



2011 WORLD CHAMBER CONGRESS COMPETITION TO - DESIGN PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

TO-Design is a project developed and financed by the Torino Chamber of Commerce. Design already existed in Torino and Piemonte even before people started talking about it. It was already there in small workshops, that led to the creation of those major industries that have really left their mark on Italy's modernity, but it also existed in the widespread and multifaceted operations of a region which has always come up with ideas and turned them into something real, acting as a spokesperson for projects and often an outpost for new approaches.

Icsid in the 2008 chooses Torino as first World Design Capital to reward those cities that have made design a means for transforming their own urban environment economically, socially and culturally. For a whole year Torino 2008 World Design Capital carried out an open-ended analysis on the nation's capability to produce and provide design. It involved designers, city folk, institutions and businesses with an eye constantly cast towards the international scene.

The Torino Chamber of Commerce had a pivotal role To 2008 World Design Capital Committee having previously backed its candidacy.

For those reasons the Torino Chamber of Commerce launched at the end of 2007 a marketing plan named TO-Design.

Piemonte's capacity in industrial design is internationally renowned as one of the "Made in Italy" symbols. It is featured by unique versatility and production variety: car and components design, aerospace, railway, cinema, jewellery, textile, clothing and sportswear, agro-food and wines, home equipment, furniture, fittings. The territory hosts world-famous design centres, companies, studios and enterprises, such as Giugiaro or Pininfarina, working side by side with research and style centres and prototype laboratories, all undisputed world leaders and actively contributing to Piemonte's international image. As a confirmation of this privileged position within the design community.

As emerged from one of the first sector studies scarce visibility of the Piemonte designer community on a global level was one of the system weak points.

From 2009 the project opens to international activities with *To-Design in the World*, project co-managed by Piemonte Agency for Investments, Export and Tourism.

To-Design in the World provides international buyers with a preferential channel to meet top class designers or companies manufacturing goods with strong design inclination based in Torino-Piemonte ready to offer new ideas or propose innovative products. Thanks to the *Torino Design in the World* project all matchmaking activities are totally free of charge: b2b meetings and companies visits are organised for all international buyers to get in touch with the capability and know how of our designers. Many international players, were invited to Torino to meet new prospective suppliers among the members of the project.

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR PROJECT ORIGINATED

At the end of 2007 the Chamber of commerce instructed a sector study where a very complex backdrop comes out: demand and offer expressed by design companies in Piemonte and how design impacts customer's **purchasing decisions**.

The study on the Piemonte Design cluster offer has highlighted 624 design-related companies - over 50 thsd total employees about 12 bln euro total turnover, 50% of them are based in the Province of Torino and account for the two thirds of the industry turnover.

Once more Torino turns out to have a pivotal role in the Region.

A quarterly manufacturing trend study on design as a strategic factor for success has been carried out over a sample of 1,000 manufacturing companies.

Accordingly a trial number of consumers mainly families in Torino and Piemonte have been asked how design impacts their **purchasing decisions**.

In Parallel an investigation carried out by focus groups made up of industry experts highlighted the industry strong and weak points; the outcome outlined a number of goals and actions to be done in support of the industry.

2. DESCRIBE YOUR PROJECT ON THE BASE OF THE CATEGORY SELECTED

To-Design is a long term project for the promotion of the Piemonte Design sector aimed to local and international markets.

Mission and objectives

Project goals

- ❖ play a part in the dynamic growth of design in Piemonte
- ❖ help consolidating the network between institutions, design schools and design buyers.
- ❖ sensitize companies towards design as strategic competitiveness factor
- ❖ matching demand and offer on Piemonte design cluster locally and globally.

three different approaches:

- ❖ actions aimed at increasing local visibility and entrepreneurial development of design related-companies (manufacturing, services, or with design as competitiveness edge) to meet prospective demand and stabilize their presence in the local network: the on-line Register; publication of a guide: designer as a career; training to develop a design career; the designer helpdesk; B2B events between designers and manufacturing companies; foreign buyers invitation; participation in international design fairs as "100% Design London" or "Designers Block";
- ❖ actions in support of prospective design buyers as to sensitizing them on design as strategic factor and helping them in meeting design offer by taking part in company presentations;
- ❖ cluster action for matching demand and offer and increasing local and global visibility of Piemonte design cluster; Chamber of commerce sponsoring, participation in "Virtual design and Virtual testing": design in the aerospace industry; guide "Torino Tour 2008"; supporting the organization of the Piemonte Torino Design and the international competition "Food Design";

Costs and investment

The overall cost of the project, in the period 2007 – 2011 is € 670.000,00 and it has been fully covered by the investment of the Torino Chamber of Commerce.

