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BRAND MANAGEMENT

Aesthetics, Technology and Sustainability:
the analysis of their influence on La Marzocco's strategies in the Italian
luxury industry

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Introduction

The paper aims to investigate how sustainability is pursued in the current Italian corporate landscape through product aesthetics and technological innovation. These three key variables - sustainability, design and technology - represent the main topic of the paper, which is declined through the study of a Made in Italy company with a strong global reputation. La Marzocco - renowned for its tradition of quality, innovation and commitment to sustainability to the point of making it its core business - is the ideal company to explore the influence of sustainability on product design and technological innovation, as it can provide important insights on the propensity to purchase of consumers in the Italian luxury sector.

Analyzing consumer perceptions in this regard is useful to understand how these levers can positively influence the management as well as the success of a brand.

Nowadays, sustainability has become a crucial element for the success and competitiveness of companies, so much that it is now a primary objective to meet the growing demands of consumers and to stand out in the market.

This study is part of an empirical research that aims to examine how and to what extent product aesthetics, technological innovation and sustainability influence consumers' purchasing decisions, and to analyze which of the three levers is attributed the greatest effectiveness. Starting from a careful analysis of existing literature and following an experimental methodology, the thesis aims to provide an in-depth insight into consumers' preferences and perceptions regarding these factors in order to better understand market dynamics and support companies' marketing and product development strategies.

The thesis is composed of three chapters:

- starting from the research hypothesis, the first one provides an in-depth review of the existing literature, analyzing the key concepts of aesthetics, technological innovation and sustainability, and presenting the theories related to the topic;
- the second chapter is based on the analysis of the case study as an example to better understand the main theme: the drafting is based on the conduction of qualitative interviews, realized with the constant support of La Marzocco's team and with the aim of

delving into the strategies implemented by the company to enjoy lasting prestige. A successful competitive strategy carried out thanks to the scrupulous attention paid to the key elements mentioned above;

- the thesis concludes with the third chapter with the goal of proposing qualitative and quantitative data that respond to the research objective proposed in the paper; in addition to the explanation of the survey, the chapter delves into the reference sample and the results obtained. The experimental study conducted is useful to gain an in-depth understanding of the main topic, discussing its relevance and implications at a strategic company level.

The topic was chosen for its current relevance: nowadays, sustainability has become an imperative, representing both an opportunity and a challenge for companies, which are facing increasing pressures to adopt environmentally and socially responsible strategies. Renowned for craftsmanship, refined design and technological innovation, many Italian companies are increasingly seeking to integrate sustainability into their production processes in order to maintain their high competitiveness and meet the growing customers' expectations. However, sustainability is not only a matter of environmental respect but also influences the aesthetics of the product and technological innovation. Integrating sustainable materials, eco-friendly production processes and ecological design not only reduces environmental impact but can also enhance the visual appeal of products, improving their performance. Product aesthetics is key for Made in Italy companies, which often find their distinctive element in elegant and sophisticated design. Integrating sustainability in this context means choosing eco-friendly materials and adopting production processes that reduce waste and CO2 emissions. This approach not only gives the companies an image of environmental responsibility but can also help create unique products that appeal to consumers sensitive to sustainability. Technological innovation also plays a crucial role in integrating sustainability into Made in Italy products. Companies are employing advanced technologies to improve the energy efficiency of their production processes, in order to reduce costs and environmental impact. Finally, the implementation of advanced technologies enables the development of more durable and high-performing products that better meet consumer needs and contribute to the company's reputation.

Chapter 1: Aesthetics and Technology for Product Sustainability: review of existing literature

Through an analysis of the existing literature, the following chapter aims to highlight the key role of aesthetic and technological dimensions on a brand's achievement of the product sustainability in order to explain their close relationship and demonstrate their significant impact.

1.1 The Evolution of Product Design: Ethics, Commitment and Collective Responsibility

Nowadays, product design is the synthesis of three elements: aesthetics, technology and sustainability. Every detail is evaluated with in-depth knowledge and from a new perspective, changing the approach to design, which now focuses not only on the functionality and quality of the product, but also on the selection of sustainable raw materials and production processes that determine its creation. In this context, ethics plays a crucial role.

The theme was already relevant in the 1990s, when Martin Charter and Anne Chick in “The Journal of Sustainable Product Design” stated that “The company is actively seeking the best way of designing consumer electronics products, so that they can be processed as environmentally soundly as possible at waste stage”¹. “For a company which designs products, design activity plays an important part in this task. Design defines the product’s environmental impact over its total life cycle and any improvement in the product design process will mean that environmental performance can be improved.”²

The change has happened as companies find themselves operating in an increasingly informed market, which is no longer enthusiastic only about the aesthetic appearance of products, but it is orienting its consumption habits towards full sustainability. Ethics then becomes an attractive element for customers, reflecting the social and environmental responsibility of the company in its authentic operating context. The choice of brand elements follows a narrative that highlights the different components involved: from the

¹ Charter M. Chick A. (1997) “The Journal of Sustainable Product Design”

² Charter M. (1998) “The Journal of Sustainable Product Design”

selection of excellent raw materials to processing focused on re-use and waste reduction, to the company's social responsibility and choices related to packaging and promotion. An approach focused on the sustainable management of resources and respect for the environment.

In order to achieve 'zero impact' status, company is required to be highly committed and constantly focused in its choices and initiatives. This commitment must be evaluated globally, from the choice of raw materials to the finished product, turning the production process into a strength that embraces the entire supply chain.

In the 'green-oriented' perspective, special emphasis is placed on environmental sustainability, with constantly evolving production processes. “It usually takes a number of brainstorming session and specific R&D initiatives before a final assessment is made of the most promising environmental opportunities to be implemented”³. From the creation phase to packaging and beyond, all activities must reflect the company's mission, as well as its long-term vision.

Reducing environmental impact is not only the responsibility of individual companies: while working to the best of one's ability, it is crucial to share the commitment to sustainability with other companies. Nowadays, all of them are called to act in their own operations to reduce their environmental impact. This challenge is not easy, as the market and consumers only recognize the value of such interventions when the end product is perceived as improved. The complexity of this task requires a collective effort to shape a sustainable and environmentally friendly future.

In today's context, “ever-changing consumer preferences, technological advancements and societal trends drive market demands, which encompass consumers’ and stakeholders’ needs, desires, preferences, and expectations within a specific industry or target market. The key points to understanding market demands are the following: identifying customer needs; analyzing competitor offerings; adapting to technological advancements; incorporating feedback and iteration; consumer-centric design thinking”⁴. As suggested in “Augmented Reality for Engineering Graphics”, the aesthetics of a product becomes more crucial than ever to create an emotional connection with

³ Charter M. (1998) “The Journal of Sustainable Product Design ”

⁴ Ivanov V. et al. (2023) “Augmented reality for Engineering Graphics”, Springer, p.15

consumers, especially when we consider a brand that belongs to luxury Made in Italy industry as consumers use luxury to signal a specific set of attributes – wealth, status, and prestige (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996; Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Grossman & Shapiro, 1988; Veblen, 1899; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Luxury products can offer these signals because of their known high cost (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). High aesthetics are almost always preferred by consumers (Page & Herr, 2002; Reimann et al., 2010; Veryzer & Hutchinson, 1998). A body of research has considered the power of attractiveness to drive choice even in product categories where aesthetics' influence on judgment is less intuitive, such as industrial products (Yamamoto & Lambert, 1994), financial products (Townsend & Shu, 2010), or computing (Tractinsky et al., 2000)⁵. It is not only a matter of visual design, but also a sensory experience that evokes feelings of exclusivity and authenticity in the minds of consumers. Indeed, their perception is not only based on external beauty, but also on the product's ability to convey brand values, tell the story and identity of the brand, with which people can connect.

“Product design refers to creating and developing new products or improving existing ones to meet specific objectives and user needs. It addresses various aspects such as aesthetics, functionality, usability, ergonomics, materials, manufacturing processes, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability”⁶.

Therefore, aesthetics becomes a visual language that tangibly communicates the brand vision and guides consumers to appreciate it as standing for quality and satisfaction of their needs, or even better, their desires. This is why it is called user - centered. “User-centered design (UCD) is a fundamental approach that prioritizes the needs, goals, and experiences of the end-users. It emphasizes the importance of understanding users' behaviors, preferences, and expectations throughout the design process. It recognizes that user needs and preferences evolve over time. Therefore, it promotes a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation. Designers actively seek user feedback, monitor usage patterns, and leverage analytics to gain insights into user behaviors and changing needs. This information helps make iterative improvements, add new features, or adapt the product to better serve users as their requirements change”⁷.

