

# CO-CREATION INNOVATION IN CONSUMER GOODS INDUSTRY: THE CASE OF BARILLA GROUP (B)

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**Abstract**— it is already proven the fact that creativity and being inventive is what helped people round the world to face and overcome the crisis or different financial hard times in their lives. As for companies, being creative is what helps them to growth and differentiate from competitors. For this very reason a business strategy used by them is co-creation that focuses on customer experience and interactive relationships. As ascertained in part (A), the aim of this paper is to explore and identify the pro-active involvement of all interested parties in Barilla’s products development or improvement using co-creation and co-innovation as main business strategy. The foreseen result is to emphasize the Barilla Factory platform’s characteristics for consumer’s engagement in the value creation and co-creation, using social media as a main tool.

**Keywords**—co-creation, creativity, innovation, social media

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE word creativity has been lately used around us, as the need for creativity has become more and more significant at regional, national and international level. We hear and talk about individual creativity, organizational creativity, and citywide creativity.

What really interlocks to the idea of creative city is Richard Florida’s concept of creative class, that is formed of people or groups of people for whom the creativity is compulsory to carry on with their jobs. We mainly talk about artists, such as designers, vocal or instrumental performers, actors, but as well scientists, and brain-workers [1].

Charles Landry considers creativity as one of the actual and main currencies, more sophisticated and powerful than the financial currencies, considered one-dimensional and narrow [2].

Taking into account all the above it is clear that creative class is what determines the appearance of a creative city, and in the end a creative economy. The latter represents a platform for the development of the economy and of the city [2].

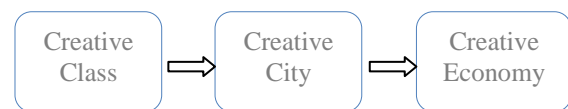


Fig. 1. Steps towards creative economy [2]

The term of creative industries refers to the socio-economic potential of the activities concerning the commerce with creativity, knowledge and information [3]. It is very important that each country where creative industries have an impact to the economy to define them to better understand their size, shape and the skills required to the work force.

All kinds of creative industries that have managed to grow despite the difficult times of crisis, and doubt, are often perceived to have as many differences, in so many similarities. However, each has in common a business model. Among the models that emphasize different classifications of creative industries recall: DCMS model, NESTA model, TWF model, Symbolic texts model, and WIPO copyright model [4].

At the European level, because there are countries that failed or did not bother to define creative industries, the most used definition is that given by Department of Culture, Media and Sport from United Kingdom.

Even though in Italy there is no official definition of creative industries, what Italians understand is the fact that they represent those cultural goods and services that can be technically reproduced or industrial produced and commercially sold.

In Italy, at first, the term of creative industries was about books, press, radio-television, cinema, musical recordings, and new mass-media. Then, the term extended to other industrial sectors, considered extremely creative, such as: fashion, gastronomy, publishing and so on [5].

## II. CONSUMERS' PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT – BARILLA FACTORY

The Barilla case study that represents the base for this paper has been divided into two main sections: The Firm and the Innovation Management and Co-creation in Innovation.

The first section of the case study was presented in part (A) of this paper, and the second section is the subject of this second part (B).

The first section was done with the purpose to obtain data regarding Barilla Group and its preoccupation toward innovation and co-creation in its products' manufacturing. The objective to research for these data was to familiarize with both the type of business that is the subject of this research, and the way stakeholders' direct involvement is part of Barilla's goals.

### A. About Barilla Group

Barilla was first founded by Pietro Barilla in Italy, country where its headquarter exists even today right from its beginnings.[6] It is a private property owned by the well-known Barilla family, whose fourth generation has as legacy, for the present days, the production of quality and innovative products as its great-great grandfather used to over 130 years ago. It is in fact the continuation of the tradition initiated in 1877. [7][8]

One of Barilla's goals is to create new products in order to satisfy the needs of all who will decide to buy and have them for any meal of the day. Carrying this in mind, the company manages to annually launch round 50 new products, this representing the final stage of a long process of four main stages: ideation, development, execution, and launch.

The four stage process, that was presented in part A, is based on the interplay between different professionals, that are brought together as the company anticipated long time ago the tight relation among people that design the products and those for who are designed. The latter ones are the stakeholders, and the professionals that are involved in products creation can be either from inside or outside the company.

