and agents to explain the possibilities to their clients and converge their attention on the website channel, increasing its use and usefulness.



NEW IN-STORE UX

Exteta improving its web services will be more next to its users, virtually. In the store can be tools to better explore and understand products, configuration, and finishes. But in the store, since Exteta has just a Dealers network, there are also other brands exhibited in the showroom. It is very important to approach directly to a customer even in these multiple exhibition situations, stand out from the other companies and be recognizable from the customer point of view. It is very hard to create a "brand experience" in this kind of distribution.
Furthermore, after the exploration phase and in some cases the decision-making phase, there is no connection anymore with the brand. The Dealer traits the customer that wants to purchase Exteta as any other customer and there is no differentiation in the experience.

My aim is to create a brand experience in all the phases of the purchase process, even in a multi-brand store.
The only possibility that the client has right now is to purchase through dealers, this current situation cannot be considered a limit for a brand value and experience perception but, instead, as an opportunity to develop a connected service.
A Brand immersive experience cannot be created in this kind of store just with physical interaction but, again, it is crucial the use of digital devices and touchpoints.
The client has to be attracted to visit the store, create a connection with the sales point and the Brand at the same time.

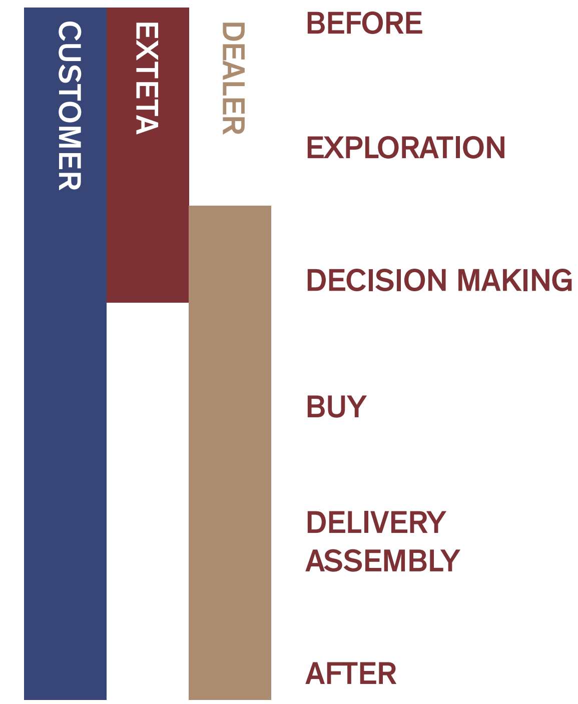
DESIGN QUESTION:
How might EXTETA create a strong connection with its final customer and be involved in all the phases of the purchase process even if the client can just buy the products in multi-brand stores?

The customer has to be guided by a tool in all the steps, that can make him more autonomous and able to access the right information at the right time. This tool has to integrate the store visit as well, improving the navigation and the process.

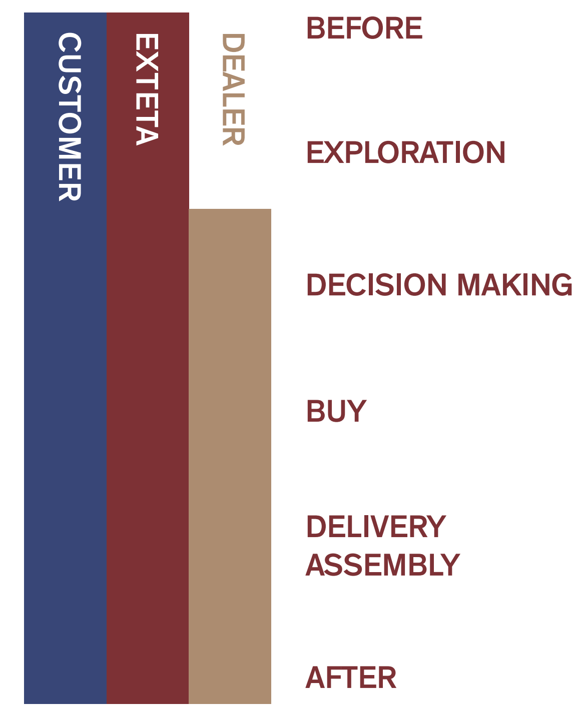
All the purchase process phase are important and can create satisfaction, becoming the reason for a nex purchase and a client return. This connection doesn't have to end with the purchase but, instead, the purchase has to be a turning point of his experience, giving him the chance to discover more and build strong boundaries with the company.

To do so, we will analyze which are the key factor that differentiates EXTETA from its competitors and underlines the opportunities.

AS IT IS:
Right now Exteta direct customers can purchase just trough Dealers.
The connection with the Brand affects just the first phases of the purchase process and is overlapped and overcome by the multi-brand Store interaction.



TO BE:
The customer experience to be designed has to involve the Brand in all the purchase steps, it should become able to creates strong boundaries with EXTETA and its client's thanks to an immersive service.



OPPORTUNITIES

In the concept ideation, it is important to stress on the key characteristics that make EXTETA unique and different from its competitors. The factors underlined below, in fact, can make the user experience valuable and improve customer satisfaction. Nowadays, the private customer directly interacts just with the Dealer and those characteristics aren't transmitted by the company itself. It is important to address directly to the customer and share with him EXTETA potential with the storytelling wanted by the Brand, to be sure to have a coherent image in all the purchase process.
Thanks to the small dimension and the great control of all the internal design and production, EXTETA would be able to involve the customer in the production process and take part in the material selection and design choices of his own product.

INTERNAL PRODUCTION

Not all the Luxury companies have an internal production and direct control on the product's manufactory.
In fact, most of the cases analyzed before making only the use of autonomous external providers.

100% MADE IN ITALY

Exteta is a real made in Italy Brand, all the production processes are artisanal and completely done in Italy. Some companies import from Asia the semi-finished products and just assemble them in Italy.

NOBLE MATERIALS

It is not common for an outdoor company the use of noble materials such as top-grade wood and leather.
EXTETA a very unique case because outdoor companies usually use mostly artificial materials such as plastic.