⁵ Cesareo L et al. (2022) “Hideous but worth it: Distinctive ugliness as a signal of luxury” *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, p.636

⁶ Ivanov V. et al. (2023) “Augmented reality for Engineering Graphics”, Springer, p.13

⁷ Ivanov V. et al. (2023) “Augmented reality for Engineering Graphics”, Springer, p.15

After having understood what is behind product design and the concept of aesthetics, it is important to define the concept of conventional beauty and discover what happens when a luxury brand product design does not belong to it.

In order to find the answer, it is appropriate to mention Ludovica Cesareo's study, which explains the different declinations of the concept of standard beauty and its opposite, distinctive ugliness.

While many experts agree that there is no universal definition of beauty, ugliness has always been defined as the opposite of beauty (Kant, 1790, as cited in Cohen, 2019). The field of empirical aesthetics identifies contrast, clarity, color, unity, order, and symmetry as the elements that influence aesthetic preference (Berlyne, 1973; Kreitler & Kreitler 1994; Hagtvedt, 2022). The general pattern is that mid (non-extreme) levels of these simple perceptual variables lead to evaluations of attractiveness, while extreme levels are evaluated as ugly (Leder et al., 2004). Thus, while beauty and ugliness may be highly subjective, following these lines of reasoning and in accordance with prior research in marketing (e.g., Sevilla & Townsend, 2016; Townsend, 2017; Townsend & Shu, 2010) we define ugly products as those overtly lacking in beauty, those rated below the mean on measures of attractiveness. Moreover, while not measured, a visual examination of the study stimuli strongly suggests that indeed the ugly products offer extreme levels of contrast, clarity, color, unity, order, and/or symmetry, in line with Leder et al. (2004).

During product evaluation, because aesthetics is almost unique among attributes for its visual, rather than symbolic (e.g., text) expression, its evaluation occurs automatically (Ramachandran & Hirstein, 1999; Zeki, 1999). As such, the appreciation of aesthetics feels innate; individuals presume others value it (Bell, 1924; Redies, 2008). Thus, when attractiveness is not present, we predict consumers will view it as a cost. However, the cost must be accompanied by a signal that the ugliness is a deliberate choice and not a mistake or omission⁸.

These prior findings specify that aesthetics that is both ugly, implicating the cost of giving up attractiveness and distinctive, implicating intention, will suggest that the cost sustained was in order to gain another benefit of equal or greater value. We identify brand as this other benefit. This is because top-of-mind reasons for purchase are aesthetics or brand

⁸ Cesareo L. et al. (2023), JAMS

(Wiedmann et al., 2009). The purchaser willingly forgoing aesthetics for another benefit implicates brand as that other benefit. Moreover, giving up attractiveness intentionally suggests the brand is more valuable than the cost of forgone attractiveness (Feltovich et al., 2002). We, therefore, propose that a distinctively ugly aesthetic implies the product is from a highly valuable, i.e., luxury, brand. (Cesareo et al, 2023, JAMS)

Going into detail, the paper offers three main contributions. First, the results provide confirmation that beauty has value (Page & Herr, 2002; Reimann et al., 2010; Veryzer & Hutchinson, 1998) since both luxury and non-luxury brands charge more for better-looking products. Second, the existence of an exception to this rule: luxury brands (only) charge the same price for distinctively ugly products as they do attractive ones. Third, we develop a scalable computer vision-based model that predicts the aesthetics, distinctiveness, and logo prominence of any apparel product using pixel-level information from the product image. Marketers can use this tool to create automatically sorted lists of products and put specific aesthetics/distinctiveness items at the top of user search results. (Cesareo et al., 2023, JAMS)

Until now, neither academics nor fashion insiders could explain why a distinctively ugly aesthetic has repeatedly been successful in the luxury marketplace (Biondi, 2019; BoF Team, 2018; Gallagher, 2022). We found that consumers recognize a distinctively ugly aesthetic as a signal of luxury. Moreover, while generally consumers choose beauty and avoid ugliness, when from a luxury brand distinctive ugliness is at least as likely to be chosen as its attractive counterparts and this choice is driven by the ability of distinctively ugly luxury products to signal luxury. A study identifies a boundary condition; when a logo is prominently displayed, there is no boost in choice likelihood among distinctively ugly luxury products, further supporting that the value of this aesthetic comes, at least in part, from its ability to signal. Ultimately, the value of signaling luxury is great enough to overcome the cost of forgone beauty. Finally, another study provides supportive evidence from the supply side; while generally, brands put a price premium on beauty, luxury brands price distinctively ugly products equally to distinctively attractive ones. (Cesareo et al., 2023, JAMS)

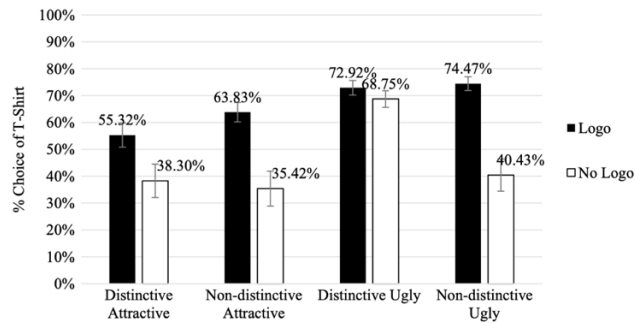


Figure 1.1 - Choice of luxury t-shirt: (Cesareo et al., 2023, JAMS)

Therefore, it can be assumed that the concept of aesthetics and inclination to purchase a product are closely related to the brand, especially for luxury brands. Consequently, product aesthetics appears to be subordinate to the strength of the logo, the main element that communicates brand values to the consumer and guides the customer decision journey. It is for this reason that a brand must pursue many different strategies to implement its brand awareness, such as restyling the logo in order to increase leadership or developing a new logo to boost sales and remain competitive.

1.2 The role of technology and innovation in shaping a sustainable product

When it comes to product sustainability, technology is another key element to analyze, as innovations can positively contribute to reduce environmental impact.

Technologies play a key role in supporting design: the integration of advanced technologies into brand's products not only offers superior functionality, but also contributes significantly to consumers' perception of prestige, leading to an increase in its consumption and in its success. So, innovation is key to success. "Innovation and creativity are essential for effective problem-solving. Product designers are constantly faced with challenges that range from improving existing products to developing entirely new solutions. By applying innovative thinking and creative approaches, designers can generate novel solutions to address these challenges. Problem-solving is the core of engineering practice. Innovation and creativity are integral components of design

thinking methodologies, exploring unconventional ideas and iterating on designs based on user feedback, leading to more refined and impactful solutions”⁹.

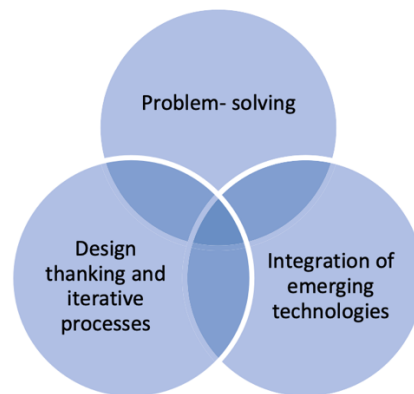


Figure 1.2 Essential components for innovation and creativity– Source: Ivanov V. et al. (2023) “Augmented reality for Engineering Graphics”, Springer, p.16

Technology can also be a differentiating factor from the competition and highlights the brand's commitment to constant innovation, an essential condition imposed by the dynamism of the contemporary market. “An innovative and well-designed product can capture consumers’ attention, generate brand recognition and establish a competitive advantage in the market”¹⁰. The perception of the product as a symbol of a high-quality lifestyle in line with contemporary era is closely linked to its technological component. However, it is essential to balance this innovation with a focus on aesthetics: only in this way a feeling of prestige can be perceived.



