

SKILLS, STRATEGIES AND VISION AT THE SERVICE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

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“Event” and “management”: two “intriguing” notions

The philosophical 1900s gave much thought to the notion of “event”, placing it centre stage. Taken from the Latin term *eventus* (a past participle used as a noun from the verb *evenire*, meaning happen, come out, result), the word in fact has taken on the meaning of something that has happened which interrupts continuity, an irruptive transformation of reality that goes beyond a mere succession of facts. For Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), for example, an event is not merely an accident, but the ‘breaking up’ of our Being, a moment in which it reveals its profound dynamism and its ‘history’: it is therefore an *Ereignis*, a mutual appropriation between man and Being, a ‘place’ where Being both reveals itself and withdraws into itself, an occurrence which cannot be reduced to a static concept, but is a “trembling” and a “fissure”.

Several other important authors, moreover, such as L. Wittgenstein, T. W. Adorno, J. Derrida, A. Badiou and S. Žižek, have contributed to reflecting on the ‘depth’ of the notion of event, which from the point of view of theological thought and works, has also always been characterized by a profound historical-salvific significance. Indeed for Christianity, events such as the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, are fundamental because they reveal the nature of God, his love and his plan for salvation: they are real tangible facts which are an integral part of history but carry with them a significance which transcends time, connecting the past, present, and future with the aim of achieving redemption.

Instead, today, the concept of ‘Management’ is becoming increasingly dynamic and oriented towards an integral promotion and non-reductionist growth of what has been established, thus going beyond mere management to include leadership, innovation and sustainability. In training managers, the focus is therefore centred on strategic guidance, motivating people, adapting to change and achieving complex objectives, which are of an economic nature – a must! – as well as ethical and social. It is not just a matter of monitoring, but of valorising human resources and creating an organizational culture by integrating technical and soft skills and a flexible mindset to deal with complex challenges.

Thus, also in the specific sector of cultural heritage the need emerges for a modern idea of managerialism connected to each single event, and to events as a whole, whose key elements include the association of updated traditional functions – planning, organizing, directing (guidance and motivation) and controlling, with strategic efficiency and effectiveness -, a leadership with the ability to inspire confidence, communicate clearly,

delegate and support team development, employ a dynamic mindset (the ability to learn, to adapt, to solve problems and be innovative), be able to adapt to change and positive people, and be transparent and honest. In short, the most appropriate vision of current management is that of a complex and adaptive process that balances economic objectives and social responsibility calling upon managers to be leaders, innovators, communicators and facilitators.

The figure of the event manager in cultural heritage

Study and interest in cultural heritage imply a range of knowledge across multiple sectors which is why it must include a range of interdisciplinary skills and approaches. This aspect will be discussed here, taking into account that the application of the different sciences is expressed not only in the characterization of goods as objects that can be exchanged, but also in their conservation, valorization and circulation (heritage objects seen as economic goods and therefore having a market value). Moreover, if we consider heritage artefacts as goods, though very unique ones (since they cannot be considered economic goods in the strict sense of the word, as they involve merit, given the fact they possess uniqueness and non-reproducibility), it helps to define the criteria needed to make a techno-economic evaluation aimed at providing useful information regarding the condition of these goods, the technical possibility they can be objects to be exchanged in intercultural meetings between nations, as well as considering them not only as a vehicle for acquiring knowledge but also as an element for economic development.

Besides being of fundamental importance from a humanistic and historical-artistic point of view, heritage artefacts are also of great relevance in terms of revenue: their valorization and prudent management can lead to positive widespread economic results, not only in the sector itself, but across other interconnected areas such as tourism and landscape.

From these considerations stems the need to converge specialized scientific experiences, so that heritage management and protection – extremely important from a socio-economic viewpoint – is the result of careful planning based on in-depth study and research.

Consequently, though heritage assets are not the same as other goods, they are part of the market, as they are able to create conditions in which cultural products, such as music, theatre, and cinema, can be put on the market. Thus, as Severino Salvemini states, what is established is “a new concept in the heritage value chain: making culture is not aimed at giving but at receiving”. In fact, it could be said that investing in art goes well beyond sponsorship and patronage: intervening on heritage is not directed at gaining a return on reputation or image but at the firm belief that today culture is a commodity, as stated earlier, in the value chain.

In short, in the relationship between culture and economy, there has been a shift from planning that involved residual economic and financial resources dedicated to culture, to the current situation, in which aspects, meanings, intents and purposes constitute the fabric and the impetus to achieve complete well-being.

Drawing and generating value from the territory

Within this context, drawing value from the “territory” refers to a region’s immense cultural and artistic heritage, including food and wine, tourism and landscape, a legacy

that has been left to us which is in need of concrete possibilities for marketing, innovation, investment and research. Not surprisingly for Italy, in 2025 'Italian cuisine' was officially recognized by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage.

Hence, the new direction to take from which to draw value should not only involve museums, exhibitions and restoration but also include restaurants, hotels, infrastructures, road networks, etc. While respecting the environmental and cultural context, the recently indicated excellences are undoubtedly connected to logistic situations and conditions, as well as to consumers. But it is equally essential to have suitable infrastructures and develop them together with the right strategies to testify to the managerial and performative skills that need to be implemented across the territory within the framework of safeguarding that heritage which functions as an attraction for consumers.