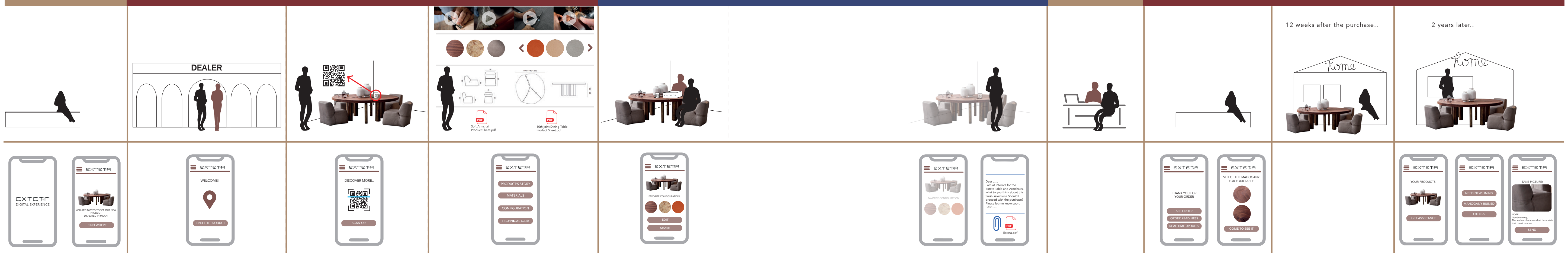
CUSTOMIZATION

EXTETA produces everything on demand.
Leveraging on the small dimension of the company that allows the control of all the production processes, the product customization can be always done.

STORYBOARD

The storyboard below represents a concept of in-store experience. The customer is guided in mostly all the phases by the EXTETA App. This is not just a way to check the website information on the smartphone but in fact a different service. Thank this tool it is possible to interact with the product in the store has all the information in your hands and in real time, share the information with relatives or architect and get a suggestion for the final decision making. The experience doesn't end with the product purchase but becomes even more immersive after. EXTETA's App gets notified the client about the exact production process of his product. The customer is involved in the creation of his item choosing the exact materials and understand the artisanal process. In this way, the product will become totally unique.

BEFORE | EXPLORATION | DECISION | MAKING | BUY | AFTER



1. get notified about new products, where they are displayed and how they are configured

2. go to the store, sales assistant welcomes you and help you with the app if necessary

3. see the product, try it an scan the QR code

4. discover the product's information

5. ask the sales assistant for more information, see physical samples and select favorite configuration

6. share the configuration with relatives, friends or architect

7. buy it or just keep it in mind for later

8. Get notified about your order and get real time information about the production phases. Select the exact materials and create your unique product. It is also possible to see materials in the store.

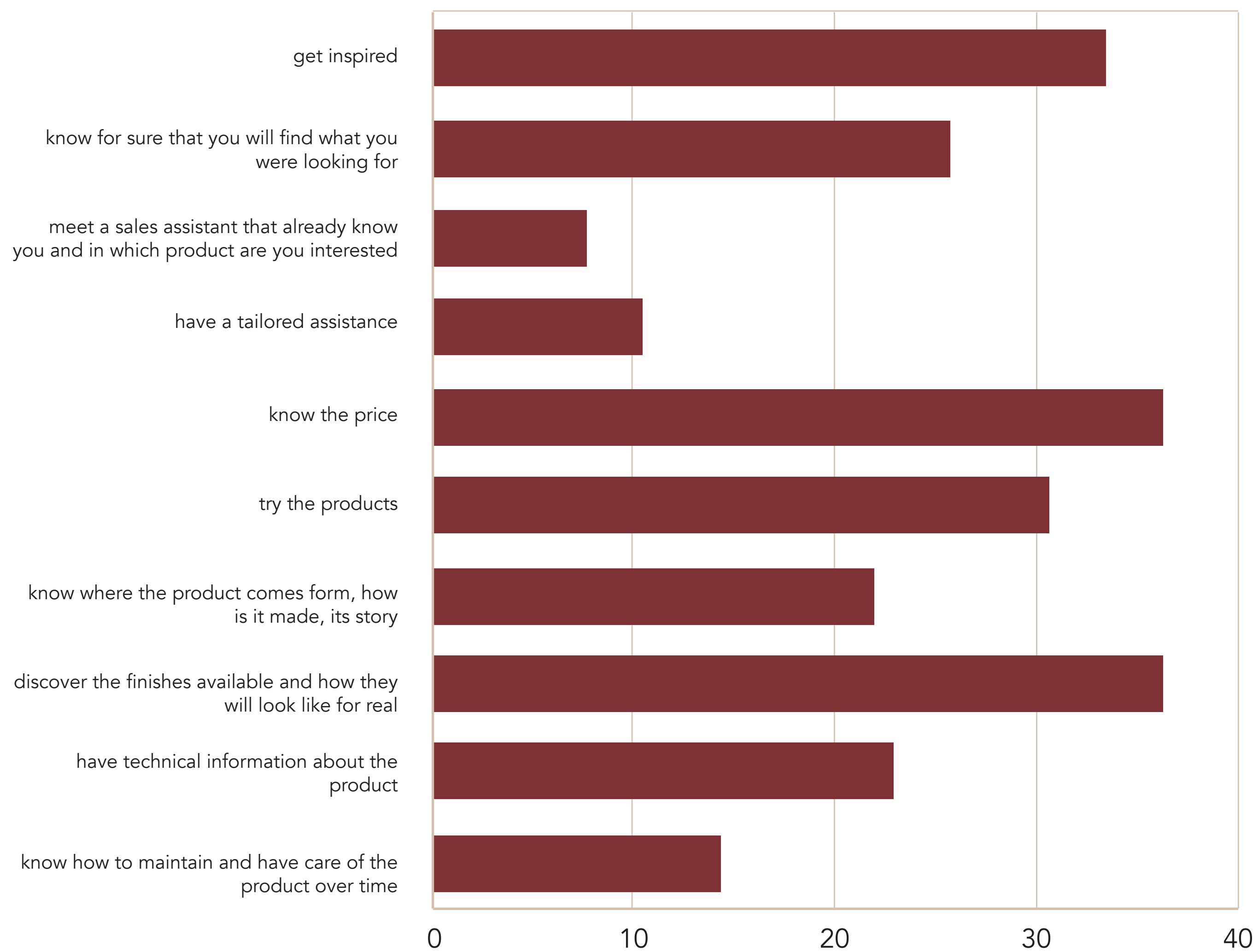
9. Get the products delivered and assembled