Figure 1.3 Market demands – Fonte: Ivanov V. et al. (2023) “Augmented reality for Engineering Graphics”, Springer, p.14

⁹ Ivanov V. et al. (2023) “Augmented reality for Engineering Graphics”, Springer

¹⁰ Ivanov V. et al. (2023) “Augmented reality for Engineering Graphics”, Springer

In this sense, product's packaging is seen as the perfect combination of design and innovative technology that looks to the future, paying special attention to sustainability. Innovation, digitalization and sustainability are setting off major changes in the packaging sector: especially in the food sector, it is now called upon to respond to the major global challenges defined by the 2030 Agenda¹¹ and summarized in the “5P”. In fact, if well designed, packaging has positive implications for more than one of the UN agenda's seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (environmental, social, economic, and institutional):



Figure 1.4: 2030 Agenda – 17 SDGs

for example, it allows drinking water to be brought to where it cannot otherwise be had; it allows food to be transported safely; moreover, by protecting it from light, air, and spoilage, it helps keep it from being wasted. For this reason, it must be safe for people and produced with materials from controlled and certified sources. In essence, the packaging of the future will necessarily have to be increasingly sustainable during its entire life cycle through optimization of sourcing, manufacturing, transportation and recycling activities, made from sustainably managed plant raw materials, and using increasingly efficient technologies. Thus, innovation is the basis of a strategy to improve the environment by reducing companies' impact on it. Innovation and sustainability have become the key elements in building success-oriented business models. "Companies must begin to understand that sustainability is not an addition, a tinting of color to a business that basically does not change(...) a game will be won if the company succeeds in re-

¹¹ <https://www.lifegate.it/packaging-alimentare-sostenibilita-e-innovazione>

engineering processes and products intended for the market in favor of the environment and society. If, on the other hand, it continues to do 'business as usual' (...) it will be destined for failure." (Floridi, 2021) ¹²

3D modelling and printing are an example of how technological innovation can support and determine product sustainability, reducing the environmental impact of the entire life cycle. The aim of these techniques is transforming the way products are conceived and prototyped. This not only accelerates the development process, reducing waste of materials and resources, but also allows for more precise and customized design, adapting to specific consumer needs. By seamlessly translating digital designs into tangible three-dimensional objects, 3D printing not only optimizes production, but also opens up new strategic avenues for companies, enabling more flexible, responsive and sustainable management of production resources. 3D printing makes it possible to use exactly the amount of material needed, reducing waste and increasing sustainability. In addition, the use of biodegradable or recycled materials becomes more feasible, allowing companies to adopt more sustainable practices and respond positively to environmental pressures in a circular manner. Another positive feature of this technology is the reduction in transport costs: as production can be closer to the point of sale or consumption, companies can save significantly on shipping costs. This not only reduces carbon emissions, but also enables faster delivery to the end customer. Market elasticity is also affected: with the ability to produce in small quantities, companies can explore new markets with a reduced initial investment, testing all possibilities before committing to large-scale production. Thus, 3D printing represents not only a technological revolution, but also a commercial one: in addition to efficiency in terms of waste reduction, this technology radically changes the production and distribution model, increasing the company's ability to customize products for individual customers by offering tailor-made solutions without significant cost overruns, creating a new customer-centric business model.¹³

Another crucial aspect of technological innovation on product design concerns energy efficiency and resource savings. It supports the design of products that maximize energy efficiency, thus reducing the environmental impact during product use. The integration of

¹² <https://www.economyup.it/innovazione/innovazione-sostenibile-che-cose-e-le-tecnologie-che-possono-rendere-migliore-il-pianeta/>

¹³ <https://www.esg360.it/digital-for-esg/3d-printing-e-sostenibilita-i-vantaggi-della-manifattura-additiva/>

sensors and intelligent systems enables continuous monitoring and optimization of performance, further improving long-term sustainability. Talking about consumer awareness, a key element in the promotion of Sustainable Product Design (SPD), apps and QR codes emerge as essential tools to foster a deeper connection between the consumer and the sustainable choice of products. These emerging technologies offer a digital bridge that extends beyond the traditional shopping experience, allowing consumers to explore a product's sustainability in detail and immediately. Apps, with their intuitive and accessible interfaces, become the means through which consumers can easily access crucial information on the source of materials used in the manufacture of a product. In addition to offering details on the production chain, these apps can provide insights into corporate practices related to ethics and social responsibility, creating a complete picture of a company's sustainability. The integration of QR codes is another key element in the sustainable shopping experience. Consumers can use their devices to scan the codes on the product, thus gaining instant access to a wide range of information. This information can range from the history of the material used to sustainability certifications, giving the consumer a transparent view of the efforts made to reduce environmental impact. Apps and QR codes act as educational tools, turning the act of purchasing into an opportunity to learn and improve the understanding of the environmental impact of choices and making them informed consumers. They raise awareness about sustainability and highlight the importance of making informed choices to contribute to a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle. Furthermore, these digital tools can facilitate consumer engagement by offering the possibility to easily share information on social media platforms. This sharing can further amplify awareness and encourage open dialogue between consumers, companies and other sustainability stakeholders, creating greater awareness and responsibility in those who participate. The adoption of digital technologies also contributes to a more transparent and responsible supply chain, allowing companies to monitor and optimize the entire supply chain. This is essential to ensure that sustainability principles are respected not only in the finished product but throughout the entire production process.

Finally, the synergetic integration of sustainable product design and technological innovation not only reshapes product design, but also profoundly affects the

environmental and social responsibility of companies. This convergence is essential to meet global sustainability challenges by creating products that not only meet consumer needs but also contribute to a more sustainable and responsible future.

1.3 Sustainability: the imperative for long term product success

The two dimensions introduced above are crucial to the creation of an effective strategy aimed at achieving the mission that guides the actions of contemporary companies: product sustainability and its declinations. But what is meant by sustainability?

The definition given by The Brundtland commission in 1987 sees sustainability as “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Fiksel et al., 1998).



Figure 1.5 <https://www.arenasolutions.com/resources/glossary/sustainable-development/>

The concept implies that business activities, including product development, should preserve the quality of the environment, not only for the present but also for the future. However, it is easy to see that most activities leverage the large use of natural resources and have a short-term view with profit as the ultimate goal. By adopting this strategy, natural resources have decreased over time, and continue to do so, increasing the level of

environmental pollution. For this reason, lawmakers around the world have promoted the enactment of environmental laws with the goal of limiting the environmental impact of most companies' products. The aim of the initiative is, of course, to reduce the overall pollution of the planet.

Returning to the meaning of sustainability, it is confirmed that is based on two goals that may seem to be opposites: consuming natural resources in the present and conserving them for the future. From the former ones arises a conflict that can be formulated as follows: "How is it possible to consume and conserve at the same time?"¹⁴

This is the dilemma to be addressed when talking about sustainability.

To find the answer, the problem must be solved in a creative way. How? By conserving material and energy in product design as the ultimate goal. Then, by making sure that these are easy to reuse and recycle, sometimes giving a new shape to existing ones, and attaching great importance to maintenance activities in product design.

There is no doubt that, over the years, the focus on sustainability has increasingly grown. Starting from considering its three dimensions - economy, environment and society - nowadays consumers, who are increasingly aware of the relevance of environmental issues and the impact they can have on society, desire and purchase products that reflect ethical values and environmental responsibility.

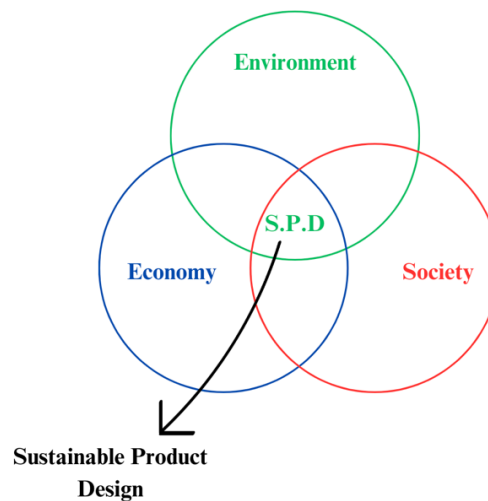
Thus, a valuable product could result in improved profitability, liberation of time, reduced pollution and so on. Feldman et al. (1997) have demonstrated that there exists a plausible connection between improved environmental performance and increased shareholder value. As a result, corporations are beginning to increasingly report the environmental performance of their products and companies voluntarily (Blumberg, 1997). Environmental standards have also been developed with the objective of quantifying the impact of products on the environment. (Mital A., Desai A., "Sustainable Product Design and Development", CRC Press, 2020)

Consequently, sustainability emerges as a powerful driver of consumer choice. A sustainable product not only meets a demand for environmental responsibility, but also profoundly affects brand perception. As a consequence, companies increasingly have to

¹⁴ Mital A., Desai A., (2020) "Sustainable Product Design and Development", CRC Press

consider the environmental aspects of their activities in order to improve their environmental performance (Charter M., “The Journal of Sustainable Product Design”, 1998).

There are many aspects involved in creating a sustainable product design (SPD), such as reducing its environmental impact, assessing its life cycle, using renewable energy, and optimizing the supply chain.



