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A PROJECT MANAGER'S INTERVIEW

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Abstract:	<i>This learning object shows an interesting interview made to a young project manager who belonged to a company that has an innovative approach to the culture. Francesca Lambertini informs us about the main phases of a digital strategy in museums, from the research and analysis, until the planning, and sustainability. If it is true that the digital strategy is mainly dealt with by the digital strategy manager, this introductory part is necessary to understand how Digital Collection Curator and Online Community Manager find space in the application of their tasks within the digital strategy in museums.</i>
Keywords:	<i>Project manager, strategic planning, target audiences, digital strategies, online positioning, platforms.</i>



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Aim and objectives

The aim of this learning object is to introduce learners to the application of a digital strategy in a museum. The person interviewed is a project manager but although the answers are the result of her personal experience, thanks to her story we can give voice to other points of view and we can understand overall how a company moves in this field.

Learning outcomes

After studying this resource, you will be able to:

- Recognize the different tasks of a project manager in museums.
- Know an effective case study in which a digital strategy has been applied.
- Analyze the digital strategy in museums.

Keywords

Project manager, strategic planning, target audiences, digital strategies, online positioning, platforms.



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1. Introduction

With the aim to better understand the role of a **Project Manager**, we interviewed Francesca Lambertini about her work. Francesca manages *Bam! Cultural Strategies*, an Italian company specialized in audience development and cultural management. With a background in economics and culture management, Francesca has also experience in the field of research and social planning. In *Bam! Cultural Strategies* she is in charge of several projects, supervising the budget and monitoring projects, considering the outcomes.

2. Questions

Here, we will present a short interview illustrated by photos kindly provided by Francesca about her work.

I: Francesca, tell us more about your role in Bam! Cultural Strategies.

F.L.: Since we started working together in 2009, we have structured ourselves as an organization providing both services and specific advice in the culture field. It was natural to identify figures more oriented to the management of the transversal activities of our cooperative and others more focused on customers and partners, with whom we often share articulated and complex designs involving more professionalism. Well, I am more involved in this second activity.





Photo 1. Francesca in the phase of planning - Davide Baruzi

I: Among the skills of a project manager there are planning, decision-making, communication and tasks delegation. Which of these do you feel most comfortable with?

F.L.: Those listed are certainly among the fundamental aspects of management, not only of a project, but also and above all of the people, skills, and expectations that gravitate around it.

I am convinced that it is necessary to find a **balance** between these three levers, in consideration of the effectiveness and efficiency.

I am a bit passionate about planning because for me it is a good basis for making sustainable decisions and allows me to delegate to employees and partners, sharing significant pieces of the path.

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I: Talking about cultural strategy, can you tell us something about your meeting with Gail and Barry Lord, two of the most famous experts about cultural planning in museums?

F.L.: The meeting with Gail and Barry Lord was a turning point for us. In addition allowing us to measure ourselves professionally at a national level, it helped us to define the areas and objectives of our intervention in the Italian cultural sector. We were (and still are!) a group of young professionals who had come together to break down walls and barriers that often keep citizens out of the places of culture. We put the public at the center and we create new dialogues and plans for involvement. Thanks to Gail and Barry Lord we have focused on how adopting **strategic planning** based on the identification of user's needs: from this, we work for clear objectives introducing innovative solutions.

I: What do you mean with cultural planning and why do you define it as a way of thinking?

F.L.: **Cultural planning** is a discipline that, since the 80's affected urbanism, economy, and culture fields.

The interesting aspect for us is that this approach, which we have known and deepened thanks to Lia Ghilardi, another big expert in strategic cultural planning projects, identifies cultural organizations and their heritage (tangible or intangible) as a dynamic factor in the (re)definition of urban spaces. This fundamental value moves us in our daily practice because it means that culture is one of the basic elements in terms of a community's development.



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Photo 2. Francesca at work - Bruno Magnani

I: How do you apply a digital strategy in a specific project?

F.L.: In spite of the name, we believe that the strength of the digital strategy is precisely that of using channels and digital content not as the ultimate goal of the action, but for what they are: ways to reach defined **target audiences** with the aim of transferring cultural contents.

One of the most significant projects we are working on is the digital strategy for the Gallerie Estensi.