10. Order new linings, maintenance of products and ask for technical assistance

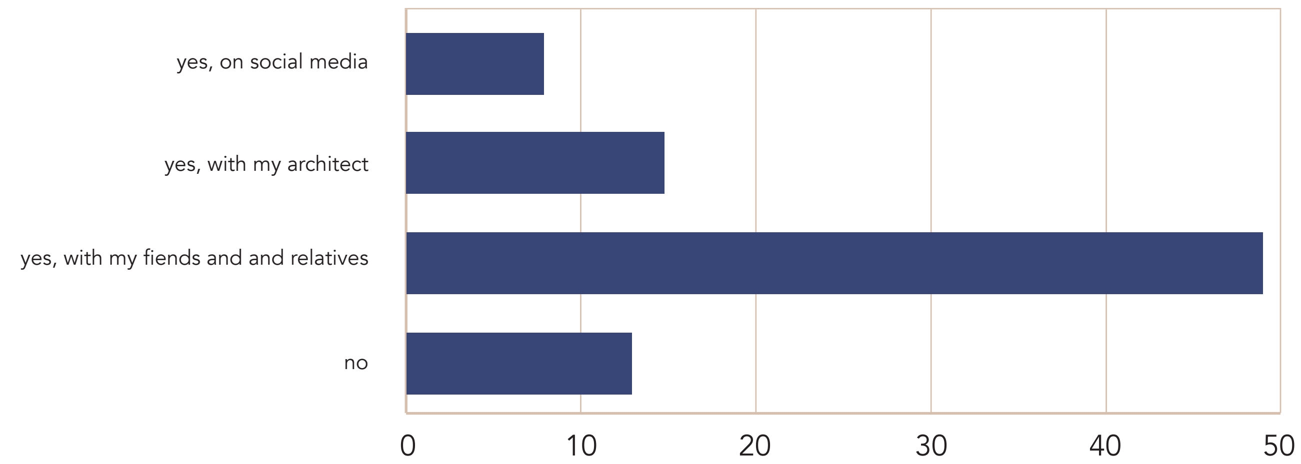
USER TESTING : SURVEY

To understand better which are the most important function and services from the client perspective, to validate some option and erase others, I developed a user survey.
Thanks to the network of Dealers and Agents I had the opportunity to share the survey with their client.
The survey reached 72 Exteta’s Customers.
The attendants were based in Italy, Europe, North America, and the Middle East.
The survey allowed multiple answers, for this reason, the results are classified by the number of response and not by the number of the respondent.

1. WHEN YOU GO TO A FURNITURE STORE WOULD YOU LIKE TO..



2. WHEN YOU GET INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRODUCT YOU ARE INTERESTED WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE IT?

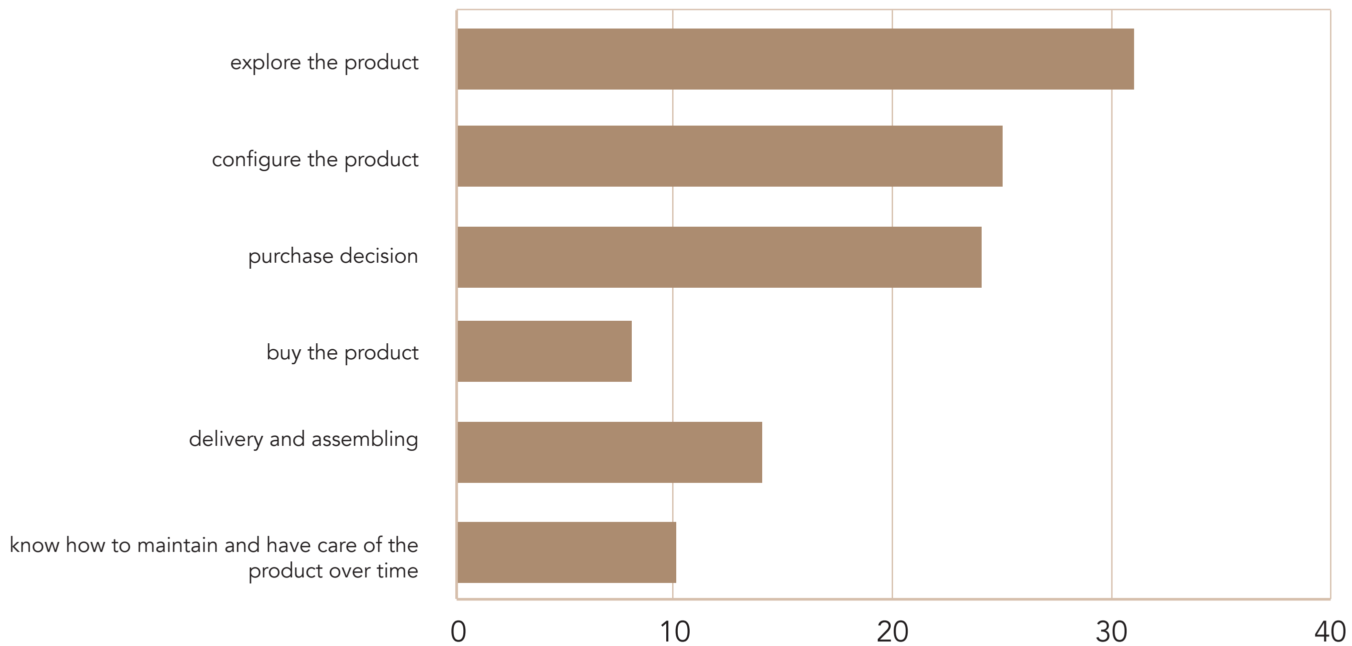


To understand better which are the most important function and services from the client perspective, to validate some option and erase others, I Question 1.
The most important functions from the customer perspective are: discover the finishes available and how they will look like for real, know the price, try the product, get inspired, know that they will find what they were looking for.
Minor but still relevant function (more than 20 answers) are having technical information about the product and knowing where the product comes from, how is it made, its story.
It is less important from the customer point of view (less than 10 answers) the personal contact with the sales assistant.
This result underlines both the need for physical interaction with product and finishes and at the same time the need for freedom during the exploration and the decision making phase.
The customer wants to be aware and conscious of all the details of the purchased product. It is clear from the physical and the digital environments have to interact to fulfill the customer’s demand.

