

VareseNews

We are like Cupid, our arrows light up innovation.

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You would never imagine to hear an industrial engineer say that the purpose of a digital production laboratory, like Smartup in **Liuc University of Castellanza**, is to be a Technological Cupid.

But it is exactly the industrial engineer **Giuseppe Catalfamo** (in the close-up), who is the operations coordinator of that laboratory, to use this expression.

I thought to talk about technology, 3D printers, makers and innovation. But we talk about romanticism.

"Because the task of the Smartup laboratory is, as a matter of fact, more romantic than it seems: creating a spark in the heart of businessmen and people, thanks to a technological Cupid who, throwing his arrows, can activate the idea of producing in a new way or new products. We don't take anything from the bottom, we produce sparks of innovation."

Is it a good definition to not make our businessmen, who are very individualists and jealous of their ideas, too susceptible?

"well, it would be conceited to explain to a mechanic how to do his job, don't you think? We don't want to teach to businessmen to do a job that they are already good at. And when we'll be able to talk about our mission, talking less and less about the product, it means that we'll be better."

At one of your meetings, I met a businessman from Castellanza who, looking at a slide, said:"It comes to my mind a new business". Have you reached your goal?

"Of course, because this new paradigm lets us make three things: technological innovation, business, that is to say people inventing something new, and activate new industrial politics. We want to incite, not to create, giving the spark to people and to the actors of the area".

The province of Varese is a complicated area, for population and business density, for its proximity to Milan and the Switzerland border, for Universities, for manufacturing tradition. Does this complexity encourage the capacity of innovation?

"First of all you cannot give a single sense to the word innovation. I would say that the Varese area is a fertile cultural context for innovation. Enrico Moretti (author of the book "New geography of jobs", for Feltrinelli) would say: " If there is more intelligence, we can create more intelligence."

You often travel to the USA, a country that seeds and germinates startups as we do with the durum wheat. Thinking at those experiences do you understand what Italian people lack?

" I travel at least once a year to the Silicon Valley to intercept new trends. And there I understood that Italian people are better than others because they have the mental agility and the ability to guess what there is around the corner without seeing what there really is. However, we lack in the capacity of pick up synergies, so we must learn to cooperate. Furthermore, technology is often seen with fear, instead of thinking how to use it in the better way. It's a bit like a paradox because we are very good at creating it."

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