There are various ways in which products can be designed following the principles of the circular economy: using environmentally friendly materials, reducing energy consumption, optimizing packaging to minimize waste, and considering end-of-life product disposal are prime examples. The goal is always to make informed decisions aimed at reducing the human environmental footprint. “Designers collaborate with suppliers to ensure responsible materials sourcing, ethical labor practices, and adherence to environmental regulations. By partnering with suppliers committed to sustainability, designers can reduce the ecological and social impact of the product throughout its supply chain. Product design is a powerful tool that connects engineering education with market demands. It blends technical expertise with creativity, user-centeredness and sustainability to create products that meet the needs of today’s consumers. By embracing product design principles, engineering education equips students with the skills and

mindset necessary to tackle real-world challenges, drive innovation, and shape a future where technology and human needs are seamlessly integrated.”¹⁵

The goal of eco-effective product design is to close the gap between environmental management and product design (Frei 1998). To enable these different goals should be set, for example, the avoidance of hazardous materials, reduction of emissions during manufacture or increased eco-efficiency. Ecoeffective product design focuses on the systematic development and usage of these goals in sustainable product design (SPD). (Charter M., “The Journal of Sustainable Product Design”, 1998)

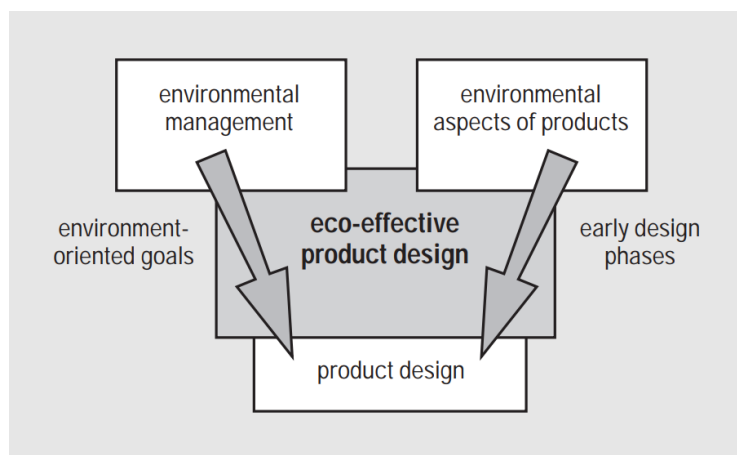


Figure 1.6: The goal of eco-effective product design is to integrate environmental management and the environmental aspects of products in the design process - Charter M. (1998) “The Journal of Sustainable Product Design, p.17

In environmental management and SPD the term ‘eco-efficiency’ is often used. However, it is important to make a distinction between effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness can be defined as a measure of goal achievement and efficiency as the number of resources used to reach the goal. Therefore ‘eco-effectiveness’ can be defined as the systematic derivation and usage of goals to improve environmental efficiency (Frei 1998). Consequently, today sustainability is no longer an option for companies, even less an ethical choice: it is now an imperative to be strictly followed in order to enjoy long-term success. Indeed, consumers reward companies that demonstrate a tangible commitment to sustainable practices, enhancing their reputation. New generations are willing to pay

¹⁵ Mital A., Desai A., (2020) “Sustainable Product Design and Development”, CRC Press

more for goods, increasing the demand for sustainability that companies now can no longer ignore. And which they can only meet with the push for innovation.¹⁶

Sustainability is no longer seen as a marketing strategy aimed at generating greater profit, but rather as an investment to build a long-lasting reputation and to respond to the needs of consumers who have taken an active role towards brands, to whom they demand respect for the values they believe in.

Given these premises, it is not surprising that sustainability continued to play a central role during COP28. Indeed, during the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Dubai from 30 November to 13 December 2023, there was a growing commitment to sustainability, focusing on the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions, to which the integration of sustainable practices into product design and the value chain could certainly benefit.¹⁷

The key moment of the event was marked by the presentation of the first global assessment under the Paris Agreement. The report not only evaluated progress towards the agreement's climate targets but also emphasized the crucial need to peak global emissions by 2025, with a subsequent reduction of 43% by 2030 and 60% by 2035 compared to 2019 levels. These targets are essential to limit global warming to 1.5°C. In addition, it highlighted the delay of some countries in meeting the Paris Agreement targets, as well as the importance of a more sustainable overall approach. Parties agreed to submit by COP30 their updated climate plans for 2035, emphasizing alignment to global warming limits based on the best available science and the results of the 2023 global stocktaking. In this way, the pursuit of sustainability in the creation and production process by industries belonging to various sectors such as fashion or food is positioned as an effective response to the problem of climate change.

In conclusion, the discourse on sustainability has evolved into a primary force shaping the strategies of contemporary businesses. Over the years, sustainability has grown from a niche consideration to a fundamental aspect of consumer choice. Consumers, now more aware of environmental issues, seek products that embody ethical values and

¹⁶ Mital A., Desai A., (2020) “Sustainable Product Design and Development”, CRC Press

¹⁷ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/climate-change/paris-agreement/cop28/#:~:text=Il%20bilancio%20ha%20evidenziato%20la,globale%20a%201%2C5%20%2C2%20%20BAC>

environmental responsibility. A sustainable product is not only a response to environmental demands but a transformative force influencing brand perception. In this sense, eco-effective product design - a strategic fusion of environmental management and aesthetics - sets new goals for sustainability. It is an imperative for companies to embrace sustainability not merely as an ethical choice but as a requisite for long-term success. Consumers reward tangible commitments to sustainability, making it an investment in building long-lasting reputations.

Chapter 2. La Marzocco: the example of successful Made in Italy brand

In this chapter, an emblematic case of successful business model – the one of La Marzocco brand - is illustrated: over the years it has contributed to the enhancement of the company's reputation by focusing on product aesthetics, high quality and innovative technology. This model places sustainability at the core of its business. Indeed, in addition to providing first-class products, La Marzocco is deeply committed to adopt environmentally sustainable practices, adopting ecologically sustainable production processes to reduce the environmental impact of its products. From ideation to final delivery, the company integrates the principles of sustainability at every stage of the production process. Through a constant search for quality excellence, La Marzocco embodies the best of "Made in Italy" in the luxury coffee sector. Its renowned reputation for innovation, production quality and environmental responsibility positions it as a point of reference for coffee enthusiasts worldwide, confirming its status as a leader in the high-end coffee machine market.

The drafting of this chapter is the result of qualitative interviews conducted with La Marzocco's team, providing interesting insights into the company profile, its strategies, as well as valuable information regarding product design and the company's orientation towards sustainability. The writing also included the consultation of the company's Transparency Report for 2023.

2.1 Company profile

The drafting of this paragraph was possible thanks to the conversation with Giada Biondi, La Marzocco's Communication Manager.

La Marzocco is an Italian company famous to produce high-quality coffee machines. With over ninety years of experience in the sector, the company stands out for its fusion of traditional craftsmanship and technological innovation. In fact, it is not by chance, that it

takes its name from the lion symbol of Florence - the Marzocco – demonstrating the close relationship with its origins. Its machines, with their sophisticated design and outstanding performance, embody a style icon in the world of high-end coffee. The focus on quality is summed up in its brand vision: to become the brand of choice for all those who seek to champion excellence in specialty coffee.



Figure 2.1 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

Founded in Florence in 1927 by Giuseppe and Bruno Bambi - at a time when coffee became 'espresso' thanks to the innovative machines that improved its quality - La Marzocco became an international reality in the 2000s, going beyond the Florentine boundaries thanks to its role as official sponsor of the World Barista Championship from 2000 to 2008; this partnership enabled it to establish a relationship with many of the world's champion baristas who became brand ambassadors.¹⁸

A milestone in its development was marked in 1939, when it developed and patented the first horizontal boiler coffee machine, which has become a standard in the industry today. This was followed by a series of important innovations, such as the double boiler system with saturated brewing groups patented sometime later. The company has always stood

¹⁸ <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/about-us/storia/>

out in the market for its strong bond with tradition and innate passion for the continuous search for product quality and reliability. To this day, highly specialized personnel oversee every stage of production of each machine, which is handmade to order for each individual customer. For this reason, La Marzocco remains an artisan company, while offering important technological innovations to its clients and the market.¹⁹

A relevant detail to understand the philosophy lies in the fact that La Marzocco played a significant role in the recognition and elevation of the barista to a dignified profession. Before the launch of its products on the market, this job was not always regarded positively. However, thanks to the quality of the machines produced, baristas were able to fully express their skills, turning coffee preparation into a true art. This contributed to a greater appreciation of the role of the barista in society and in the catering sector.

Consequently, it is unsurprising that the company is based on core values guiding its operations and strategies:

- *Integrity*: doing the right things for the right reasons.
- *Impact*: making a difference by practicing a positive influence on the team, the company and the customers.
- *Curiosity*: asking questions with genuine curiosity that reflect different points of view and challenge the status quo. Identifying the 'why' behind everything the brand does.
- *Courage*: having a propensity to defend the corporate culture, embracing change with a listening attitude.
- *Celebration*: La Marzocco celebrates others with the same energy with which it celebrates its achievements.