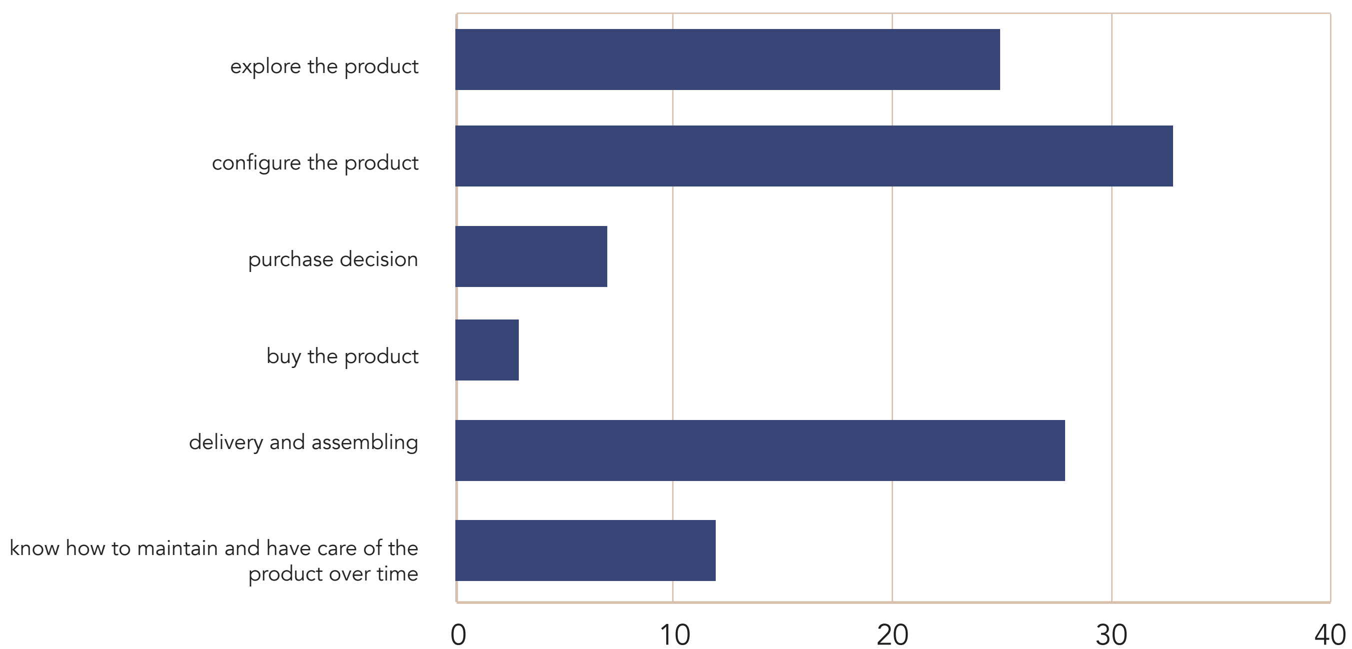
Question 1.
From the graphic above we can see that the customer would like to share the information about the product, he is interested in.
Most of the respondents indicated that they would like to share the information with friends and relatives. Sometimes clients have to research and visit showrooms alone, in this case, it would be useful to have a tool that allows the sharing of information easily.
Nowadays most of them send picture or website screenshots to their families or architect.
Again, digital interaction is crucial to share content regarding furniture.

SURVEY:

3. WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PHASE IN THE FURNITURE PURCHASE?



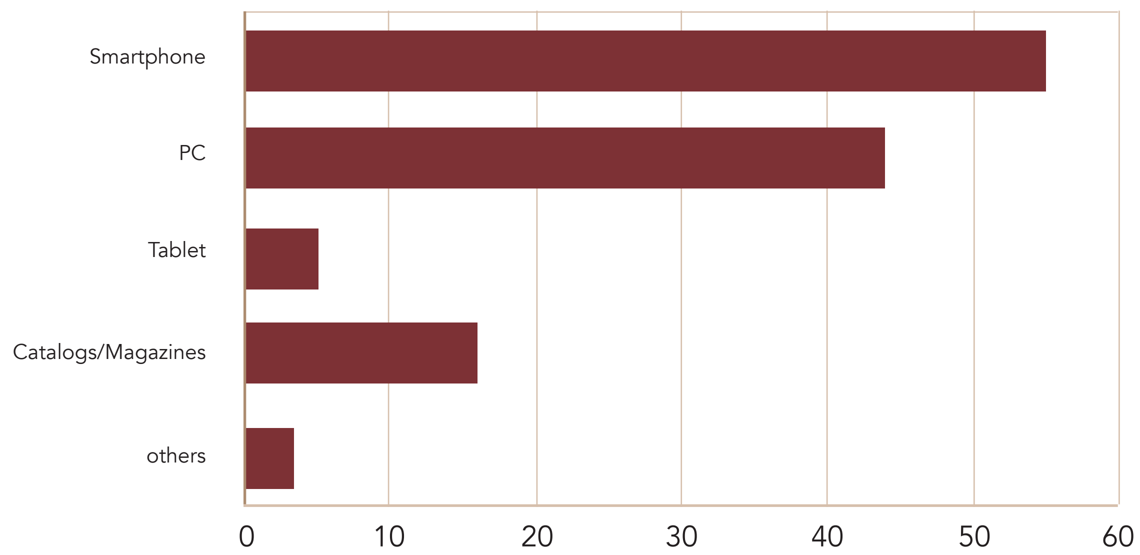
4. WHICH IS THE PHASE IN WHICH YOU REQUIRE MORE ASSISTANCE?



