

Altagama: Italianness and Excellence

Mila Tenaglia (November 17, 2016)



The Altagama Foundation was born in 1992 to enhance the competitiveness of high-end Italian companies operating worldwide in such different markets as fashion, design, jewelry, nautica, hospitality, and food. Two distinctive features bring these vastly different industries together: Italianness and excellence. i-Italy met Altagama's Director Stefania Lazzaroni and talked about the history of Altagama Foundation.

The [Altagama Foundation](#) [2] represents the best of the Italian lifestyle thanks to its over 100 partner companies, known all over the world for the quality of their products and services. "They are the ideal ambassadors of our country and are responsible for 4% of the Italian GDP," says Stefania Lazzaroni, the Foundation's director. "Our mission is to enhance the competitiveness in the high-end Italian industry while contributing to the economic growth of the country at the same time." Over the course of more than two decades - in 2017 the



Foundation will celebrate its 25th anniversary - Altagama has supported its associates in a series of activities in the name of cooperation. "There is no better weapon than collaboration when competing in a complex and fluid global market," says Lazzaroni.

How does the Altagama Foundation work?

It acts primarily as a Knowledge Center, and it collaborates with leading partners in research and international training such as Bain, BCG, McKinsey, Deloitte, BNP Paris Bas, and [Bocconi](#) [3]. The Foundation produces studies on the high-end market every 8 years; its training activities are supported by three master's courses at the Bocconi University of Milan dealing with fashion, food, art, and design.

Last but not least, the Foundation is an incubator of innovative projects intended to promote its own members and the Italian economy as a whole, both nationally and internationally. Two examples of Altagama's promotional events are Altagama Contemporary Excellence and Panorama."

The "Panorama" event was held this Summer in New York. Its main attraction was 360-degree virtual reality screen showing the beauty of "Made in Italy," from music, to fashion, and to nature.

How was this idea born and how did the project go in New York?

"Panorama" was first presented at Expo Milano 2015, and it was a great success because it offered a unique showcase for this innovative visual representation of Italy's beauty. [Carlo Calenda](#) [4] the Vice Minister of Economic Development who supported this project with courage and energy last year, wanted to take the installation to New York.

On average, 600 people visited [Panorama](#) [5] at the Grand Central Terminal every day for a total of around 20,000 visitors in less than a month. It was considered a great success by the partners of the project, including the Italian Trade Agency, [Salone del Mobile](#) [6], (Milan Furniture Fair), Camera della Moda, Simest, Camera di Commercio and the City of Milan.

You promote the "Made in Italy" brand through Italian creativity. How are your ideas born?

It's first of all our associate companies and their own needs that trigger Altagama projects. Italian high-end products and services today are in a stage of regeneration that is both delicate and full of opportunities. This regeneration is a result of both the economic situation and of the ever-changing global society.

Our most recent studies confirm that now more than ever consumers with high spending power, even if there is an abundance of personal luxury items, are always looking for new experiences, for instance in travel, well-being, and fine dining. Today the typical high-end consumer is more mature and pays more attention to the intrinsic values of the product, such as manufacturing quality and exclusivity, at the expense of the superficial values, such as the logo. People are also paying more attention to sustainability issues.

What are the projects you are particularly proud of?

One is the book and the exhibit "Italian Contemporary Excellence." It was created to celebrate Altagama's 20th anniversary and tells the story of Altagama companies through the eyes of 10 talented photographers who were called to interpret the soul and philosophy of our brands. Another is the concept restaurant called LARTE. It was created by the Altagama Foundation and is located in the heart of Milan, next to famous opera theatre [La Scala](#) [7]. It is a perfect example of the synergy between the creative industry and the worlds of art, culture, and food. LARTE will soon begin its own international expansion, starting in Dubai.

What is the contribution of the high-end industry to the promotion of the image of Italy abroad?

Italian authenticity represents a priceless intangible asset; studies on consumers' perception of



Italian companies validate this assumption. The advantages of high-end products aren't just that they are well made, but they also encapsulate values, dreams, quality, and lifestyle. Highlighting the best that Italy has to offer is crucial to promote both our industry and the country as a whole.

Future projects?

In 2017 we will launch an important project promoting luxury tourism called "Altagamma Italian Experiences." It's a tourist itinerary geared for an elite international clientele, and its objective is to offer exclusive and highly personalized excursions, which include not only nature and art but also special experiences

held at high-end stores. It will be an authentic way to immerse oneself completely into the Italian lifestyle. The other big project we are working on has to do with the area of professional training. Altagamma is partnering with the Italian government, academic institutions and private entities to create an innovative training center. We named it Scuola del Saper Fare Italiano. It will deal with the schooling of young professionals needed in the industry by using special techniques and avantgarde teaching methods.

How important is the United States for you?

The United States will always be the best market in the world for high-end products, accounting for almost 80 billion Euros in 2015. In this period of economic change China's consumers seem to waver, but the United States still remains a staple for the development of our companies' strategies. US consumers are among the most demanding and sophisticated in the world.

To see the video i-Italy realized during the presentation of Panorama in Grand Central >>> [8]

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[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Calenda

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[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milan_Furniture_Fair

[7] <http://www.teatroallascala.org/en/index.html>

[8] <https://youtu.be/h8upOGVXN9M>