

Press Release

IEG - From VOICE, the key words for the future: re-think, innovate, collaborate, in respect of a no longer deferrable sustainability

*The vision of the big names in jewellery, at Vicenza Expo Centre until tomorrow
for the event organized by Italian Exhibition Group*

Vicenza (Italy), 13th September 2020 – Not growth as an end unto itself but the ability to create new opportunities and the determination to seize them, not only to the benefit of one's own company but for the entire sector. This is the overall vision among the big names in gold and jewellery, gathered at VOICE from 12th to 14th September in Vicenza for the first physical show since the lockdown.

Innovation must necessarily unite technology and digital with the values of human capital and sustainability, in an ethical dimension that is the common denominator for every player in the sector.

Witness accounts confirm it, including that of **Roberto Coin**, owner of one of the most famous international brands with an ever-present reference to sustainability: "A great man must, first and foremost, have a great memory to remind himself that he has a heart and this is the concept that we should reignite in order to direct our efforts increasingly more towards the social and ethical sphere. Luxury is responsible. The future is diversity & Innovation and Italy will always be the world's idea catchment basin."

"Sustainability must be a tangible, an integral part of every company's responsible and ethical development," said **Eleonora Rizzuto**, CSR Director for Bulgari Group, one of the speakers at the much-awaited seminar organized by CIBJO, the World Jewellery Confederation, on CSR and sustainability in the post-Covid era. "The road to sustainability is long and requires commitment from everyone, including the world of fashion, jewellery and luxury. The pandemic has given the world a chance to reflect on the future, to review its priorities and take change a few directions. Sustainability is not just a question of tracing materials, it also includes Corporate Social Responsibility, an aspect of an ethical nature that completes the development plan."

Sustainability was also the focus for **Pomellato**, as **Maddalena Capra**, the company's CSR manager, said: "Raw materials must be bought and processed responsibly and miners and small artisans, who are not protected, need to be supported. We are, in fact, activating a project aimed at supporting them by buying more gold than we specifically need. And another of our priorities is gender equality. 70% of our workforce is female, our CEO is a woman and we have a D-value collaboration that supports female leadership. Of course, we also take care of women with difficulties. We support the Kering Foundation, founded by Salma Hayek, for women who are victims of domestic violence."

For **Simona Demeglio**, Production Manager at **Roberto Demeglio**: "New opportunities are appearing and it is essential to unite with those who have the same vision as your own company in order to tackle market challenges together."

"The situation we are experiencing is a chance to bridge the digital gap that separates us from the rest of Europe," said **Duccio Vitali**, CEO at **Alkemy**. "The forecasts for 2020 relating to e-commerce give a growth of between 35 and 40% compared to 2019. This crisis has therefore brought to light how digital can act as an

essential lever to create value even for the luxury sector, a key supply chain for the Italian economy. The difference in the medium term will be decided by how much companies are able to grasp this challenge, re-think their business models and adapt to the new reality that digital has created.”

Alexandra Trosin, Director of Club degli Orafi, fully agrees with this vision. “Covid has highlighted several trends that were already emerging. It has emphasized the importance of brand power, of new technologies and of digital and has brought into focus the ability of companies to adapt and adopt an almost start-up mentality. We are now witnessing a market polarization between big and small brands. The former, which have always paid great attention to storytelling and branding and already had a prominent online showcase, have found things easier, while the unbranded sector and those brands which had no online showcase, have suffered more.”

And speaking of storytelling, thoughts go to De Beers. “Fewer but better things,” said **Stephen Lussier**, CEO at Forevermark at De Beers. “The signals we are getting from the market urge us towards cautious optimism but we need to know how to interpret the consumers’ new demands: jewellery with a longer-lasting charm, less dictated by continually evolving trends. Moreover, consumers are returning to the stores with a different attitude to before. They initially make their choices on the web and often only make their final purchases in the boutique.”

A reflection on the importance of training was added by **Augusto Ungarelli, President of Vendorafa Lombardi**: “Innovation is a broad concept. Technology is not the only thing we must think about. We must, above all, consider training our human resources. The Valenza district could see a further boost should it manage to enact the conditions for both specific and basic human resource training. The sector needs technicians and “complete” experts, able to work alongside management.”

Diego Nardin, CEO at FOPE, rather than speak about a re-start, talked of a new organizational modality. “We have never stopped. During the lockdown, we turned the engines down while continuing to cultivate relations with our interlocutors, who are our key to success. There is no model to revolutionize, no strategy to change. Remodulation is the task of the near future.”

The topic of organization was confirmed by **Paolo Bettinardi, CEO at Better Silver**. “This moment is a great opportunity for re-thinking and re-organizing. The future is tightly bound to the dynamics of innovation and digitization.”

The highly important role that the younger generations play in the sector, particularly women, was greatly confirmed among the halls at VOICE. The future is female, responsible and in Italy.

Isabella Traglio, Vice General Manager at Vhernier, is sure of it. “We have an enormous responsibility to keep production going in our country. That means providing the territory’s workforce with a project and taking a profession and all-Italian know-how forward. Otherwise we risk losing them.”

“It is not only skill that we need to transmit, but also identity,” said **Alessia Crivelli**, Marketing Manager of the family-run business. “We realized that, if we hadn’t included training among our sector’s priorities, in the next 5 years, we would have lost 40% of our workforce. That is why we created the Fondazione Mani Intelligenti in order to promote a training model that could be attractive for the younger generations and guarantee our sector’s future. We are now in contact with all the districts that share our commitment.”

On the collaboration and beauty of “an extremely difficult profession that you can only practice if you have a deep love for it and are totally dedicated,” **Azzurra Cesari, special project manager at Cesari& Rinaldi Gemmai**, commented. “Collaboration comes from a cleansing of intentions that can be highly felt here at VOICE among all the companies and traders in attendance. I personally am extremely grateful to the organizers for making us feel united and ready to forge ahead with our challenges and those of the entire sector.”

FOCUS ON ITALIAN EXHIBITION GROUP SPA

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