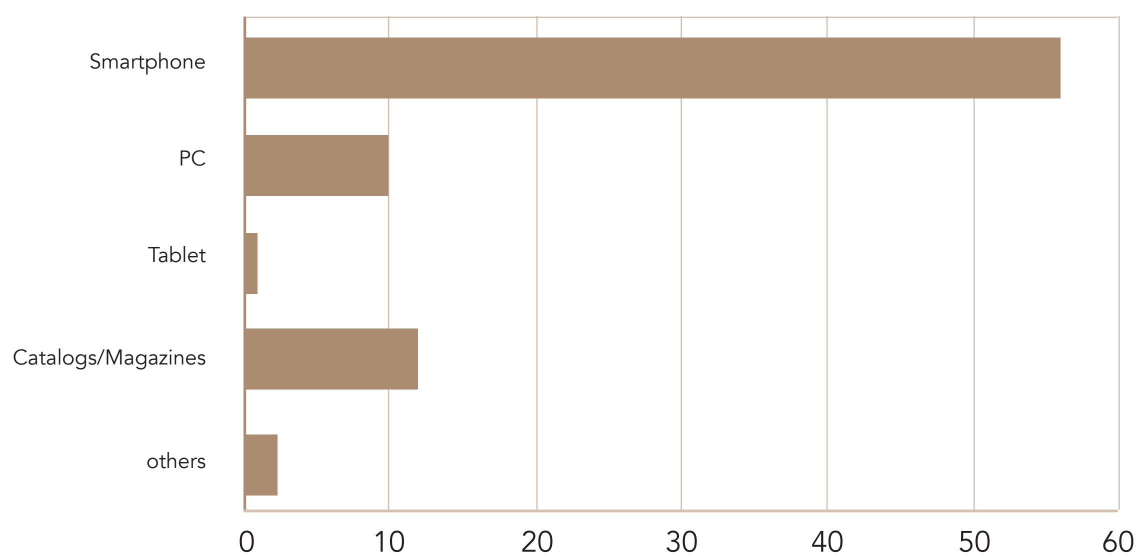
Question 3 and Question 4 have to be compared and analyzed together because the answers are the same and the questions differently. In the first, we question which is, from the client point of view, the most important phase of the purchase process. The result is the exploration phase, as second we have the configuration phase. In Question 4, instead, we wonder in which phase the customer requires more assistance and the most responses go to the configuration phase and the delivery and assembly phase.
This result points out the areas that require more attention and that can be taken as opportunities for further investigation.
In the case studies mapping we noticed that the phases with major automation and digitalization were the exploration and purchase/after sales. The Customer recognize as more important and valuable the exploration phase rather then the purchase and after purchase phases.

In the concept development, we have to consider those answers and improve the experience related to the exploration and the configuration phase, providing to the user all the necessary tools to make him free and autonomous. The focus has to be in the phases that the client himself consider valuable.

5. WITH WHICH TOOL YOU DO PRODUCT RESEARCH?



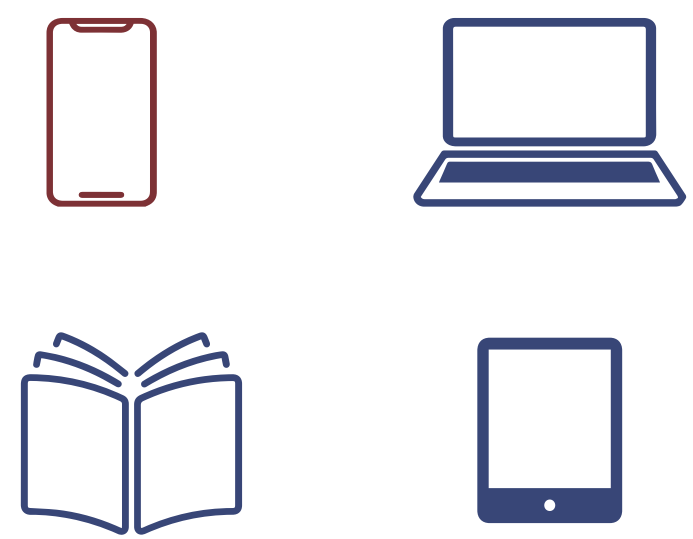
6. WHICH IS THE TOOL THAT YOU USE IN THE FURNITURE STORE?



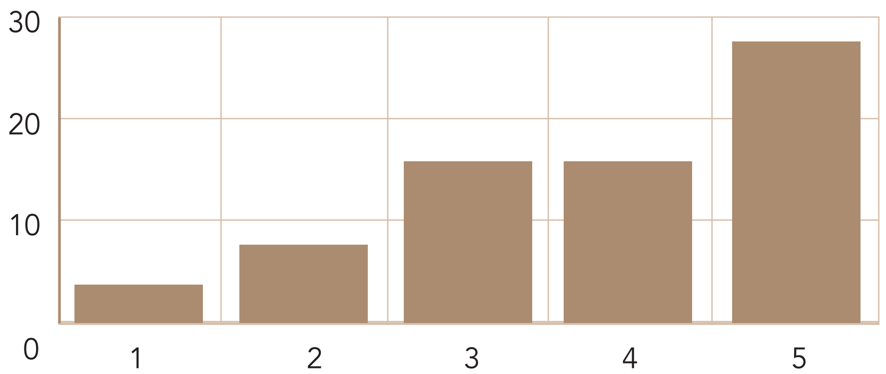
Question 5 and Question 6 have the aim to discover which is the most used device, in order to design the experience including a specific tool.
Both at home and in-store the customer mostly uses the smartphone.
The PC is still used a lot in the research done at home.
The smartphone's function today can be totally assimilated to the PC functions, moreover, this tool can be easily carried with the user, for this reason, it is the preferred device for the private client.
The PC is a tool used in the furniture market mostly by architect and sales assistant in the decision making phase because they have to use programs to model the customer's requests.
More than 10 response was given to "Catalogue/Magazines" in both the question. The physical touchpoint is still important in the furniture market, for some companies as Exteta the catalog is still the main source of revenues.

This result clearly indicates the importance of digital tools in physical experience. The purchase process, as we understood with the case analysis, has digital touchpoints in every phase. They have to be individuated and considered to develop a better in-store user experience.

