

THE EDITORIAL.



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Low-cost: necessity or choice?

The demand for products - such as furniture and technology, décor accessories and services - at low-cost prices is increasing. In many sectors this is currently a winning, almost glamorous formula: one that is certainly growing, possibly even rocketing.

The answer, on the one hand, is necessity: it certainly is, at times when the economic crisis imposes the choice of a basic product, to generate an immediate saving. However, the market generated by the current crisis results from a casual, hopefully transient moment. If we were to look no further, we would lose sales opportunities with those who perceive the concept of low-cost as a new social trend, a veritable lifestyle, as the Ryanair phenomenon has taught us.

Quoting some data from a market survey: "...there has been a 4 percent increase [from 44 to 48%] in the number of Italians who agree with the statement «I'm not interested in earning more in order to spend more». And 55% claim that they identify with the philosophy of «voluntary simplicity». It's almost a socio-cultural revolution: unrestrained consumerism is on a downward trend. And, believe it or not, values such as love of art and culture, community sense, commitment and care for the environment are coming back. Consumers are becoming increasingly focused: low prices are no longer considered equivalent of low quality, but of correctness on the part of the producer - and low-cost is taking over in multi-faceted forms: while some people are looking for designer clothes in stock-houses, others are adopting simple living as an ideology, seeing it as a choice of ethics and social responsibility..."

What's more, this trend is confirmed by our own data: from 2007 to-date the share of total sales represented by 3* products has grown by 25%, and, as far as 4* products are concerned, best-sellers are in fact lines with a simple, linear design. Therefore, to return to our initial question, low-cost is also a choice: or rather, it is above all a choice, being an indicator of the consumer mode of contemporary society; here the motto becomes even emphasized using the phrase: low- cost - high value, that is low cost but high quality.

Applied to our sector, low-cost means that while still loving a good - looking product, customers do away with frills and opt for the leanest, most essential configurations; by persevering with minimalism in furniture; by settling for modular products, rather than requesting off standards; by embracing the philosophy of frequent changes, instead of a solution that can last a lifetime! It's easy for us, since we were the first to industrialize the bar counter in the late '60; although, in recent years - starting from our leadership in technological modules and panelling systems - we have also invested in the development of medium and medium-to-high-end segments, and through to Platinum, with ranges ample enough to respond to any requirement, going as far as customising all the non refrigerated lines. Proposing and selling low-cost is a new art, and a profitable one - if you do it well.

But watch out, this is no easy ride: only too often, in every sector, low-cost means very poor quality, when it isn't a downright fraud! Ours is a noble interpretation of the term: a challenge, based on the research of furnishings and technology at unbeatable prices - resulting from cutting-edge industrialisation; from research into new materials with improved cost-effectiveness, yet compliant with standards that guarantee sturdiness and reliability for use in public venues; and finally from the fine-tuning of commercial offers which interpret the formula "prices starting from" through the adoption of truly minimal configurations.

Our low-cost has quality standards that are guaranteed by the same formal certifications applicable to the high-end of the range. Our low-cost comes from a modularity that enables the maximum flexibility, and from an industrialisation capacity that has been the feather in our cap for over 40 years.

Therefore, our dealers are now better equipped to tackle the market in a low-cost perspective: the new Espresso bar counter [and all the other 3* lines]; the new entry level configurations of bar counters, without accessories [obviously available on demand]; plus a new, more essential back counter unit for coffee machine, lead to truly unbeatable, ground-breaking commercial offers. If into the composition we then include Sky, the new professional gelato display case, competitors simply don't stand a chance!

Happy reading.

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