¹⁹ La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report



Figure 2.2 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

These values are also reflected in the brand mission: *“Persevere in manufacturing the finest in class of specialty coffee equipment, while encompassing people, heritage, technology, design and a spirit of sustainability in business”*.

Among the company's strengths stand its people, who are at the heart of all its activities and the protagonists of the company's Manifesto: *“to build relationships that enrich the lives of others”*.

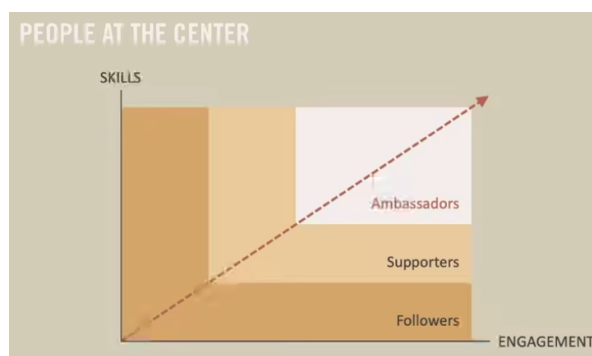


Figure 2.3 La Marzocco 2022 Company presentation

What does it mean to put people at the center? It means working together with talented people in a rewarding and safe environment where they can emerge and grow and each of them has the tools to become a driver of La Marzocco's growth and a brand ambassador. Focusing on preserving the company's culture, employer branding and employee engagement, the goal is to promote and maintain La Marzocco's heritage by sharing the

company's legacy, vision, values, and philosophy with employees at all levels and departments anywhere in the world.

With partners in more than 120 countries around the world, it is more important than ever to promote diversity in the workplace. La Marzocco embraces its multicultural identity and is committed to creating a team of professionals with different experiences, skills and points of view.²⁰



Figure 2.4 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

La Marzocco's commitment to its people and employees was marked by being awarded the Great Place to Work certification for the fourth consecutive year (2022/2023), following a corporate culture audit performed in late 2022.

Great Place To Work works with a number of pioneering companies around the world to analyze, evaluate and recognize outstanding workplaces as it is renowned as a global authority on corporate culture. Working with this research institute enables companies to conduct surveys of their employees and gain recognition.

What are the features of a Great Place to Work?

“The inclusive character of trust, consistently experienced by the demographic groups, is the foundation of a great place to work for all. This homogeneity is realized by maximizing the human potential. A great place to work for all is a place where everyone, regardless of the personal characteristics, the role held in the company, and the tasks performed, recognizes that they work in a company with an excellent organizational culture. The company and its workplace culture are analyzed using our 2 tools, validated by thirty years of research and analysis in organizations around the world, which measure the opinions of employees about their workplace and collect the HR management policies implemented by the company”²¹.

²⁰ La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

²¹ 2024 GPTW LM Italy Results



Figure 2.5 2024 GPTW LM Italy Results



Trust Index® - the model and the 5 dimensions



Figure 2.6 2024 GPTW LM Italy Results

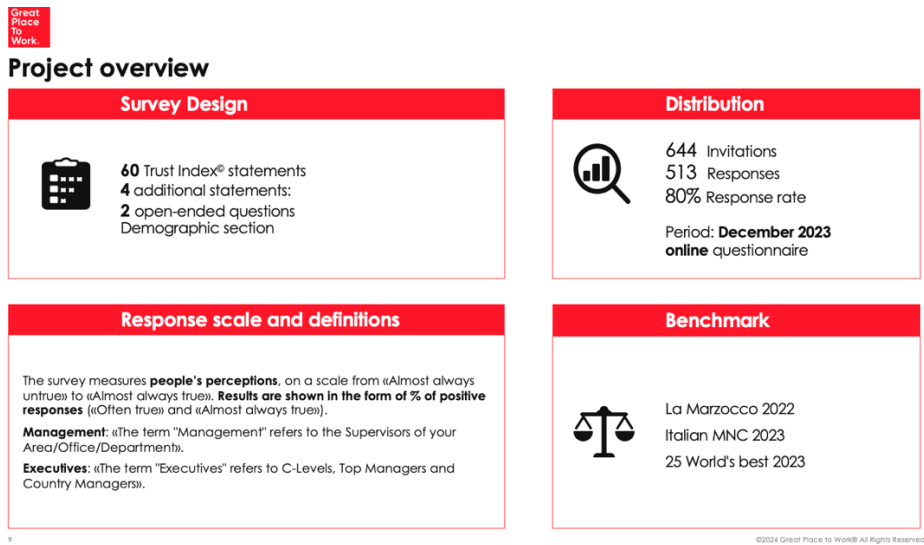


Figure 2.7 2024 GPTW LM Italy Results

La Marzocco has received support from Great Place To Work in its efforts to create a work environment suitable for personal and professional development. Over the past two years, the company has collaborated with Great Place To Work on an international level, achieving global company certification (and ranking 14th as the Best Place to Work in Italy for the year 2022/2023) based on survey results collected from over 600 employees worldwide.

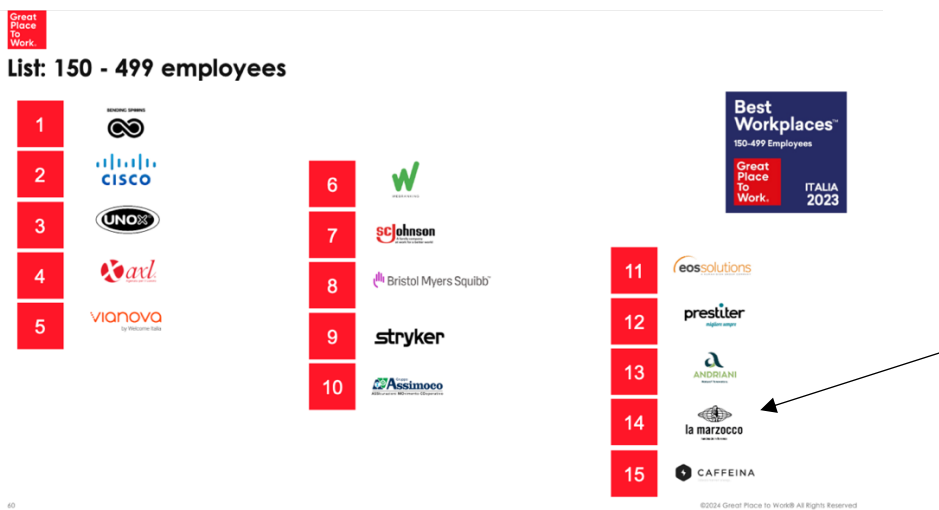


Figure 2.8 2024 GPTW LM Italy Results

In the latest assessment, La Marzocco recorded a Trust Index score of 83%, representing the overall average of employee perceptions of corporate credibility, respect, fairness, pride and cohesion.

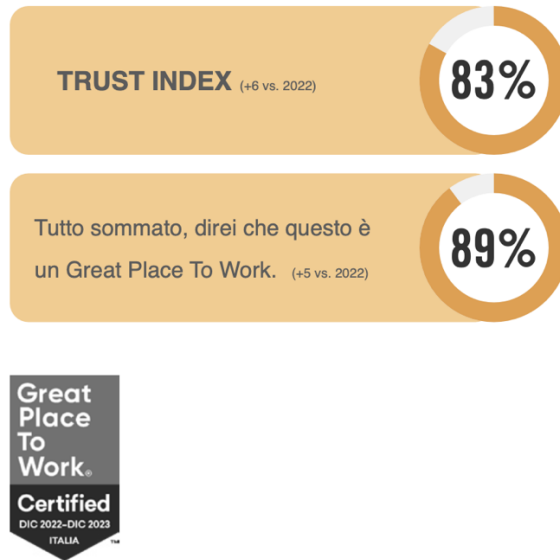
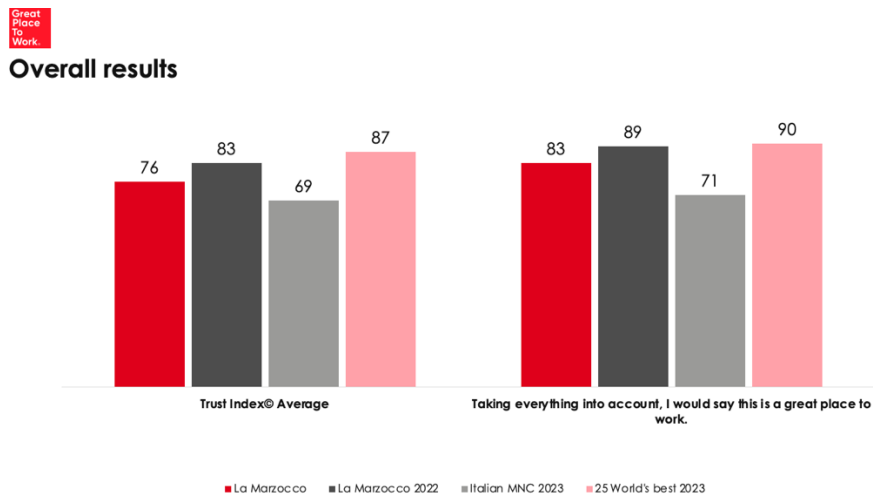