A dedicated team has been set up, made up of 7 full – time professionals in addition to two extra professionals dedicated to the project international activities.

Activities

1) SURVEY :

A survey on design as strategic factor for companies, a local consumer sample survey on how design impacts purchasing decisions, a quality survey by means of selected focus groups made up of industry professionals. All this led to an outcome of: 624 design-related companies - about 12 bln euro total turnover, over 50 thsd total employees

2) ON-LINE REGISTER: WWW.TO-DESIGN.ORG



A portal with 237 design related-companies registered was set up, showcasing Piemonte design brand besides being a useful tool to make effective local and global promotional strategies.

3) DESIGNER HELPDESK

A Help desk operative from 2008 daily, was set up with the following services:

- assistance for designers on protection of industrial property;
- assistance on funding and administrative papers; the industry economic data to set out a business;
- assistance on how to go international and innovate;
- assistance on training, pitching session, technologic brokerage events and meetings, industry economic data.

4) PUBLICATION OF THE DESIGNER GUIDE

In 2008 "The designer career guide" was published, an easy tool for design companies and industry operators who want to set out a business, that comes in 5 different stages:

- business start ups and business plan
- Piemonte design-related entrepreneurial system
- design brand protection
- design circulation and use of exclusive rights
- design promotional actions done by the Chamber of commerce

5) TRAINING FOR A NEW ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A new training course on a "new entrepreneurship" is under way for graduating students of the Torino Polytechnic, IAAD and IED.

6) TO-DESIGN IN THE WORLD



Is the international side of the project envisaging a number of activities:

- outgoing Missions to meet with manufacturers;
- organization of B2B meetings with the most suitable partners and providing assistance with translation, continuous follow up and contractual information to buyers during meetings;
- Participation in international events: Designers Block (September 2009); Business mission in Turkey (14 -17 December 2009) and 100% Design London (23-26 September 2010).

Incoming business missions for prospective buyers to visit companies and arranging meetings with designers:

- 19-22 January 2010: Cebien (South Korea) operative world wide from 1993 in shower systems sector;
- 16-19 March 2010: Fostec (South Korea) operative world wide from 1998 in the optical fibres and telecommunication sector;
- 17-18 May 2010: Hunday Engineering & Construction (Korea), design and manufacturing for urban furniture and urban areas; Geobong (Corea), automotive; Bosphorus (Turchia), kitchen-ware, bath, garden, gift accessories and items distributor.

7) TORINO CONNEXION



17-18 May 2010 Torino Connexion, in its second year a bi-annual event where local companies aiming at re-qualifying their offer with the work of a designer meet with designers.

22 companies, 40 designers with 259 bilateral B2B meetings, 34 of which transnational.

The 2010 event saw seminars and conferences extremely interesting for design:

“eco-planning Directive”

“Systemic design”

“Design: protection of industrial property”

8) TRAINING ON DESIGN AS A STRATEGIC FACTOR OF SUCCESS AND COMPETITIVENESS

IN 2009 Exploring Design, workshop aimed at local manufacturers focused on innovative products like semi finished products and design in components.

In 2010 the pilot phase of “MATto materials for design” began; a project in cooperation with the Torino Polytechnic on new generation materials and semi finished products set out to assist local companies in view of manufacturing re-qualification.

10) TORINO TOUR



A publication that provides tourists and local with a peculiar outlook of the city by drawing attention to public and private places and spaces favouring design, creativity and cases of artistic contamination.