One way of stakeholders' involvement in new products creation consists in a collaboration between them and Barilla's designers. The company selects a group of people to participate, in an active way, to the creation of new products together with a design team. They are not invited just as tasters, but also as pro-active persons involved in the development process right from the first stages [9].

In terms of innovation, Barilla has publicly revealed its determination to become both the home of competence and a hub for innovation. For this reason, it annually invests its innovative and creative energies in almost 150 projects. With the help of these projects, the enhancement and education of the food industry, as a strong concept, are aimed. The completion of all started processes will be between two and three years, and at present they can be found in different stages of progress.

*Barilla Factory* is one of the projects from the collections of projects that form the Barilla's portfolio of innovation and creation, which is constantly revised based on recognized priorities. *Barilla Factory* is [10]:

1) *a creative space for the exchange of views on topics, products and relationships;*

2) *a way to get involved and co-create content.*

On the Barilla Factory platform two important projects are also presented: **“Love life, love pasta; in your way!”**, and **“L’Arte della Cucina”**.

### B. Love Life, Love Pasta; In Your Way! Project

„Love life, love pasta; in your way!” is the first “call-to-action” campaign hosted by Barilla Factory. It is in fact a competition that takes into account all the brand, but with a focus on pasta, and targeted [11]:

1) *Firstly, the announcement of the platform launch, following the successful direct result of the two previous contests: Sughì Barilla and Di che pasta sei fatto.*

2) *Secondly, promoting the idea of "Love life, love pasta: in your way!", by exploring and highlighting the values that Barilla will promote as part of its future strategic communication, values that can be described in three words: diversity, uniqueness and inclusion.*

In this project, participants were given the opportunity to create a video focusing on all the things that make us unique, in that we have the ability to create extraordinary things as long as we put the soul and the mind, as long as we are passionate about, and strong enough believe in something.

Through this project, Barilla wants a creative vision of our world, made of new types of communities [10]:

1) *digital relationships, born and developed due to social networks;*

2) *the co-housing among young professionals that lives in big metropolis;*

3) *extended families;*

4) *friends sharing hobbies, and trends.*

### C. L’Arte Della Cucina Project

Because Barilla appreciates both the chef and the artist's creative spirit for a long time, the “L’Arte della Cucina” project is initiated. Pietro Barilla's passion as a benefactor and art collector has determined Barilla to become an early innovator in the design of posters of the twentieth century. Over the decades, designers and artists have found inspiration in the celebration of food and cooking, influenced by the art of those times [12].

Through this project, Barilla invited everyone to put creativity at work to bring to life a fresh expression of Barilla's sauce, with the potential to become a part of the Barilla's collection. In fact, it was aimed to achieve a contemporary interpretation of Barilla's sauce, as a poster, to communicate that the fresh from the garden taste of Barilla Sauce inspires fresh ideas, and exciting possibilities [12].

## III. BARILLA FACTORY PLATFORM

The tool dedicated to interaction with stakeholders is

the Barilla Factory platform, through which different countries and cultures are connected, attracting creative people, known filmmakers and new talents.

Within the projects launched by Barilla Factory, people are asked to speak in different creative languages, each project being linked to a region that the Brand can explore through the community. On the Barilla Factory platform the connection with the participants is based on individual accounts created by the participants.

More and more often, the exciting and captivating, entertaining and creative information are realized by a community. With Barilla Factory, the company offers a place where creative people can discuss and jointly create new landscapes and new stories.

Barilla Factory serves as a hub of ideas, being an innovative platform where filmmakers from around the world can communicate their ideas and skills, sharing diversity and collaboration to provide Barilla company new ideas.[10]

There is no direct connection between the Barilla Group official site and the Barilla Factory platform: <https://www.barillafactory.com/us>

In terms of externalization of the instrument, as long as on this platform people are invited to imagine stories and concepts, not only on Barilla's reality, but also to their own worldview, new habits and ways of life, it exists.

The visual identity of Barilla Factory platform is given by the combination of the logo used by Barilla brand specific for pasta, and the word factory written with transparent letters, to very well combine with the blue color of platform's background. In fact, blue is the color used for pasta's packaging.



Fig. 2. Barilla Factory Logo

The first time the platform is accessed, in the upper left there is the logo, followed by the four main sections: *Projects*, *Creative*, *Artists*, and *Factory*. On the same line, but on the right, there are the following:

- 1) the icon to select the language in which we want to explore the platform: *English*, *Italian* or *French*;
- 2) the *Log in* or *Sign up* icons. By accessing one of them, just with a click, a new page opens where we can *Register*, on the left, if we have not done it yet, or *Login* on the right side of the page, in case the *Registration* process was done earlier;
- 3) the *Search* option.

