

Robots in companies, the best friends of the workers

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An **anthropomorphic robot**, meaning vertical, that draws and paints a ceramic tile, is the best summary of what the **factory 4.0** is: the will and creativity of man combined with the precision of the machine. The natural objection which an **artist would raise**, could be the lack of errors that would render that piece unique. For the entrepreneur, however, the added value could be in the **repetitiveness** and fidelity of serial gesture included with the “artistic” product or even better, craftsman.

“The robot is a valuable ally of production,” explains **Michael Pedretti**, Manager of the **ABB** Swedish multinational world leader in the field of robotics, “is a tireless worker, accurate, robust, fast, versatile, long-lasting and easy to use.”

Pedretti, who spoke at **Faberlab** of **Tradate** to introduce entrepreneurs to **Confartigianato** the protagonists of the fourth industrial revolution, lists one by one the good reasons for doing this cultural leap: one increases the production capacity, reduces costs, improves the quality of the process, increases the production flexibility, reduces wastage, reduces the production spaces, and one reduces the fixed costs and above all improves the quality of work of the employees.

“Industrial robots in recent years,” continues the manager, “have evolved and have become easier to manage, easier to program and more secure.”

The example is **YuMi**, the newest member of **ABB**, a collaborative robot presented, incidentally, at the last fair in **Hannover**, Germany where five years ago it sat off the first spark of the new industrial

revolution. “YuMi has a cost that is around 50 thousand euro,” says Pedretti, “and has been designed not only for the **ROI** of Central European companies.”

That of ABB manager is anything, except a joke. In fact, the applications of the new generations of robots seem cut out for the sectors that characterise the small companies of the Italian districts: from automotive to machine tools, from food and beverage to ceramics, from plastic-rubber to electronics, to the smelter and forge.

The basic objection is: what will remain of the working class? After losing their place in heaven, do they risk losing the job too? “In fact,” concludes Pedretti, “the robots have revitalised workings that were not made any more, like, for example, rifle butts, which were made by workers manually.”

Perhaps the real revolution is also semantic and lies in the word “**collaborative**“. Robots and human beings, no longer separated by cages and security perimeters, but placed next to one another “allied” in the production. The next step will be Cyborgs in the production? If this reminds you of a tale of **Asimov** (“I, Robot”), we are not so far from that.

di Michele Mancino Translated by Prof. Robert Clarke