11) COMMERCIAL COOPERATION ADS

From July 2009 the Chamber of commerce has set out a service circulating design related ads on commercial cooperation for those registered on www.to-design.org coming from UE based businesses.

The service makes use of the Business Cooperation Database (BCD).

To date 35 ads have been promoted, 21 companies put in touch, 9 companies with underway dealings, 3 local companies posted their profiles on BCD.

12) CLUSTER INITIATIVE

Cooperation and support for all local initiatives in order not to dissipate Torino World Design Capital legacy, see Torino Design Week, now in its second year; Food Design a competition where prizes and organization were sponsored by the Chamber of commerce

ADI exhibition: "Design excellence" and "Artissima" Design exhibition were hosted at Chamber of commerce Headquarters in November 2010.

Beneficiaries

To-Design targets 3 kinds of beneficiaries:

- Piemonte-based designers,
- local/international manufacturing companies with strong inclination towards design
- local/international manufacturing companies employing designers works

With reference to the first group, the selection for the international activities is made annually, through a call of interest. There is an average of 70 participants in the TO-Design group. The selection criteria: companies ready to operate on international markets; core business: design; commercial and technical managers able to manage foreign languages.

Second and third group have a number of local SMEs design-related companies that will benefit from the effect of the project.

per quanto riguarda il secondo e il terzo gruppo sono particolarmente coinvolte piccole e medie imprese presenti sul territorio per offrire loro le opportunità date dal valore aggiunto del design.

Methodology and innovative character

TO-Design introduces a very innovative marketing approach if compared to the traditional promotional activities carried out by institutions such as chambers of commerce or business associations.

There are some distinctive features in the projects that make it particularly original:

- 1) the long-term commitment of the project sponsors (3 years, renewable for 3 extra years), that ensures an efficient and effective planning of activities and returns;
- 2) the cluster approach: the project is not only serving the interest of the individual participants, but it is primarily promoting an entire local production system in the design and industrial field by marketing the idea that Piemonte has not only the know-how to make a "product" but also to make a "design product", from the concept to the final production and delivery.
- 3) the selection of the participants based on quality criteria, moving away from the idea of indiscriminate support of everyone. This allows to build up on the reputation of TO-Design as a reliable partner for local companies, international companies and international buyers and on the idea of Piemonte as a hub of excellence;
- 4) the expertise of the managing team of TO-Design, with professionals specialized in the Design sector capable of providing a high level consultancy to the companies;
- 5) the performance evaluation system adopted by To-Design in the World, based on the "Balanced Scorecard" model, allowing to evaluate the economic return on the project in terms of increase in turnover for To-Design in the World.

Problems and adjustments

In a fast changing economic scenario, particularly over the past years, there have been many challenging conditions for To-Design since its beginning in 2007.

Here below some of the most significant problems:

- a scanty diffusion of design culture and the scarce demand expansion in Piemonte is due to entrepreneurial fragmentation that affects the design offer (with relevant exceptions of the automotive field).
- another critical factor for the development of design offer is about the lack of culture and sensitivity towards design in a remarkable segment of the Piedmont entrepreneurial system.
- on average, the small size of TO-Design member companies, is more a hindrance than help when it comes to approaching international markets.
- some of the most promising markets are also the most distant and complex ones and therefore require an on-going presidium by suppliers on site.

The project provided an answer to these difficulties by:

- increasing the awareness that Piemonte is the center of a unique technical competency in major strategic international markets
- supporting the collaboration between local designers and companies in order to facilitate business opportunities
- making it easy for local designers to operate on foreign markets
- sensitizing local manufacturing companies on the influence design has on products

3. WHAT HAVE BEEN THE RESULTS AND RESONANCE OF THIS PROJECT

Quantitative results

Objectives	Indicators	Results
Facilitating local companies finding international business opportunities	📁 prospective business partners research in target countries	👍 3
	📁 Foreign buyers involved in To-design in the World	👍 40
	📁 Trade missions abroad with To-design in the World companies	👍 1
	📁 One-to-one meetings between To-design in the World designer (companies), suppliers and foreign buyers	👍 143
	📁 Training courses on international trade, technical aspects and regulations for the internationalization of companies and institutions.	👍 5
	📁 industry International fairs	👍 2
	📁 companies participating in fairs	👍 20
	📁 Business scouting missions	👍 4
Favoring designers and manufacturing companies matching	📁 B2B events	👍 2
	📁 meetings	👍 259
	📁 companies	👍 22
	📁 designers	👍 40
New entrepreneurship	📁 total of training hours	👍 96
	📁 total of students involved	👍 180

training		
Commercial cooperation ads	<div> <div></div> total ads <div></div> total companies involved </div>	<div> <div>👍</div> 35 <div>👍</div> 21 </div>