The required fields for registration are: *Username*, *Name*, *First name*, *Email*, *Password*, *confirmation*, *Nationality*, *Residence*, *Language*. Before ending the

registration by clicking on the *Registration* button, we must select the box if we want to receive the *Userfarm* newsletter. *Userfarm* is the partner of *Barilla Group* that developed the platform, and administrates care of it.

The *Login* option can be found on the same page as the *Registration*, but on the right, and it requires completing two fields: *Email* and *Password*. On top of the *Email* field, the *Userfarm* logo is placed with the mention that *Userfarm* users can *Login* using their credentials.

Just before using the *Login* button, there is the possibility to recover the password, in case we do not remember it, by selecting: *Forgot password?* A new page opens, *Reset Password*, in which we are invited to introduce the email address and to follow the instructions that will be sent to that address, by selecting the button *Submit*.

On the bottom of the page, the following sections can be found, from left to right:

- 1) *Barilla logo for pasta*
- 2) *Legal notes*
- 3) *Privacy Policy*
- 4) *Netiquette (the correct or accepted way to communicate on the Internet)* [13].

On the same line, but on the right side of the page the *Twitter* and *Facebook* icons are placed. With just click on them we are directed toward the respective pages.

Latest details that are found on bottom left are links to *Barilla.it*, *Barilla Group*, and *Barilla.com* sites. On the same line, but at the bottom right it is written the current year: 2014, with all rights reserved *Barilla Factory* and under this we can find out by who is the platform administrated, namely *USERFARM*, *Content Creators*.

All these elements / sections / details that can be encountered on the *Barilla Factory* site, at the first access, on both top and bottom of the page, store each time, at each opening of new sections / pages platform.

The first page of the platform, in addition to the above, greets us with a message of welcome, showing, through a changing image, all contests and their names. The way that anyone interested can participate to the contests is found under these moving images. Thus, three buttons/sections are posted: *Brief*, *Registration*, *Awards*. By accessing each of these sections, more information on the contest, whose image runs while selecting the button, are available. Under these three buttons a brief of the following sections appears:

- 1) *Creative*, with three videos and four posters, and
- 2) *Artists*, where few of the artists and the date on which they were connected to the platform can be viewed.

In the *Projects* section all details about the projects of *Barilla Factory* can be found: title of the contest, description, deadline, awards, brief, jury, contest rules, by accessing the corresponding button.

In the *Creative* section, can be discovered the contents made by people, those who have viewed these contents, comments, and are invited, if we like to, to share it with all our friends. These contents are presented as videos

and posters that can be searched using the Search option, placed on the left, above the Video. In line with Search, but on the right side of the page, the button used to sort the videos and posters by date, by views, by comments or randomly can be found. The same button is found on the lower right corner of the page.

In Artists section we can make acquaintance with the creative talents community, and are invited to join them by registering to the Barilla Factory platform, selecting the preferred competition, thus putting ourselves to test. By pressing *Be part of the community* we are directly directed to the Registration/ Login page.

We can also find here the Search option, positioned as in the Creative section, but instead of the button for videos and posters viewing by date, comments, views or at random, we now have the Sort by Newest/Number of videos option.

In the *Factory* section a brief of the Barilla Factory platform can be read.

In terms of stakeholders, Barilla addresses to those that work / activate in one of the domains presented in Table I. During the time their number increased as a consequence of Barilla's long term objective implementation: "Good for You, Good for Planet". Within this growing direction, the products and services diversity is also meaningful in terms of stakeholders' engagement.