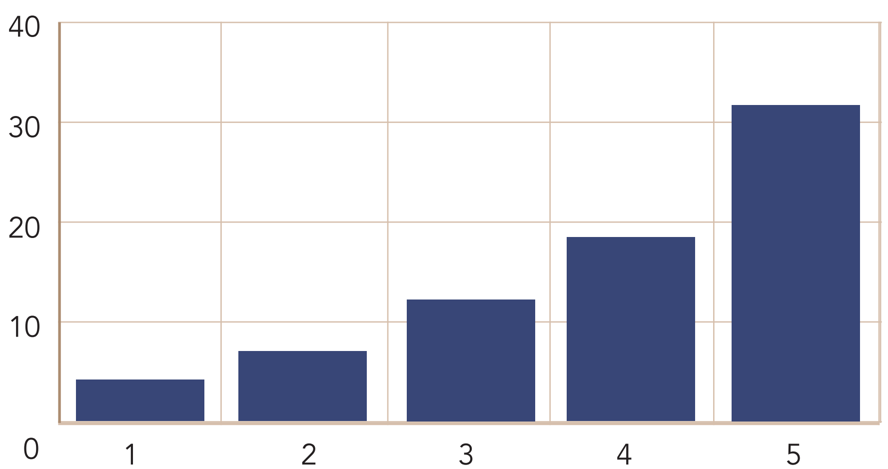
Those two questions, if linked to the ones before, can suggest an intervention path: the function and part of the process that most interest to the customer can be digitally expanded. In this way, the user will be at the center of the experience and will have all the information to be more autonomous.



7. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU THE PERSONALIZATION OF YOUR PRODUCT?

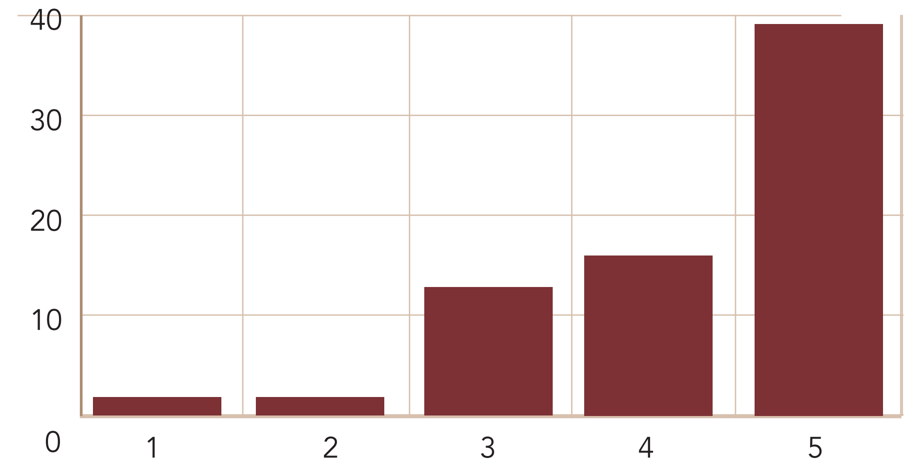


8. IS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO HAVE REAL TIME UPDATES OF YOUR PRODUCT READINESS?

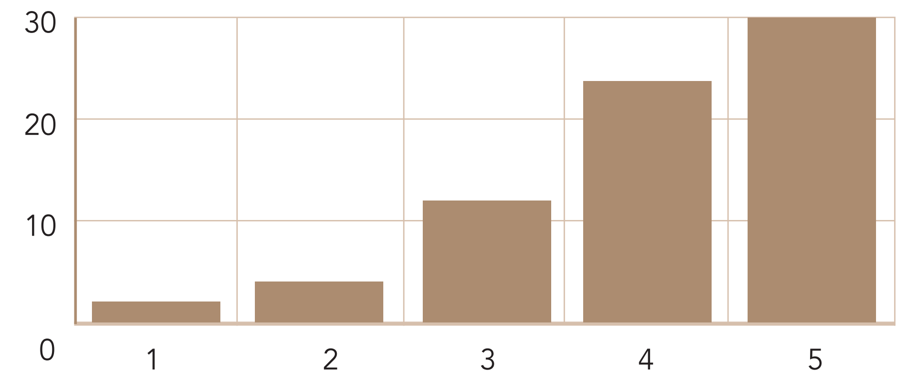


Those last five questions were made to confirm some function that I already present in the concept. Surprisingly all the respondent indicated their preferences accordingly to my idea.
They could answer from one (not important) to five (very important).
The services that are considered more valuable by the customer are, overall, to be autonomous in the store exploration (mostly 40 answers) and to have real-time updates of their product readiness (more than 30 answers).
This survey helped me to give an order of importance to the functions and services needed in the purchase process.
In the next pages, we will define and develop the concept accordingly to those answers.

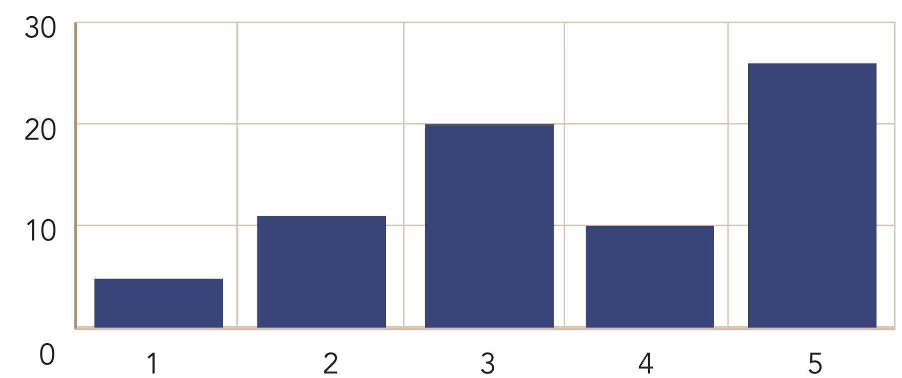
9. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BE AUTONOMOUS IN THE PRODUCT AND STORE EXPLORATION, HAVING ALL THE INFORMATION?



10. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO KNOW IN ADVANCE WHICH PRODUCTS ARE DISPLAYED IN THE SALES POINT?

