

PRESS RELEASE

The second edition of the training course directed at SMEs on digital communication and internationalisation was presented in Turin. The project was developed from the collaboration between Intesa Sanpaolo, the Italian Trade Agency (ICE) and Piccola Industria Confindustria

DIGITAL4EXPORT: “SCHOOLING” ON DIGITAL ISSUES FOR ENTERING FOREIGN MARKETS

- Exports will once again provide leverage for Italian growth into the future, thanks to international demand trending at +5% yearly
- Italian exporting companies number 200,000, but in the manufacturing sector this only refers to one in 5
- The objective of the training programme promoted by the Italian Trade Agency (ICE), Intesa Sanpaolo and the *Piccola Industria Confindustria* is to support the qualitative growth of SMEs based on education, focusing on digital communication for internationalisation
- The programme to be rolled out in six Italian cities, extending from North to South, includes 6 training days and 8 hours of customised consulting in specific cases

Turin, 2 March 2018 – The Italian Trade Agency (ICE), Intesa Sanpaolo and *Piccola Industria Confindustria* combine forces to support and guide small and medium-sized enterprises in the process of internationalisation and digitalisation, so that they can deal with these issues cohesively, and exploit the real opportunity for growth and development provided by the outlet to foreign markets.

Digital4Export, the initiative presented in its second edition today in Turin, offers small companies a targeted training programme. **Turin, Varese, Pordenone, Ancona, Caserta and Cosenza** are the cities that will be involved, starting from 4 April: **6 training days** for each stage on a fortnightly basis, and with the possibility of **8 hours of additional consulting** in response to the specific requirements of companies applying for this.

Digital4Export was launched in 2016 and has a strong correlation with **Industria 4.0**, the national plan promoted by the Government: a series of measures, incentives and investments aimed at taking digitalisation to all the production process phases of Italian industry. During this second edition, the **programme** has been finetuned and consolidated to provide **better support to the qualitative growth of SMEs**, using digital tools to make them more open to exports, bring them closer to new consumers and increase their possibilities of anticipating market requirements.

The course, which was planned and is being implemented with the contribution of **Intesa Sanpaolo Training**, will focus on the **opportunities provided by the digital world**. An in-depth analysis will be made of the **phases of an international expansion project** using digital channels, examining the merits of the **main digital communication tools** and the **methodologies for estimating the potential of online markets** in key countries.

According to a **study conducted by the Research Department of Intesa Sanpaolo**, presented by the Head of Industry & Banking Research **Fabrizio Guelpa**, there are approximately 200,000 Italian companies exporting, but in the manufacturing sector this refers only to one in 5. Despite the appreciation in the Euro exchange rate, **exports** will once again provide **leverage for Italian growth** in the future, considering that international demand is trending at +5% yearly, and given the recovery in certain emerging countries like Russia, Turkey and Brazil. Current and potential exporters therefore need to strengthen their strategies, exploiting the new digital approach.

The report also highlighted certain **structural trends** in foreign trade, which have characterised Italian industrial districts in the period between 2008 and 2016. In a context of strong export growth (+14%), sales were concentrated primarily in the 4 leading markets, differing according to sector, but directed mainly towards the larger European countries; the average distance from Italy to its outlet markets increased by 400 km as did the “cultural” distance, given that the countries with the highest growth rates are those in Asia, such as China, Hong Kong and South Korea; the weighting of emerging countries rose from 33% to 34%; certain countries, including Switzerland and the Arab Emirates, are assuming the role of hubs for subsequent re-exporting.

Piergiorgio Borgogelli, Managing Director of ICE: *“ICE has focused increasingly on digital, and over the last two years has implemented a promotional strategy based on multi-channels, where the export promotion strategy using e-commerce channels is at the cutting edge of innovation. A strategy underpinned by the three pillars of agreements with the marketplace, partnerships with e-tailers (such as the ICE-Yoox agreement signed last December, which launches 100 Italian SMEs into China and the USA) and the increase in digital sales working in conjunction with the international large-scale retail sector. A state-of-the art launching platform for Italian SMEs, where the traditional training initiatives tie up with operational training, in constant synergy with our digital promotional pillars, to create an education ecosystem that can build the necessary skills to bridge Italy’s gap in terms of e-commerce channels. Customised training programmes like Digital4Export make significant strides towards the success of this strategic ecosystem: global e-commerce, in the B2C channel alone will double in sales volumes by 2021 to reach 4.5 billion dollar. Made in Italy must get involved from now so that it can play a leading role in international e-commerce.*

Manuela Montagna, head of the “Imprese Banca dei Territori” Division at Intesa Sanpaolo: *“Our Bank values human capital, and therefore training, a fundamental intangible aspect for accessing credit, to the extent that it has been included among the quality aspects contributing to assigning a rating. This briefly summarises why we contributed with conviction to Digital4Export. The first edition of the programme that had included Turin, Brescia, Salerno, Treviso, Parma, Catania and Florence gave rise to significant success stories, some of which will be shared with you today. Enterprises that were often quite small, managed to find foreign outlets and write a new chapter in the history of their company, and in a relatively short time frame. We therefore ensured that*

the new edition of Digital4Export encompassed the different and equally strategic realities extending from North to South”.

Carlo Robiglio, Chairman of Piccola Industria Confindustria: *“The scenario of rapid change in the context of competition in which Italian companies find themselves operating, opens up new opportunities, while revolutionising the way business is conducted, and transforming the life of each one of us. Consequently, it is fundamental to position as many companies as possible so that they can successfully exploit the new opportunities generated by these changes. The objective of Piccola Industria Confindustria is to become the largest growth incubator in the country. This is the reason for re-launching and enhancing the advanced training course Digital4Export, which is implemented together with the Italian Trade Agency and the Intesa Sanpaolo Group, in collaboration with some of our System Associations. The shared purpose is to consolidate the know-how of Italian companies, focusing on the digital, applied to the processes of internationalisation, with the objective of strengthening corporate strategies in our productive system”.*

Companies that are interested in the Digital4Export programme can find the necessary **information**, training modules, notice and application forms on the site dedicated entirely to the project: www.digitalforexport.ice.it and on the Intesa Sanpaolo and Confindustria Piccola Industria websites.

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