Figure 2.9 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

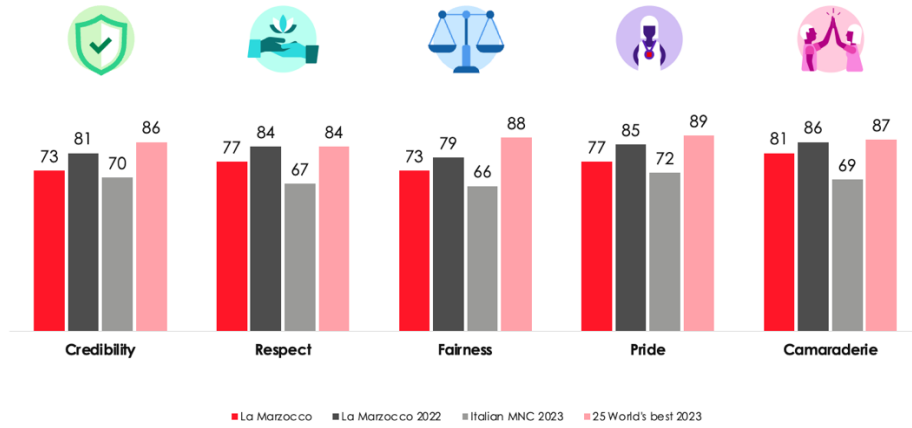


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Figure 2.10 2024 GPTW LM Italy Results

The 5 dimensions

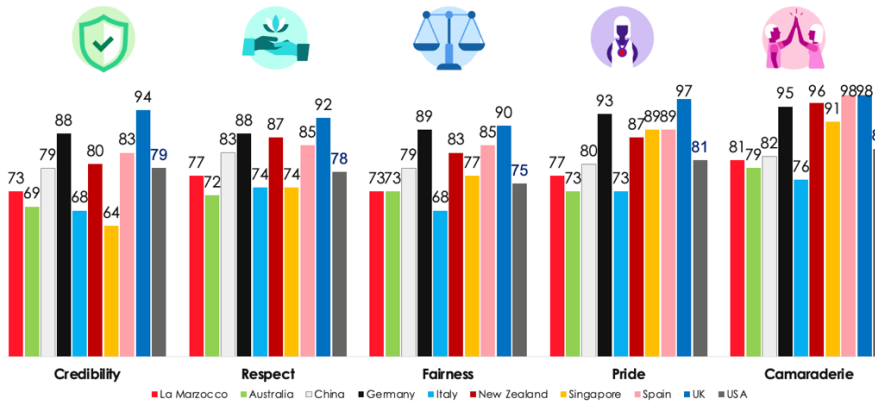


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Figure 2.11 GPTW LM Italy Results

The 5 dimensions by Country



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Figure 2.12 GPTW LM Italy Results

2.2 Product Design: tradition driven by innovation

La Marzocco offers a wide range of products, from traditional espresso machines suitable for professional and high-end home use, made in-house or in collaboration with leading companies. The main goal of each of these products remains constant: to improve the customer experience.



Figure 2.13 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

Brand Pillars such as connection, tradition, innovation and craft are summed up in all the products realized. La Marzocco machine has always been conceived as a design element, around which people gather to socialize and share a positive moment. Its lower profile than traditional machines allows interaction between the barista and the customer.

Over time, La Marzocco has become a reference point in the hospitality and Food & Beverage sector. In fact, it is present in restaurants, cafeterias, and hotels with its products, including the revolutionary KB90 as its top model.



Figure 2.14 <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/prodotti-professionali/macchine-da-caffe/kb90/>

Since 2015, the company has also entered the domestic sector with models designed for the consumer, moving from B2B (business to business) to B2C (business to consumer) business. The symbolic product of this innovation is the Linea Mini, a machine designed for espresso enthusiasts at home; the small machine features the design and performance of La Marzocco products, including quality and technological components, redesigned for the kitchen. In 2022, the Micra Line was launched, the first machine designed exclusively for home use. With the high quality that distinguishes the company concentrated in very compact dimensions, the new member of the home range allows exceptional coffee to be prepared in the comfort of the home kitchen, reaching the ideal temperature for espresso in five minutes. This innovation has been La Marzocco's strong point in recent years, as it now accounts for more than 50% of the volume of machines produced.



Figure 2.15 <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/categoria-prodotto/macchine-da-caffe/macchine-per-la-casa/>

Most people begin their journey in contact with the company with an initial experience with the Moka, and then decide to continue it by buying first the capsules and then the machines in department stores (e.g. Mediaworld). The market size slowly diminishes as niche products that have a high cost: only people who are truly interested in using a professional machine for domestic use will proceed to purchase, understanding all the quality and technological innovation behind the product. La Marzocco accompanies them along this path with emotional and educational activities, high-level experiences with the aim of inspiring them; in fact, another key element of La Marzocco lies in its non-aggressive or direct advertising (it has no showrooms around the world, but only digital and social channels as a showcase, in addition to its offices, factory and Accademia del Caffè Espresso).

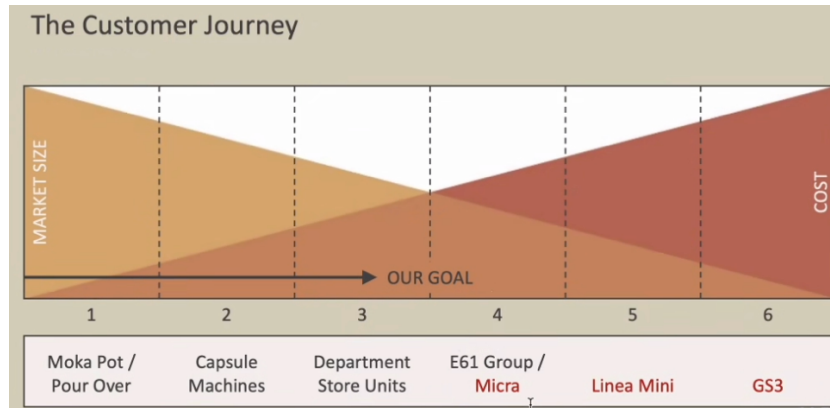


Figure 2.16 La Marzocco 2022 Company presentation

In every product, La Marzocco seeks the union of form and function (performance and design). An example is the Mod bar model which, positioned under the counter, was created on the principle of reducing the barrier between bartender and customer.²²



Figure 2.17 La Marzocco 2022 Company presentation

The aim of offering outstanding experiences around the making of coffee has pushed La Marzocco beyond its boundaries, expanding its core business: the typical machines have thus been joined by coffee grinders and coffee dispensers, as well as the Milky, an automatic milk frother which, thanks to a button and its innovative technology, not only froths any type of milk to perfection but also allows the barista to engage in other activities such as talking to customers.

²² La Marzocco Definite Transparency 2023



Figure 2.18 <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/prodotti-professionali/wally/scopri-wally/>

Accademia del Caffè Espresso also hosts a craft workshop, 'Officine Fratelli Bambi', where artisans work on customized machines, perfectly embodying the 'Fatto a mano a Firenze' (handmade in Florence). Here, craftsmanship excellence, research, design and innovation are at the service of the production of exclusive machines and limited series.²³



“where renowned engineering meets outstanding design”

Figure 2.19 <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/prodotti-professionali/officine-fratelli-bambi/>

Almost 50 per cent of the brand's machines are customized in their component details and the materials used (e.g. wood and brass), as well as in terms of color. The company is willing and prepared to meet all requests for customization and painting of the products, but also for tailoring from scratch thanks to a close collaboration between designer and customer that allows a unique product to be achieved.

The meticulous attention to detail of craftsmen, suppliers and customers results in a machine that is considered the top product in the place.

²³ La Marzocco Definite Transparency 2023



Figure 2.20 <https://accademiaespresso.com/officine-fratelli-bambi/>

As already mentioned, La Marzocco's production quality lies in the combination of art and technology, the key element to enjoy lasting competitiveness in today's market and maintain a high brand reputation. For this reason, a few years ago, the company began a digital transformation project, combining craftsmanship and innovation.