TABLE I: BARILLA'S STAKEHOLDERS [16]

Stakeholders	Level			Control Position in Organization
	International	National	Local	
<b>Media</b>	x	x	x	Communication and External Relations Department
<b>Scientific Community</b>	x	x	x	Scientific Relations Center – Department of Research, Development and Quality
<b>Institutions</b>	x	x	x	Institutional Relations Center
<b>NGO's and Civil Society</b>	x	x	x	Centre of Sustainability and NGOs Relations
<b>Barilla People</b>	x	x	x	Centre of Internal Communication
<b>Commerce and Retailers</b>	x	x	x	Europa Market Centers – Regional Managers
<b>Consumers</b>	x	x	x	Marketing Department and BDI – Regional Managers – Department of Research, Development and Quality
<b>Local Communities</b>			x	Department of Operations and Supply Chains – Regional Managers – Factory Managers
<b>Suppliers</b>	x	x	x	Department of Supply Chains and Operation
<b>Universities and Research Center</b>	x	x	x	Department of Research, Development and Quality – Scientific Relations Center Barilla Lab – Centre for Talent Attraction
<b>Financial world</b>	x	x	x	Department of Administration and Finance

Barilla's competitions/ projects address to both today's consumers and potential consumers of Barilla products, as well to all stakeholders presented above. The geographical limitations, of age or any others are imposed by each project/ competition.

As for competitions found on Barilla Factory, they are addressed especially as it follows:

„L'Arte della Cucina” addresses to all over 18 years old, legal residence of United States (50 states), Columbia District [16].

„Love life, love pasta; in your own way!” addresses to all over 18 years, without any distinctive limitations [16].

Being about competitions to create posters and videos, the intellectual/industrial property rights on ideas/ innovations submitted by participants represents a very well described section by the company. It can be found in the Rules section, rules that are required to be kept in order to participate in competitions, of any type.

Therefore the management and rights exploitation on the selected videos / posters requires that all works to compete to be managed under the terms of the agreement between the two parties. The company has the right on videos [14] / posters [15] without any limitation, as follows:

- 1) *Reproduce, in any format, any Poster or Video temporarily or permanently, including digital format, and by any resources or procedure now in existence or which will in future exist;*
- 2) *Make all Posters or Videos available to the public, using electronic tools such as the Internet, on one or more websites, without limitation, both in streaming as well as in download, and or any other technical means which allows use of the Posters or Videos;*
- 3) *Present and communicate all Posters or Videos to the public in any possible format or using any resources of remote transmission, already in use or that will exist in the future, such as any sort of telephone network, air, cable or satellite television, free television, re-broadcast via satellite, pay or pay per view television, video-on-demand, near video-on-demand, digital television, Dvd-h, IPTV;*
- 4) *Distribute any Poster or Video in both analog or digital format, now in existence / use or which will exist in future, such as CD, CDi, CD-ROM, DVD, VHS, by any resources and through any commercial channel, such as e-commerce, big and small distribution, newsagents, so on;*
- 5) *Distribute any Poster or Video, together with the distribution of audiovisual materials and / or publication of the press;*
- 6) *Show any Poster or Video in cinemas;*
- 7) *Translate into any language the Poster or the audio of each Video and insert sub-titles in any language;*
- 8) *Use any Poster or Video to promote and advertise the activities of the Barilla Company, or using any ways whose use are permitted under this agreement;*
- 9) *Posters and Videos' use and distribution to t third parties, even in embedded mode, allowing those third*



*parties to reproduce posters and videos on their sites, without having some form of prior authorization and without any claim for moral damages;*

*10) Use different parts or fragments of the Posters or Videos, and re-assemble them, in whole or in part, if the Company and/or Barilla and/or a third party licensee considers necessary to better use them;*

*11) Use single parts or fragments of any Poster or Video;*

*12) Insert, in the Poster or Video, a distinctive mark, such as figure, name, or other, of the Company and/or the Barilla and/or of third party licensees.*

Promoting projects on Barilla Factory platform is very important to attract more participants and voters. Therefore, in addition to conventional methods, Barilla also uses social media in order to develop co-creation initiatives. Social media can be defined as a group of Internet applications that rely on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow creating and sharing generated content [17].

Social media is the new tendency, fashion as many may say, which changes the rules of communication with customers, allowing the company to engage in direct and immediate contact with the final-consumer, at relatively low cost and relatively high efficiency compared with traditional communication tools [18].

The presence on social media of Barilla Factory platform is as follows:

- 1) "L'Arte della Cucina": direct links from the competition page to Facebook, Twitter and Google plus.*
- 2) "Love life, love pasta; in your own way!" direct links from the competition page to Facebook, and Twitter.*

Through these links we are invited to share the projects from Barilla Factory with all our friends in the online environment, and even publish them on our personal socializing pages. Social media shortens the distance between the company and users, increasing and strengthening their degree of involvement in the innovation process [19].

