

**L'impresa culturale.
Processi e strumenti di
gestione**

**L'entreprise culturelle :
Procès et instruments de
gestion**

**The Cultural Organization:
Management Processes
and Instruments**

Ludovico Solima
Rome: Carocci editore, 2004
309 pages
ISBN 88-430-3029-9
€30.50, US\$37.32

An expert in economics and the management of cultural organizations, Ludovico Solima is the author of three volumes that analyse the museum sector and the management of museums: *La gestione imprenditore dei musei* [Business management of museums] (1998), *Il pubblico dei musei* [The museum-going public] (2000) and, in collaboration with A. Bollo, *I musei e le imprese* [Museums and companies] (2002).

Unlike his previous works, Solima's new book, *L'impresa culturale. Processi e strumenti di gestione*, offers an analysis of aspects related specifically to the management of cultural organizations. The perspective and key to reading are thus resolutely managerial, and the preface by Patrick J. Boylan provides an apt introduction on the use of managerial instruments in the cultural field as an emerging practice.

The end result is a useful guide that addresses all the fundamental issues of management and that offers professionals in the field (policy-makers), as well as students of general management or the management of cultural organizations, an interesting theoretical and practical overview.

The volume can be divided into two parts. Each chapter, with the exception of the second, is fol-

lowed by one or more appendices that delve deeper into a specific topic or that deal with a representative case of an Italian cultural organization (foundations, theatres, museums, libraries).

The first part of the book addresses the main themes related to the cultural economy. It comprises two chapters that undertake to define the boundaries of the cultural and arts sector in order to identify the institutions that, according to Solima, should be analysed.

The second part of the book, which spans the last four chapters, is structured in the manner of a veritable guide to general management. The author examines the choices of cultural organizations and the fundamental managerial skills required to meet the specific challenges faced by such organizations.

In the first chapter, Solima offers his interpretative point of view, according to which no theoretical analysis of the cultural sector can ignore the dichotomy represented by the preservation of existing material testimonials and the development of a process that creates richness and cultural value. The author's method of analysis is also defined and circumscribed by several specific typologies of organizations: museums and archaeological sites, production theatres, musical foundations, archives, libraries, and literary, dance or theatre festivals. While these cultural organizations may, of course, be structured differently, all share certain elements: a primarily cultural objective; the absence of profit objectives; the presence of a structured and permanent system of resources (human, financial, technical) to be managed; and exclusivity (in the sense that access to the services offered is not free, but rather organized by managed forms of access). The author then

analyses the notion of "service offered" in order to address in greater detail the specificity of the cultural sector and the issues currently affecting it (evolution of supply and demand, scientific and technological advances, product exploitation and reproducibility, presence of the State, economic impact and the benefits contributed by cultural organizations).

The second chapter deconstructs and describes in minute detail each type of cultural organization as previously selected by the author, using tables to support the author's analysis of the case of Italy by offering data concerning the cultural structures and activities of recent years in this country.

The second part of the book comprises four highly effective chapters that together make it a practical and accessible guide of sorts for readers. The third chapter focuses mainly on decision-making processes and strategic management options. It is organized in a strictly didactic and explanatory manner, as it deals with the different managerial phases: "decision-making processes" (information, knowledge, competency, analysis, understanding, resolution), "decision-making levels" (objectives, mission), "competitive analysis," "strategic guidelines" and "competitive strategies" – adopting a largely general approach to organizational management. Parallels with the cultural sector are constantly drawn in the numerous tables, diagrams and models, in which managerial notions are applied to artistic and cultural realities.

The fourth chapter, which is similarly structured, focuses entirely on the notion and organizational development of directional management. On the other hand, the fifth chapter is a veritable and functional guide

If you wish to have your book reviewed in the *International Journal of Arts Management*, please send one copy to the Book Review Editor:

Jennifer Radbourne

Assistant Dean
Faculty of Business
Queensland University
of Technology
2 George Street
GPO Box 2434
Brisbane QLD 4001
AUSTRALIA

Phone: (61) 7 3864 1792
Fax: (61) 7 3864 1771
E-mail:
j.radbourne@qut.edu.au

to marketing at the heart of the book's structure, while at the same time describing several cases relevant to the cultural context. Just as the first chapter begins with a retrospective of the cultural system before introducing notions of a more managerial and practical nature, the sixth and last chapter closes the book with an analysis of the question of funding sources, specifically in relation to the cultural milieu. In addressing the financial issues that all cultural organizations must face, Solima analyses the significance of and problems related to the three main types of funding sources on which cultural organizations rely: "transfers from the public sector," "resources obtained through fundraising activities" and "self-generated profits." Sponsoring and project financing are also discussed as generators of funds.

This book constitutes an application of the principles of management analysis to cultural organizations, culminating in an interdisciplinary reflection inspired by the research conducted by Solima in the cultural sector. It succeeds in introducing researchers and students to this particular branch of the discipline while at the same time offering useful information to cultural professionals confronted with management difficulties.

The examples, tables and technical data relating to the different typologies of arts organizations, as well as the sections devoted to specific themes, offer astute comparative reflections. My congratulations go to the author, who succeeds in offering his readers an exhaustive overview. Each chapter can be used independently of the others to analyse different topics in detail.

Federica Codignola

Researcher

Università di Milano-Bicocca

ISTEI – Istituto di Economia
dell'Impresa

Milan, Italy