La Marzocco's focus on people is a crucial aspect in the transition towards 'Craftsman 4.0'. This concept implies the integration of advanced technologies with traditional craft activities, enabling the exchange and processing of data within the organization. This approach combines manual work with process mapping and optimization of activities in the production cycle. The implementation of RFID technology for material management, together with the development of dedicated applications, has simplified warehouse operations and improved stock accuracy. In addition, the company has introduced smart labels and specific applications, further optimizing the production process and offering operators real-time information about the machines to be produced and those in production, as well as intuitive and interactive assembly instructions.

La Marzocco can also rely on an intelligent production system, thanks to customized applications that facilitate daily planning, monitoring material availability and operator skills. Each operator has been provided with a personal tablet to consult technical product details, assembly instructions and directives from the manager. Product identification has been simplified through the introduction of 'smart carts', which are equipped with electronic labels that communicate the status of the machine via an intuitive color code.

During the work phases, these provide visual indications and can signal possible problems.

During assembly, a digital checklist assists the operator in critical process steps, such as specific quality checks or recording values in the system.

All these innovations have enabled real-time monitoring of production, facilitated by the creation of shared dashboards between the factory and production managers, allowing rapid intervention when necessary. The integration of digitized processes has improved resource efficiency, gradually replacing more traditional practices based on experience and paper-based documentation.²⁴

The study of innovative design proposed in the following paragraph was further explored by conducting an interview with Stefano Della Pietra, La Marzocco's Design & Innovation Manager, aimed at exploring some of the key elements characterizing the company in the premium coffee machine market, with a particular attention to product design. Starting with the goal of creating a harmonious combination of form and function, the study below shows how the company has approached this challenge in the design of its products, as well as the central role that La Marzocco machines play within coffee shops and how the evolution of their design has influenced this dynamic. The interview delves into the aesthetic approach adopted by the company - including the criteria of symmetry, color and inspiration that have a strong impact on product creation - as well as the relationship between aesthetics and sustainability at the product level, with the aim of a design that will last.

1. La Marzocco aims to combine form and function in all its products with the purpose of offering exceptional experiences around coffee preparation. Can you explain this strategy in detail?

"For us, aesthetics is the way to bring the customer closer and let him discover how well made the machine really is on the inside. The aim is always to create objects that have functionality at their core because we do not make works of art but working tools, and aesthetics alone would not make the product sustainable over time".

²⁴ <https://www.impresacity.it/news/28835/come-funziona-la-smart-factory-di-la-marzocco.html>

2. Why is the machine considered as a top product inside a bar?

"In the past, the development of the horizontal boiler and consequently the reduction of the vertical space required by the machines, combined with the double boiler and therefore a large steam supply, allowed us to become popular in Anglo-Saxon markets where coffee drinks often require the addition of frothed milk. In these markets the consumption of the drink is not as frenetic as in Italy, it often takes place at the table and not at the counter. This has allowed the machine to be moved to the counter and not the back, making it the core of many coffee shops".

3. How are aesthetic dimensions, such as symmetry and color, handled in the design of La Marzocco products? Where do they draw inspiration from and what aesthetic canons do they apply?

"There is no constant method, it is the eye of the designers who have grown up within the company that ensures that the company's proportions and heritage are respected. Inspiration can be everywhere in practice, because every object we have around us is designed and often very well".

4. How has product design evolved because of the company's international expansion?

"Our idea is to maintain a design that is the same all over the world so as not to alter our nature. We believe that La Marzocco must be the same everywhere. What is implemented most from the initial phase is the industrialization of the product itself, which must be repeatable and mountable. You never start a design without thinking about how it must be produced and maintained".

5. What is the relationship between aesthetics and sustainability in La Marzocco products?

"On the design side, what we do is always to start from a classic shape and add details related to the historical moment. Our aim is to create machines that aesthetically can last as long as the mechanics inside them. We win when the barista doesn't feel like changing the machine after a few years. This for us is a way of being sustainable: if machines are maintained correctly they can last forever".

2.3 La Marzocco's commitment to sustainable growth

The redaction of this paragraph was facilitated by the discussion with Guido Preti, La Marzocco's Sustainability manager.

La Marzocco's commitment to sustainability has grown over the years, going along with its expansion and increased reputation. The initiatives carried out by the company are enclosed in the Transparency Report under the headings of people, planet, product and profit.



Figure 2.21 "people, planet, product and profit" La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

Looking at the mission statement, it should be mentioned that the last element has been included in recent years to formalize the company's commitment to sustainability, which has become the heart of the business: *"Pursuing excellence in the production of the best*

high-end coffee equipment, focusing on people, heritage, technology, design and sustainability".²⁵

La Marzocco is committed to adopting solutions that can reduce its environmental impact.

accademia del caffè espresso

DOVE L'EREDITÀ INCONTRA LA VISIONE



Figure 2.22 Accademia del Caffè Espresso - La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

The sustainability commitment not only reflects the company's structural growth, but also its responsibility towards its stakeholders: the potential positive impact generated by the company on people is aimed at reducing the environmental impact of its operations and products. The strategy adopted includes the systematic measurement of emissions, water and energy consumption and reduction and efficiency operations, as well as decarbonization in line with the Paris agreements to stay below 1.5 C°.

On a concrete level, La Marzocco has implanted photovoltaic panels on its main plant: the Scarperia site and Accademia del Caffè in Pian di San Bartolo produce about 50% of their energy needs through these panels, which produced 530 MWh of green energy in 2022. In addition, the company has switched to full electric or plug-in hybrid cars (66% to date) and can count on 28 recharging stations spread over three factories. A concrete commitment has also involved investing in climate action projects through the purchase of carbon offsets (financing international projects aimed at reducing the company's CO2

²⁵ <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/about-us/mission/>

emissions). In addition, La Marzocco has supported reforestation or sustainable forest management projects in Italy to have a local impact at a national level.

Nowadays, sustainability takes many different forms but La Marzocco is characterized by a particular focus on quality at 360 degrees, both in relations with stakeholders and in the quality of the product which, to be sustainable, must be long-lasting. Sustainability also invests in the cultural context as an almost century-old company, to continue to be competitive in the reference market and maintain its positioning, must invest in the preservation and transmission of corporate culture, through alignment activities aimed at the new generations and members of the organization who will continue the company's growth.

Having become aware of its impacts, the company has made a strong commitment to a more structured approach to the sustainability of its processes, both from the point of view of the mentioned Smart Factory (with applications of Company 4.0), which includes lean production projects and a digital support system to closely monitor the stages of the production process, as well as product efficiencies. The system implements awareness of the impact of machine consumption and is a commitment to improving thermal efficiency and reducing the energy consumption of the product itself.

In parallel and starting in 2021, La Marzocco has begun to do the first data collection for the carbon footprint, going to analyze not only direct and indirect emissions relative to its own factories (scope 1 and 2), but also emissions relative to the value chain (scope 3) i.e. upstream and downstream activities. The result is a general calculation of the impact of raw materials used during the activities of La Marzocco Srl.

The company also conducted an analysis of the recyclability rate, looking at the end-of-life rate of key products. In this context, the sustainability of products also has to do with the concept of durability: being high-quality products, they have always been designed and manufactured both to be repairable - prolonging their life - and to last a long time. In contrast to the world of electronics, they do not become obsolete after a short time, but enjoy a very long life of around 20 years.

"The ultimate goal is to create a huge impact on people while leaving a minimal footprint on the environment"²⁶. In this regard, a significant role is played by Accademia del Caffé

²⁶ La Marzocco Definite Transparency 2023

Espresso, which is both a marketing and networking platform and a physical space where the company hosts multidisciplinary experts to carry out research and studies on the coffee chain and its environmental impact. The heart of the building is the Air Factory (a greenhouse to purify the air in indoor spaces - designed in collaboration with Prof. Stefano Mancuso, the University of Florence and PNAT) that produces 99% pure air.



Figure 2.23 Photo by Sara Petruzzi, July 2023

At the level of large-scale international projects, La Marzocco has financed reforestation projects in South America to compensate, as far as possible, for carbon emissions: steel machines exported to more than 100 countries and foreign markets representing 95% of the company's business have driven La Marzocco to a commitment to reducing its impact. La Marzocco's commitment to sustainability is combined with philanthropy projects: since 2007, the company has joined the "Songwa Coffee Farm" project, supporting a plantation in Tanzania without having direct control over the sale of the coffee produced. The focus of this activity is on improving the living conditions of the workers and includes the construction of wells and schools within the plantation.