The collection, processing and analysis of ideas provided by customers/ stakeholders is done according to each project' requirements. To participate in all projects from Barilla Factory platform, registration on the Website is required. User may register by completing all required data and after reading and accepting the Legal Notice and Terms and Conditions for participation in competitions. All information must be true and correct, to retrieve and process according to the privacy policy posted on the site. A single registration by e-mail is accepted.

Once registered, the user will receive a confirmation email of registration on the site to the e-mail address provided on the registration form. Once registered, anyone can take part in any competition by uploading one or more posters/ videos.

All participants in the competition: 41 participants - 81 creative for the first project, and 155 participants - 166 creative for the second project, had to register and upload

their works on the site under the required conditions. All posters/ videos are reviewed by the editorial staff of the site, which will make a preliminary assessment on the suitability for publication and if they are in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the presentation, available on-line [14], [15].

The editorial staff is committed to examine and approve, within a reasonable time, the posters/ videos uploaded. Each step: approval, rejection, different change requests, if the posters or videos are considered adequate, but lacking in form or content, it notifies the user via email or other means of contact provided when registering on the site. All posters approved will be made visible and available online.

A jury of six experts made the selection of posters the announcing of the 5 finalists being scheduled at an established and announced date. Presentation of the 6 experts can be found on the competition website to the Jury section. The public is also involved with the opportunity to vote for the 5 finalists through an online campaign at a time also established and announced [19], and the announcement of the winner being scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2014, and the Art event celebration was held in New York four days later.

Regarding the "Love life, love pasta; in your own way!" project, key data collection, processing and analysis of ideas were also well established in a particular sequence and made public.[20]

After the registration period of time, the Userfarm team, the hosting platform, has prepared a short list of the best 20-30 works, from which Barilla chose the favorites top 10. Afterwards, the Barilla's database/fans were asked to vote for the best videos out of the 10 selected, during a week. Finally, Barilla decided the awards order.

Barilla works to implement forms of involvement of stakeholders in defining the key elements of sustainability policy, in order to identify stakeholders on the criteria of representativeness and relevance, to establish a communication channel based on strengthening their suggestions and directions, to improve the design of programs and initiatives in order to have them as partners for achieving the goals that the company cannot achieve alone.

Through initiation and continuation of competitions / projects on various topics and platforms, Barilla seeks to move the dialogue with stakeholders to their real and effective involvement. The company is convinced that without their contribution to sustainability it could not exist. It is not only wanted innovation of products, and technologies, but also to highlight young talents in any field, such as design, graphics, photo-video, promoting and enriching their portfolios. Thus, a community of creative artists was created, of people interested in food safety and nutrition under the brand Barilla.

All these had also a financial impact on the Group. Prizes winners are, as we have seen. All the prizes from the competitions were, so far, quite significant and consistent.

According to Annual Report for 2013, the total revenue for 2013 has registered a series of changes compared to previous year. These revenues are analyzed according to the Table II:

TABLE II BARILLA'S REVENUES IN 2012 AND 2013 [21]

Revenues from:	Year	
	2013	2012
<b>Total sales of finished product</b>	3,121,227	<b>3,067,472</b>
<b>Sales of secondary products</b>	49,517	<b>54,401</b>
<b>Sales of packages and other materials</b>	22,383	<b>27,120</b>
<b>Revenues from the distribution of franchise products and services</b>	5,356	<b>6,854</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,198,483</b>	<b>3,155,847</b>

Even though in 2013 Barilla Group did not manage to register not even the same revenues on sales of secondary products, packages and other materials, and from distribution of franchise products and services, the Group certainly managed to register higher revenues on total sales of finished products.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

More and more often, the exciting and captivating, entertaining and creative information are realized by a community.

With Barilla Factory the company offers a place where creative people can discuss and jointly create new landscapes and new stories.

Thus, Barilla Factory serves as a hub of ideas, being an innovative platform where filmmakers from around the world can communicate their ideas and skills, sharing diversity and collaboration to provide Barilla company new ideas.

One of the main tools used by the platform to promote its projects, to make them known worldwide, and so invite consumers, clients, stakeholders in general to pro-active get involved is social media.

Social media is the new tendency / fashion, which changes the rules of communication with customers, allowing the company to engage in direct and immediate contact with the final-consumer, at relatively low cost and relatively high efficiency compared with traditional communication tools.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was undertaken within the framework of the National Research Program PN II, financed by MEN – UEFISCDI, project PN-II-PT-PCCA-2013-4-1811.

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