



Quality & Innovation in Vocational Training for Enterprise Cultural Heritage

Welcome to the MNEMOS Project Newsletter.

This first number will cover the aims and activities of the project and promote its main outcomes as well as presenting an overview of Enterprise Cultural Heritage in Italy.

What is MNEMOS?

MNEMOS¹ is a new project with European funding working in the developing field of Enterprise Cultural Heritage (ECH). In partnership with SMEs in the craft sector the project is looking at how they currently use their ECH and how this can be developed. The project focuses on makers of textiles and clothing, food and drink, ceramics and jewellery.

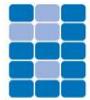
MNEMOS aims to develop an innovative vocational training approach which will enable enterprises to exploit their ECH and improve the quality of vocational education and training practices for non-formal learning. The development of new competencies and skills and a more effective use of ECH will enhance the employability of individual workers, improve the competitiveness of SMEs and help to utilize the economic value of their unique cultural heritage.

What is Enterprise Cultural Heritage?

Organisations that have been trading for decades have a quality that no newcomer has, their history and knowledge makes them stand apart. ECH is this competitive advantage. It is a company asset that derives from historical evolution, and is made up of tacit and explicit knowledge. This knowledge focuses on the products or services and the overall brand identity of the firm, processes and technologies, functions, and organisational structures. It can be used to underpin future competitiveness through originality, innovation and quality. Effective

¹ Mnemos - "Quality and innovation in vocational training for Enterprise Cultural Heritage Management" is project funded with the support of the European Commission in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme.

1st Newsletter
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management of ECH can increase creativity and innovation, boosting the productivity and performance of SMEs with a long and rich history. The majority of these long established enterprises, however, find it difficult to identify and exploit the economic value of their cultural heritage, and may not even think of doing so.

The new FIAT 500 which re-visits the original design of 50 years ago and the very popular Guinness Storehouse in Dublin which showcases not only the history of the brewing of Guinness but also the history of its advertising are examples of the importance of ECH.

Saving and exploiting the records and traditions of an enterprise has the potential to make the difference between decline and renewed competitiveness.

What can ECH do for your business?

'In the current climate small businesses need to use all potential sources of competitive advantage. The history and tradition of firms can raise them above the crowd. MNEMOS will help them to develop the ways in which they use their heritage to gain this advantage.'

Professor Christos Kalantaridis, University of Salford

'Enterprise Cultural Heritage is really an unknown concept among Finnish SMEs – not to mention the management of it! Therefore, it is really important to import this know-how from more experienced companies around Europe to increase the competitive advantage of our firms.'

Ms Satu Aaltonen, Turku School of Economics

Your business can benefit from the current project by:

- Developing understanding of its ECH
- Developing better communication skills in sharing ECH among its employees
- Communicating ECH better externally

An organisation that has used its heritage to gain competitive advantage is a tea and coffee shop in Lancaster, UK; J. Atkinson and Co <http://www.atkinsonsteaandcoffee.co.uk> . The company is active in the heritage domain and has seen a rise in its sales despite the economic downturn!

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Who are the partners?

The University of Salford (UK)
Spin (IT)
ID Technology (IT)

Turku School of Economics (FI)
Tis Praha (CZ)
Urenio (GR)

The partners are located in different geographical and cultural contexts which affect the characteristics of ECH. Thus profound differences are anticipated between established industrial economies (Italy, Finland, UK), intermediate (Greece) & post-socialist (Czech Republic) countries.

What has happened so far?

MNEMOS has already started, with the first meeting of the partners taking place in December 2009 in the University of Salford. At this meeting a clear definition of ECH was agreed. An agreed definition was necessary as ECH is such a novel area for research that there is not yet an accepted definition of what it covers.

Since that meeting, partners have been contacting SMEs to establish to what extent they are aware of and are exploiting the potential of ECH. All partners have been carrying out the first round of interviews and already useful information is emerging. It is clear that there is scope for much greater use of ECH. The next partners' meeting is in April in Rende, Italy.

Enterprise Cultural Heritage Management in Italy

Italy has more private than public initiatives collecting Enterprise Cultural Heritage. These private initiatives tend to have a territorial dimension, which ranges from the local district level, such as the Textile District of Prato [ref. Portale Distretti Industriali Italiani], to the regional level, in the case of Centro per la cultura d'impresa (Business culture centre) set in the Lombardia region.

In the public sector there are a number of initiatives relating to ECH, notably a project owned by Italian National Archives. "Portale per la cultura di impresa" (the Portal of Enterprise Culture) is focused on

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historical archive preservation and dissemination activities through its web portal, that gathers historical information such as documents, pictures and other records from the archives of enterprises founded since 1861.

While the public projects are mostly focused on memory preservation, the private initiatives are more concerned with the exploitation of historical and contemporary enterprise experiences in order to develop creativity, know-how and personal skills. [Prato Textile Museum](#) has been collaborating in European funded projects to exploit the potential of the cultural heritage of the textile industry at a European level. [Museimpresa](#) is the first network linking enterprise museums and archives to organize cultural heritage events.

The input of enterprise heritage into innovation is a crucial aspect of ECH management. The gathered information, explicit and tacit knowledge about products, processes, techniques and materials, is documented and needs to be organized in a structured way representing products, stakeholders and actions relating to them to enable ready access to the storehouse of information.

The uses of ECH found in SMEs are a mixture of innovation, knowledge and change management, fostering enterprise memories (Bomisa, Barilla), creativity (Max Mara), management of product knowledge (iGuzzini) and research and training (CERCAL). [Bomisa](#) has a “Museum of Signs” dedicated to its founders and the people who have been working with them for eighty years. This dedication expresses a desire to remember and to enhance the cultural and historic value of work completed by four generations of individuals. At [Max Mara](#) they combine the preservation and use of historical information. By gathering concepts from earlier production, reproducing garments and generating new variations that are fed back into the archive, it exploits the potential of historic products and creates a continuous preservation chain. [iGuzzini](#) uses its knowledge base to develop a long term knowledge management solution for products and production processes to be used in the development of new products and for cultural heritage dissemination.

Informed by ECH management in Italy, a model can be developed in which knowledge of historic products and processes is both preserved and used to inform new production.

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