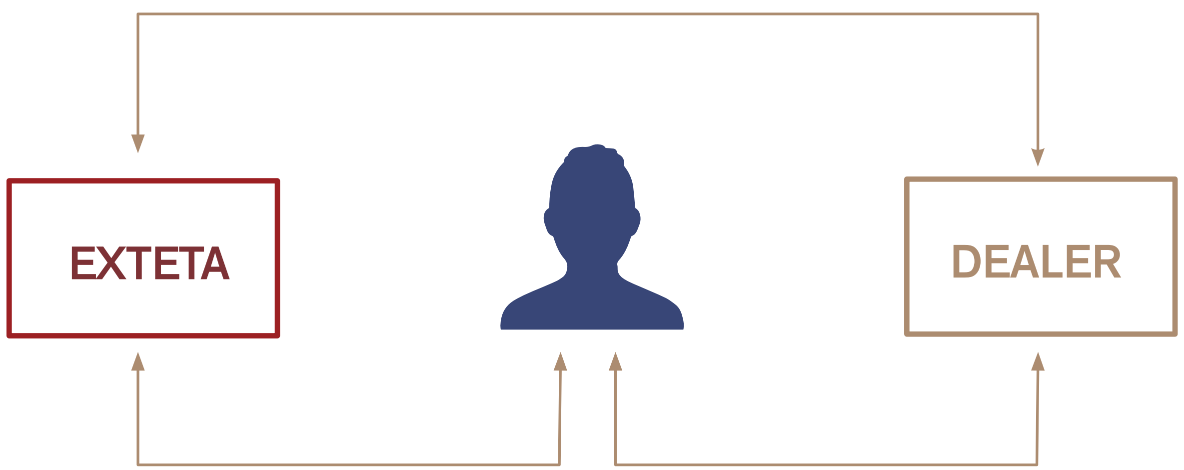


11. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO SEE HOW YOUR PRODUCT IS MADE AND DISCOVER ITS STORY?



INTERACTION MAP - BEFORE

- exteta forward the client request to a dealer
- dealer ask information to exteta
- dealer send client's order to exteta
- exteta check with dealer exact product finish
- exteta provide order confirmation to the dealer
- dealer check the production lead time
- exteta send packing list
- dealer organizes the pick up of the goods
- dealer asks about cleaning and maintenance to exteta

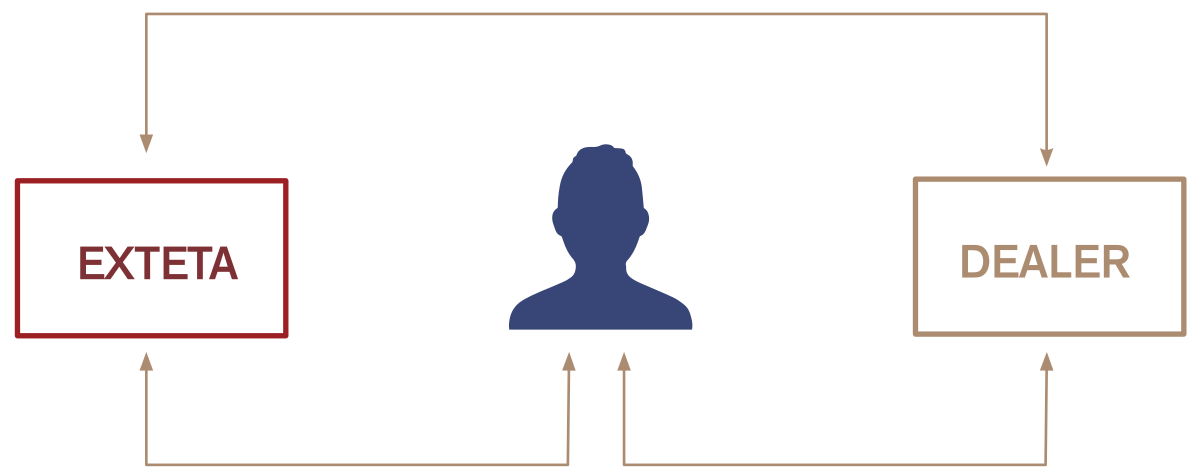


- ask where to find dealer
- exteta put client in touch with dealer
- ask product information

- dealer guide customer in the showroom visit
- customer ask information about the product
- sales assistant show samples
- sales assistant help customer with configuration
- client buy the product
- dealer provide order confirmation
- client ask about production lead times
- customer ask about delivery information
- dealer delivery and assemble the product
- client contact dealer for after sale assistance

INTERACTION MAP - AFTER

- dealer send client's order to exteta
- exteta send packing list to dealer
- dealer organizes the pick up of the goods
- exteta forward to dealer the request of after sale assistance

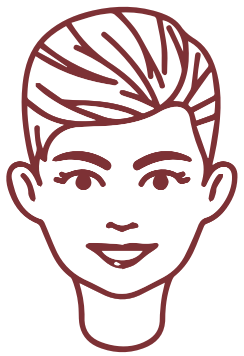


- ▶ customer find dealer
- ▶ customer check product information
- ▶ customer check finishes and configuration
- ▶ customer check order confirmation
- ▶ customer select materials
- ▶ customer check cleaning and maintenance
- ▶ customer send request to after sale assistance

- customer go to dealer ▶
- customer interact with the products ▶
- dealer show the client physical samples
- customer decide finishes and configuration ▶
- customer buy the product
- customer ask about delivery information
- dealer delivery and assemble the product

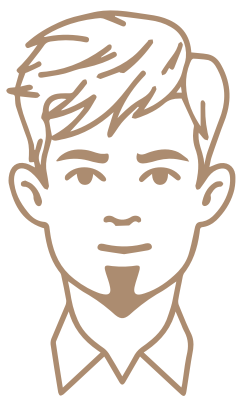
▶ **AUTOMATION:**
considered as action and processes the customer is able to develop by himself

EXTETA'S MANAGERS INTERVIEW



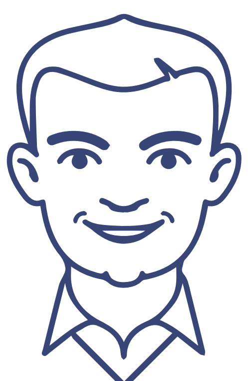
PAOLA,
PROJECT MANAGER

The customer service will have less work to do in this way since all the information will be easily accessible, and the communication with the final client and dealers will definitely improve and become more fluid.
To reach this objective the company has to achieve better resources management to guarantee the final customer the exact goods readiness.
Furthermore, we would have to organize all the product information in an exceptional way.



MICHELE,
SALES MANAGER

The type of customers that Exteta targets are the real top niche of the market. This type of clients are always looking for a much more immersive service that offers the maximum personalization possible. This is why a much better integration between brands and dealers would benefit both of them to enhance clarity in the offer an completeness of products' information.
The only side view that I see in this project is the complexity to apply it in the medium/small companies and dealers. Most of this niche market are privately own with limited investments.