Qualitative results

The project and its initiatives like: business missions abroad, international fairs, B2B events, training and seminars for companies have been assessed through the Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire and follow-up actions put in place so as to gauge participants reactions and the impact of the project.

Data have been collected in the quality management system operated by the Chamber and will be used to make decisions on future actions in accordance with the needs of the various beneficiaries or users.

The high satisfaction degree expressed by users showed that ex-post assessment, directly involving customers, led to a growth in the activities submitted.

Referring to some activities of To-Design in the World, the project was implemented by an evaluation based on the Balanced Scorecard model (B.S.).

The Balanced Scorecard, widely used in the private sector, is more and more adopted also in the public sector, particularly in the U.S.

In Italy, some examples of B.S assessment are also in Chambers of commerce (e.g. Milano), but it is still mainly aimed at addressing financial and budgeting issues.

4. CAN YOUR IDEA BE APPLIED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD?

The idea can be successfully applied to others parts of the world, given some major requirements:

1. a strong trustworthy relationships between companies
2. a proactive mindset of the local Chamber of Commerce or Association of companies
3. a local/international oriented business mindset
4. a selected team of professionals devoted to the support and the promotion of the design cluster
5. spreading strategic information within the group of companies involved in the project (i.e. technical, scientific and commercial information), crucial to fill their lack of competitiveness in an always changing market and technological status;
6. promoting dependable relationships between the companies involved in the project, pushing them to share strategic information (i.e. technical, scientific and commercial information), in order to boost the cluster overall quality level;
7. supporting business development activities of the companies involved in the project, providing them with information on market trends or with services that could cater for their lack of competence (i.e. training courses to increase their marketing, sales or business development skills);
8. marketing the cluster abroad, with the twofold effect of supporting each single company lacking the financial strength to invest in this specific activity, and enhancing the entire region image;
9. In the end, even if the idea in the first place was setting up a project aimed at the design market, it can equally and successfully be applied to other sectors. Its replicability is well testified by other projects, exploiting the same methodology, started by the Torino Chamber of Commerce, in 2007, one focused on the aerospace sector (Torino Piemonte Aerospace: www.torinopiemonte-aerospace.com), the IT sector (Think-Up: www.thinkupict.org), the automotive sector (From Concept to Car: www.fromconcepttocar.com), the mechatronic cluster (In To Mech: www.intomech.com), and the contract sector (Piemonte In Contract:

www.piemonteincontract.com) and the project dedicated to supporting participation in international tenders (Tender: www.to.camcom.it/tender).

10. This project despite the congenital industry fragmentary nature plays a part in spreading competence and circulating best practices through its promotional activities locally, internationally and with training programmes.

5. WHY DO YOU FEEL YOUR PROJECT SHOULD BE SELECTED AS A FINALIST AND PRESENTED AT THE 7th WORLD CHAMBER CONGRESS?

The Design Project should be selected on the basis of its main features, listed as follows:

1. the idea can be applied to others parts of the world and to other sectors of activity;
2. since the project is a long– term initiative, it is tuneable and adoptable to market changes
3. main results come in a medium period;
4. it's possible to gauge the results of the project in monetary terms;
5. the success of a single company/designer on the market enhances the sector legacy, putting the entire region under the spotlights of international players and viceversa: the wider the resonance of the cluster, the greater the opportunities of a single company/designers to be sorted out by foreign/local potential partners.

For further reference

Torino Chamber of commerce - www.to.camcom.it

Piemonte Agency for Investments, Export and Tourism - www.centroestero.org

TO-Design - www.to-design.org