Founded in 2015 as one of the first twenty autonomous state museums, the new Gallerie Estensi brings together different museums in a single one: four museums, one library and three locations, spread over a vast area. The unification under a single institution was accompanied by the decision to merge the various existing digital channels into unified **platforms**: a single website, a Facebook page, a single Instagram account and a Twitter account, with many advantages and some

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communication challenges, starting with the need to connect the different locations to the new brand "Gallerie Estensi".

BAM has created for Gallerie Estensi a one-year course that, from the analysis of **online positioning**, stakeholder mapping and benchmarking, develops on different levels: ad hoc digital communication campaigns, positioning actions and involvement towards specific targets, as well as constant support in the ordinary management of social channels.

This is accompanied by positioning actions on digital channels frequented by potential visitors and products of editorial content for the museum's website and the design of a newsletter to disseminate them in the best possible way.



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Photo 3. Gallerie Estensi - Elena Bertelli

I: Are there any models that can be taken as a reference by those who undertake this work?

F.L.: There are countless museums that have been able to implement successful **digital strategies**: one case that has marked a significant point of departure, we could say a zero year of the sector and that has been able to make digital tools effective means of accessibility, democratization, dialogue and co-creation with their audiences is Rijksstudio, the digital platform that, from 2013, makes accessible (and much more!) the immense heritage of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.



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I: You told us about online platforms, users to identify and "study", online communities, positioning on digital channels. Which people in your company deal with these issues? What backgrounds do they have and what exactly do they do? And you, how do you set the work with them?

F.L.: The members and collaborators of BAM! have rather **heterogeneous backgrounds**, coming from training in economics, humanities, and communication. In the first years of the cooperative's existence, we members experimented with different sectors, accumulating experience both in communication and in those more related to marketing and strategy. In recent years, our staff has expanded and we have promoted the specialization of professionals. So, there are some resources that follow the most digital strategy projects and, therefore, the management of channels and content.

Others, on the other hand, with more marketing skills, deal with public analysis and segmentation.

Apart from this type of subdivision into "thematic areas", I believe that one of our strengths is the **strategic approach** that we put into every path and project that we manage. We share reasoning on objectives and targets as well as on stakeholders and actions to be taken.



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Photo 4. Francesca and the team - Elena Bertelli

3. Conclusions

Many important reflections emerge from the interview, first of all, that culture is one of the fundamental elements for the **growth** and definition of territories and communities. This is what pushes Francesca and her team to find solutions with museums and cultural institutions so that people feel ever closer to culture. To achieve this goal, her company devotes much attention to the study and analysis of the target and then move on to the planning of actions in agreement with customers. At the base of her role as Project Manager, there is communication with all the actors of the projects and the ability to delegate specific tasks to the professionals who support her.

The members of her company have different backgrounds and their tasks are split into "thematic areas", even if their real strengths are the sharing of the reasoning and the application of a global strategic approach.

Hoping that this case study has been helpful for learners, the author of this interview wants to sincerely thanks Francesca Lambertini for her time and availability.

4. Synopsis

This document contains information about how different kinds of professionals in museums can introduce changes thanks to the application of digital strategy. This interview tells about the experience of Francesca Lambertini, Project Manager of the company Bam! Cultural Strategies.

5. List of references

All the content is the result of an interview and if you want to know more deeply the company's work you can visit the website:

<https://www.bamstrategieculturali.com/>

6. Glossary

Project Manager: the Project Manager of a company usually handles a lot of things as managing complex projects monitoring the impact of actions in consideration of the outcomes. Among the main skills typical of this role there are planning, decision-making, communication, and delegation.

Strategic planning: it consists in adopting a strategic approach considering not only the mere need (typically conservative and self-referential) of the cultural system but above all the needs of identified

beneficiaries, through clear objectives that allow to propose innovative solutions.

Target audiences: it's the key concept of the digital strategy. It consists of using channels and digital content to reach more or less defined target audiences and transfer them cultural content.

Digital strategies: applying digital strategy in museums means making digital tools to enhance accessibility, democratization, dialogue, and co-creation with the audiences.

Online positioning: together with digital communication campaigns and involvement towards specific targets it is one of the most important actions in a digital strategy program.

Platform: it represents a way to merge the various existing digital channels into a unified space: a single website, a Facebook page, a single Instagram and Twitter account, with many advantages for the communication with the users.

7. Further readings

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