PAOLO,
CHIEF TECHNICAL
OFFICER

Giving to the customer the possibility to choose every single product piece and component can build a strong relationship between brand and client.
Right now the production lead times reach already 12 working weeks and in some cases, we also postpone the delivery. This possibility might extend those time even more. To apply such a customer experience and guarantee the client a fluid and effective interaction, it is necessary to achieve a perfect production control.

COMPANY IMPLICATIONS

The concept has been discussed in a meeting with EXTETA's managers, who underlined both the positive aspects and the limits of the proposed experience.
Everyone involved confirmed that this design proposal would lead to an increased Brand Value Perception and would allow the creation of stronger bonds not only with dealers, architects and professionals but also, and more importantly, with direct clients.
This tool would also be more effective for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) than, for instance, the website. More importantly, this would allow the Brand to have a more direct control over customer choices, location and requests in real time.

Although the concept was met with positive reactions, it is also true that, at the moment, the company is not completely ready to face this innovation because of its dimensions and limitations.
One of the most impactful limits is, in fact, the lack of strong control on the production lead times. The reason for this is the fact that the production has been integrated for only two years and therefore still has to be assessed and prepped for these changes.
On the other hand, the manufacturer and the provider are artisans that are not used to industrial times. The production approach shouldn't be completely revolutionized but optimized and improved in order to prevent delays and to promptly respond to customer requests. EXTETA doesn't have a stock of finished products as they want to guarantee great customization and personalization as well as for the fact that they're a small company with limited financial resources.
From an office point of view, there would be the necessity to make a great effort in order to organize properly all the information available on the App and to keep it continuously updated not only with new collections but also with new available finishes, changes of the products' structural improvements.
Another limitation that has to be kept into consideration is the lack of a capillary sales network. At the moment EXTETA is still undergoing an expansion phase and therefore it can be hard to find dealers in every city and country.

Despite the difficulties that the company and its network would have to face in order to innovate the purchase process, we certainly have to remember the positive improvements that the company has faced these last years and trust that this will continue in the future.

The aim of this work is not to improve the company's resource management but, rather, to show the importance of putting the user at the center of the experience and how the digital and physical interactions can be supported one by the other.

FINAL REFLECTIONS...

CONCLUSION

The continuous growth of digital technologies changes also the offline processes and activities. The digital and the physical world are supporting each other and every product or tangible item, to be perceived as valuable, has to be surrounded and implemented by services that create a link with the final user. We expect the products we buy to be smart, to be tailored to our habits and meet our always higher expectation.
In particular, the purchase process evolved with the introduction of such technology that affected it in every single phase.

Retailers engage in direct interactions with end customers, often with a large number of them, unlike most manufacturers.
This underscores the importance of the customer interface and requires that retail business models articulate how the retailer will optimise its direct interactions with end customers to strengthen relationships with them.

In the luxury market, this trend seems to be contrary to the elite and exclusivity of this sector's values. Instead, the inclusion of digital technologies in every aspect of everyday life changes the luxury customer's needs and expectation.
Luxury consumers do not live in a parallel world: as demonstrated by the research, they are even more connected and more active in the world of "social" than the average of other consumers. This is why it is essential for luxury companies to be able to follow the new trend so as not to be perceived as anachronistic: adopting an omnichannel approach. This a radical change of mentality aimed to place the client at the heart of the sales strategy and offering a truly integrated shopping experience, fluid on all the channels. (*Osservatorio Innovazione Digitale nel Retail, un mosaico ancora da comporre*)
Luxury Furniture brands, because of specification such as kind of product and distribution, are not completely ready to move to omnichannel and that from a customer point of view the opportunity of purchasing in a mono-brand flagship store or in a multi-brand dealer is equally relevant, this choice has to be made according to the kind of project and product considered.
The physical interaction plays a crucial role in the furniture purchase process but It is very interesting that, according to the cases analysed, the digitalisation and the digital touchpoints are relevant in mostly all the phases of process and allows the customer to become more aware and more free in the product exploration and in the final decision. This has to be considered as opportunities to push forward the interaction with clients. Thanks to the possibility to see online the option available the in-store experience and the product trial become more conscious and the final selection better reasoned.
More coherent and clear the information on the various channels are, better is the customer experience and growing is the interest of the customer in the Brand.
Digital tools will play an important role in sharing and generating knowledge.

From furniture companies perspective, front end investments look always to be riskier if compared to the ones in the back end, because they don't produce immediately revenues.
We assist in investment in domotics and high tech devices to embed in products, innovative production technologies, nanotechnology, and smart materials but at the same time, the customer relation and interaction process are not being promoted by the companies that in some cases haven't improved the customer sales experience from the last 10 or even 20 years.
In particular, companies of the furniture sector looks more disposed in giving tools to Dealers, Agents and their Professional Network rather to the final client. This tendency should be the other way around and prioritise customer needs.
Companies should make an effort to meet their client expectation and provide more transparent information.

By 2025 the services will cover an increasingly important role within the offers of furnishing companies: the products will no longer be the only dominant driver on the market. (Federlegno 2018)
Service design has the role to create intuitive user experiences listening to customers wishes and, at the same time, integrates exclusivity and high quality in the luxury brand services.

LIMITATIONS

We have to recognize the limitations of the case studies research and of the design process.
First, the user journey maps related to the cases taken into consideration, have only been analyzed from customer point of view, leaving out the company perspective and therefore an accurate comparison of the two sides is missing.
Getting in touch and discovering information about the Dealers was far easier than with the Brands; in fact, competitor information rarely comes from direct interviews but from secondary channels.
Another limitation of this work might be that the concept has been applied to just one specific case, without the development of a proper toolkit for a larger scale application.
We also have to consider that the research has been lead by a single researcher and this excludes a second opinion or alternative interpretation of results and solution proposal.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

In order to push the proposal forward, it would first be necessary to test the in-store user experience with real customers. The right opportunity to test the tool for the exploration and decision making purchase phase would be the exhibition during the Design Week. Following this evaluation, it would be possible to define a method to evaluate a larger scale application of the tool, according to the level of digitalization and of the Sales Network of the company considered.
Having just dealt with one specific case, a similar structured company could be investigated using the theoretical framework to produce outcomes tailored to its specific characteristics and customers.

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Thanks to everyone who supported and helped me during this journey,
I am grateful to have you by my side.