

Don't go to London, look for work here!

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“Only by actually coming in do young people realise what a company is and how it works.” **Patrizia Pigni**, the owner of **Litocartotecnica Pigni**, has participated for a number of years in the **PMI Day**, an initiative of the **Small Business Committee of the Varese Association of Industrialists, UNIVA**, who, this year, will be bringing 3500 third-year students from 39 middle schools into **120 local, small and medium-sized companies**. The **presentation** press conference was given by **KOH-I-NOOR**, from **Tradate**, a company that has been part of the event since it first took place, in 2009.

PMI Day creates a demand for professionalism – **Gianluca Marvelli**, the deputy chairman of UNIVA's Small Business Committee, likes to call himself as an industrial craftsman. He is the CEO of **KOH-I-NOOR**, a company based in Tradate that, since the 1950s, after having taking over the historic Slovakian brand, has produced items for personal care (shaving brushes, make-up mirrors, bathroom furnishings, and much more). “We are eclectic,” Marvelli explained, “so we look for professional individuals for the whole cycle of a product, from when it's conceived to when it's sent to the final customer. We don't do large volumes, and much of our production goes abroad, to about 30 countries around the world; what we lack most today is the Italian market. The idea I like to pass on to young people is that they can work in their own country, without necessarily going abroad. It's possible to have a good job in Italy, if you choose education that's in line with the market. We aren't an appendage of any other country, we're the second manufacturing country in Europe, the first in some sectors. We must help young people to choose and schools to adapt, because we need to be more open-minded. We have to concentrate on young people, to regain domestic demand, and the **PMI Day creates a demand for professionalism.**”

Students should not put their futures down to chance – In her company in **Gorla Maggiore**, **Patrizia Pigni** produces boxes and holders, items of everyday use, whose origin is often ignored, even if it is local. The businesswoman explained, “Awareness of how and where something is produced can help young people in their choice of what to do in the future, and therefore, to direct them in their future studies. In the past, if you were good at maths, you would enrol at the scientific high school. But today, taking personal talent into account is not enough; a young person must understand the demands of the labour market, which professional roles companies need, and which skills. Young people today are really smart and motivated, certainly much more than we’re told they are. When they come into our companies, they’re assisted by experienced workers, because the management programmes of small and medium-sized businesses don’t allow for independent experiences, but their attention is high. For a small company, this is an undertaking because it doesn’t have any excess staff, but we think it’s very useful for the system as a whole. Alternating between work and school is a step forward with respect to the past, but it should be gauged to micro and small businesses, because 400 hours is too long.”

We are lucky to live in Varese Province – **Giancarlo Saporiti** is a young businessman, the owner of **SAMIC S.p.A.**, a company in **Lonate Ceppino** that specialises in the construction and assembly of industrial plants. “This is the second year that we’ve taken part in the PMI Day,” Saporiti said, “and we’re very pleased to do so, because it’s important that companies become known and reveal their particular skills. It’s a time that helps young people to assess the value of where they live and to reflect on how lucky we are to live in this province, which provides employment opportunities, which has a highly developed industry and a territory that is attractive, in a number of respects, for a young person looking to the future. There’s great individuality among young people, and thanks to the PMI Day, they can personally see company dynamics and how the production process works, things that they neither see nor experience at school. The goal is not to get many or a few hours’ experience in the company, but to give them guidance, so that they can choose their future studies correctly. It’s necessary for the new generations to be aware, because by observing and experiencing companies close up, they can also understand critical aspects that depend on the context in which they operate, for instance, bureaucracy, which is the true *bête noir* of entrepreneurs.”

di [Translated by Alabi & Rudi \(Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook\)](#)