

'Your Italian Hub' And What of i-Italy?

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EDITORIAL. A new communication agency is born. One that goes beyond information. A hub.

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Last week at the [Italian Trade Commission in New York](#) [3], we presented i-Italy's new journey. Now, I will do the same for the readers of i-Italy.

This publication, which you have been following for 10 years, has gone through many changes. We have provided, mostly in English and always keeping up with the times, information, analysis, and multimedial entertainment using various platforms: online, print, TV, social media. In doing so we've encountered many difficulties, made some enemies but also many friends and friendly partnerships. Among them I want to thank New York University's [Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [4] for its constant



support.

Now we are undertaking a new challenge.

i-Italy in fact becomes part of a new communication agency called 'Your Italian Hub.' One of the shareholders is [Colavita International](#) [5].

Throughout the years we have become increasingly aware of the strategic value of **integrating information and communication**. It was somewhat of a non-choice, because part of a process that is affecting the publishing world at large, "traditional" but also televised and online news headings. However, I believe that, taken intentionally, it can become a great and meaningful opportunity. In other words, the future.

From informing through a unidirectional process, which sees the passage of data from top to bottom, from the media to the public, we are now moving towards a multidirectional approach, in which contents and meanings are negotiated with the public. Communication is transforming information into an increasingly social activity, an ongoing conversation, which goes beyond writing articles for passive readers to generate opportunities for encounters, exchanges, both online and offline.

It is therefore no longer possible to inform without communicating, exchanging, conversing with readers, listeners, followers, and especially without listening to them. In a way they become your main collaborators. Articles, press releases, so-called 'pure' forms of communication are no longer sufficient.

Readers want more, and so do sponsors (I have no problem mentioning them since i-Italy doesn't receive any funding.) The world is changing, moving faster, it wants more. People want to be told a story, to live an experience. The Italian experience in our case. That's why our publication is also transforming, putting itself out there, looking for new sustainable paths for innovation.

It is with this awareness - matured through years of experience in **recounting Italy** in the United States - that we decided to embark on a new journey together with Colavita, itself a company that has changed over the years, going from leader in the sale of extra virgin olive oil on the American market to a platform dedicated to the internationalization of many Italian products, importing and distributing them in this country.

We remain journalists of course, fueled by courage in this new phase. Besides me, another journalist, **Francesca Di Matteo** will be part of the agency, along with her story and her experience at Mediaset and other international platforms.

To those who turn up their noses thinking we will only promote products tied to Colavita, I answer now that our shared vision and strategy seek to do the exact opposite. The goal is to outgrow a certain way of doing things, to overcome the traditionally self-centered approach that deeply stains the image of Italy, in clear contrast with the general interests of our country and of its millions of



small, medium, and large businesses.

I had anticipated the path that brought us to this decision two years ago, in an editorial titled "[Message in a Bottle](#) [6]."

What was the message? I wrote: "Stronger Together? So why is so little being done in the field of communication? The most common answer is that there is no shared vision. Italians almost never play in teams. Fragmentation is an Italian character trait. We aren't able (and often aren't willing) to collaborate. Italian individualism - a great wellspring for creativity, but also a huge barrier for gaining competitiveness and success in today's global world!"

I continued to work on, think (maybe even dream) about this concept. Today we are creating **a communication hub, open to all companies willing to put the communication of Italian products first**. This thanks also to the brave vision we share with a family of entrepreneurs, from Enrico Colavita to everyone, sons, nieces, and nephews.

Still today, communication is often pushed in the background. Your Italian Hub wants to present Italy by communicating differently. **"Tell knowing, know to tell."** That'll be one of our slogans.

Our experience shows us that too often the role of communicating is assigned to American professionals, often big names, who know the market well but don't really know the object, what they are communicating. Other times, communication is handled by Italian professionals, who are well-intentioned and full of creativity but don't know the target, its segments, its niches. They don't know who to communicate to.

But in order to **communicate well**, it is essential to **fully understand WHAT to communicate, WHO to communicate it to, and HOW** to communicate it. Especially when operating abroad. Because you cannot accurately communicate Italy abroad (whether it be a commercial or cultural product, a vacation package, or the country's overall image) if you aren't aware of the importance of **cultural mediation** and of the need to integrate the informative value of the message, the seductive **quality** of storytelling, and an **innovative** use of language into a virtuous cycle.

This is the experience and the awareness that we bring to YOUR ITALIAN HUB, which will become the editor of i-Italy but will go **beyond i-Italy**, opening up to everyone interested in communicating all things Italian, and striving to do so always better.

Looping back now to conclude: why a HUB, your Italian Hub in America? Because we want to involve all those who share our view, even external professionals whose competences we will require to reach the goal, in a truly collaborative approach.

This includes other publications, PR agencies, creatives, and professional communicators. We will



choose our partners based on two factors: their propention for teamwork, for creating synergies, coordinating efforts towards obtaining a common goal; and their interest in prioritizing communication, that is “good communication.” Effective but elegant, proud but honest, capable of influencing the hearts and minds of Americans without resorting to cheesy rhetoric.

I leave you with a quote from the Director of the Italian Trade Agency in New York, Maurizio Forte’s introduction to our presentation: “In the traditional model, most companies, and sometimes also Italian institutions, go from production to distribution, and only later think about communication. Today, it can no longer be that way. **Communication has to be put at the center.** Communication should come right after production.”

It’s for this reason that there will be a new i-Italy inside YOUR ITALIAN HUB, with a larger mission and open to all those who will wish to contribute in any way.

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