The paper is an opportunity to highlight how the driving force of the figure of the event manager of the specific sector – be it art, food and wine, landscape – brings innovation to products, processes, consumerism, promotion, knowledge, also by proposing and introducing original ideas: it is why mention was made regarding the value drawn from the territory as well as the value it generates, such as the previously mentioned excellences.

It goes without saying how, and to what extent, the enormous potential for development linked to art and other sectors can be deployed, and as such, represent great opportunities.

At this point there is an aspect that fits into a broader vision and comes into play in a match that is vital for the future: training human resources with the purpose of drawing and generating value from the territory by valorizing the enormous heritage found within its borders. This is a reference to the person who can put into practice their distinctive qualities, demonstrating their personal creativity in improving cooperation and promoting communication in the specific sector, nationally and internationally, while advancing professionally career-wise. More specifically, the figure is a professional, an event manager, or so-called "eventologist", a professional figure who is becoming increasingly more specialised and transversal, with the ability to build communication strategies and operate across multiple media platforms, effectively bringing together the diverse languages involved and all the potential the situation offers.

Creativity and specialization, therefore, are determining a change in the profile of the event manager. In the past, they were dedicated people who were knowledgeable about many subjects – they organised and managed the project from start to finish – today it is the eventologist who has taken over, that is to say a specialized professional with different functions. As such, the professional is:

- a project manager, who develops the project (proposing and defining valid possibilities for marketing, innovation, investment, research),
- a logistics expert, who identifies the geographic location (region, city, environmental and cultural context),
- an expert who studies and monitors the content of the event (following the timeline and contents),
- an account manager, who interacts with the client to understand how the project is progressing (essential in hosting, presenting and entertaining),
- a person with operational responsibility for handling the event.

From this stems the importance of selecting specific training courses that provide reliable tried-and-tested content and meet quality requirements. It is in this area, therefore, that the matter of training young people and future generations becomes a vital aspect to consider. It is clear that several key concepts have shifted and taken hold in today's post-modern businesses, namely, in culture, production units, research, education and, in particular, in the art sector, as in other excellences found in the territory.

Hence, rather than continuing to excessively overconform to established objectives and programmes, it must be clearly and definitively understood that it is time to change and differentiate, and to review what has already been done, proactively: managing things just to survive is not the right approach, daring to do what has never been done before, is. This means taking a new direction in the approach to training in an era in which value is based also on intellectual capital and creativity. In addition to possessing these qualities, the professional figure, who moreover meets the needs of the employment market, must possess an interdisciplinary background deriving from a variety of skills and experiences. From this it is evident how the role of today's youth, and the new generations, is important in driving change and innovation because the strength of the future lies with them.

Conclusion

We have seen how the role of the manager is constantly evolving: adapting to a dynamic environment, knowing how to valorise people and foster sustainable practices are all challenges, as well as being opportunities for growth. Being a leader today means embracing change and contributing to a business culture that is inclusive, innovative and responsible, all of which naturally impacts the heritage sector and therefore, in a particularly special way, the event manager.

We are therefore discussing the past and what has been passed down to us – in relation to advances made in science and technology in addition to new cultural, ethical and social parameters – in order to preserve it for the future. The past belongs to the future through the present, memory is future. All this in the belief that – and here we are referring to what the philosopher Salvatore Veca underlines in a particularly significant way – “awareness of what is or a sense of reality must always be accompanied by a passionate and optimistic sense of possibility”.

If, in the future, management is to be characterized by an ever-more appropriate dynamic synthesis of skills, strategies and vision, what was suggested by Pope Leo XIV in his address on the occasion of the meeting with representatives from the world of cinema held at the Vatican, on 15 November 2025, may be quite inspiring for the whole of the heritage sector: “I find comfort in the thought that cinema is not just moving pictures; it sets hope in motion! [...] However, cinema is much more than just a screen; it is an intersection of desires, memories and questions. It is a sensory journey in which light pierces the darkness and words meet silence. As the plot unfolds, our mind is educated, our imagination broadens and even pain can find new meaning. Cultural facilities, such as cinemas and theaters, are the beating hearts of our communities because they contribute to making them more human. If a city is alive, it is thanks in part to its cultural spaces. We must inhabit these spaces and build relationships within them, day after day. [...] I urge institutions not to give up, but to cooperate in affirming the social and cultural value of this activity. The logic of algorithms tends to repeat what ‘works,’ but art opens up what is possible. Not everything has to be immediate or predictable. Defend slowness when it serves a purpose, silence when it speaks and difference when evocative. Beauty is not just a means of escape; it is above all an invocation. [...] In the present era, there is a need for witnesses of hope, beauty and truth. You can fulfill this role through your artistic work. [...] In conclusion, filmmaking is a communal effort, a collective endeavor in which no one is self-sufficient. While everyone recognizes the skill of the director and the genius of the actors, a film would be impossible without the quiet dedication of hundreds of other professionals, including assistants, runners, prop masters, electricians, sound engineers, equipment technicians, makeup

artists, hairstylists, costume designers, location managers, casting directors, directors of photography, music directors, screenwriters, editors, special effects technicians and producers... I hope I have not left anyone out, but there are so many! Every voice, every gesture and every skill contributes to a work that can only exist as a whole. [...] Thanks to the gifts and qualities of those whom you work alongside, everyone can make their unique charisma shine in a collaborative and fraternal atmosphere.”

For all these reasons too, the figure of the event manager is, and will be, increasingly more valuable in the heritage sector.