Figure 2.24 La Marzocco 2022 Company presentation

Since 2023, this project has evolved into a foundation under the name 'Hands for Songwa Foundation'. Thanks to the 'Consensus' project, a collaboration between Accademia del Caffè Espresso, PNAT and Cisco Systems, the well-being of the plantation and environmental conditions are monitored through the application of IoT sensors.²⁷



Figure 2.25 <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/hemro-e-la-marzocco-uniscono-le-forze-per-promuovere-la-fondazione-hands-for-songwa/>

La Marzocco's commitment in terms of sustainability also invests the product, through the implementation of an LCA (life-cycle assessment) of the best-selling product to use its modelling to carry out eco-design projects. Relating to ESG corporate objectives, in addition to a reduction in corporate emissions, combined with efficient waste management and product end-of-life, through the EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) program, La Marzocco takes responsibility for the end-of-life of packaging, plastics used, batteries and everything used in production.

²⁷ La Marzocco Definite Transparency 2023

“La Marzocco has always looked to innovation and sustainability as fundamental pillars in the design of each new product. This is not limited to coffee machines, but also involves assembly, packaging, culture and company.”²⁸



Figure 2.26 2030 Agenda – 17 SDGs

For what concerns social activities, in addition to the already mentioned Songwa foundation, La Marzocco engages in community engagement activities - both with employees and around the world - with subsidiaries that do corporate volunteering, promoting employee participation in voluntary activities with local NGOs.

In addition, the company pays attention to diversity and inclusion issues and aims to adopt strategies to improve the percentage of men and women in the company, as well as the percentage of female managers.

²⁸ <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/la-linea-mini-e-sempre-piu-green-con-il-nuovo-imballo-sostenibile/>

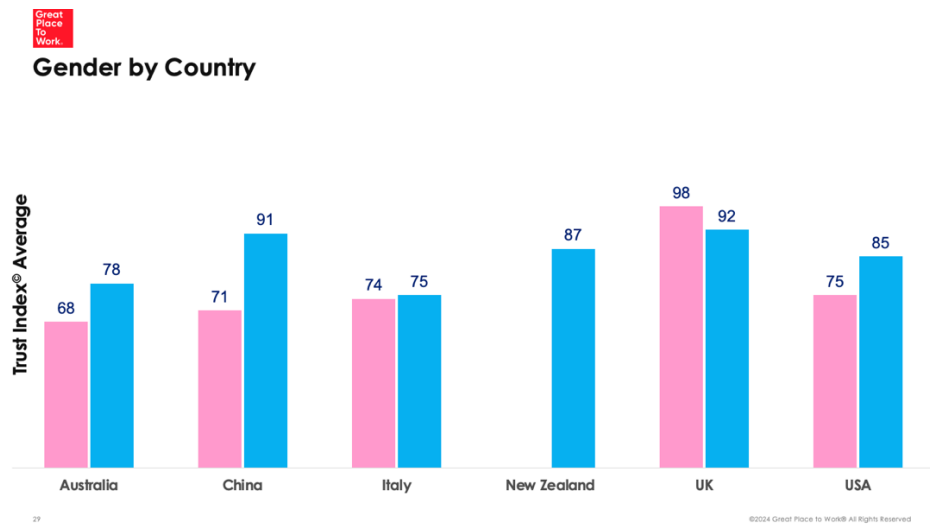
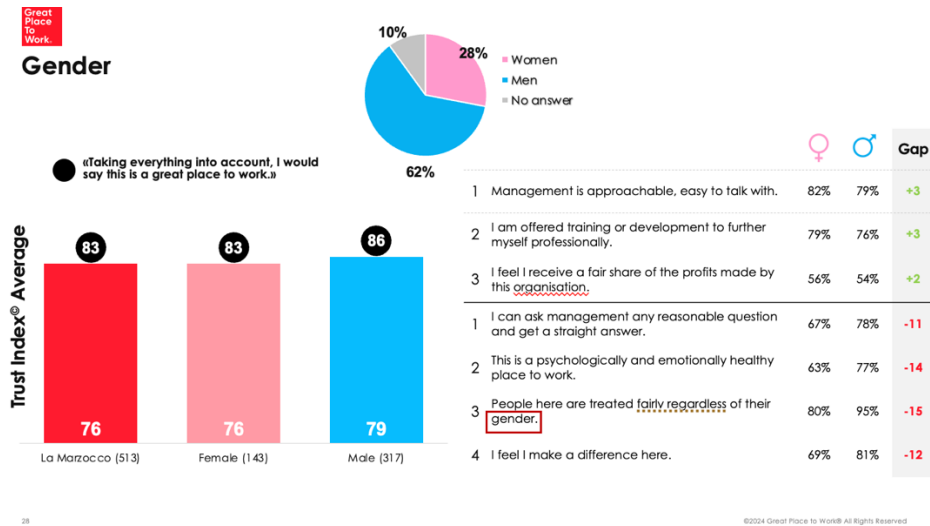


Figure 2.27 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

“For years, La Marzocco's philosophy has been based on people, putting them at the center of the company's policies. To formalize this approach, La Marzocco has decided to become a benefit company, committing to consider its impact on people and the environment, and choosing a sustainable and transparent path that leads the company to enhance the ecosystem and the community in which it operates.”²⁹

The company pays attention to organizational management by limiting its risks, using the MOG according to law 231 and this year renewed the code of ethics after changing the statute of La Marzocco SRL and its legal form to a Benefit Society in 2023, thus adding

²⁹ <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/about-us/impegno/>

four common benefit clauses in the statute and formalizing a management focus on the positive impact on the environment and people and not only investors.

La Marzocco can also rely on an integrated management system with quality systems (already implemented ISO 9001 for quality, ISO 45001 for health and safety). The company plans to further implement the EMS (Environmental Management System) with an ISO 14001.

Therefore, the growth La Marzocco has undergone over the last two decades has affected its awareness of the impact of its operations. In addition to it, over the last ten years a path has been pursued to improve the company's policies and management model, refining and adapting it to meet the needs of all stakeholders, reaffirming its commitment to social and environmental sustainability.

2.4 Business profits

La Marzocco Transparency Report 2023 shows the company closing with a consolidated turnover of \$250 million, with more than 30% of the profit going to R&D and CSR investment. Over time, the company has experienced enormous growth in demand, from 15000 units in 2016 to 40000 in 2023. An important growth that also concerns domestic products.

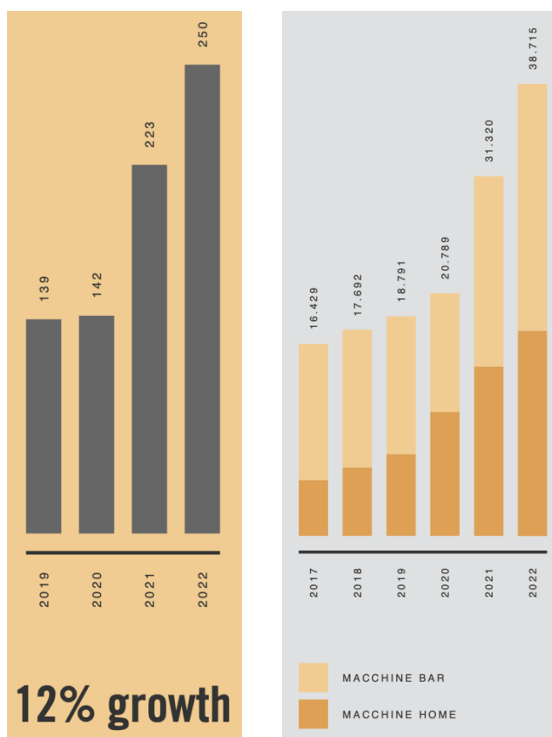


Figure 2.28 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

The following are the top 20 markets (in terms of turnover) for the 2022 sales of La Marzocco SRL and its subsidiaries and dealers.

	2019	2020	2021		2022	
	Revenue (€)	Revenue (€)	Revenue (€)	Revenue (€)	% of Total	
1. CINA	4.390.152	8.468.569	21.730.901	27.351.251	15,6%	
2. USA	10.757.787	8.458.717	16.727.903	26.025.945	14,8%	
3. ITALIA	8.649.136	9.978.279	15.136.106	19.361.276	11,0%	
4. AUSTRALIA	8.531.604	8.066.726	12.428.501	15.577.768	8,9%	
5. SINGAPORE	7.209.398	116.279	260.744	9.731.257	5,5%	
6. REGNO UNITO	2.080.573	5.237.819	9.039.298	9.696.430	5,5%	
7. ARABIA SAUDITA	2.081.513	6.224.242	8.501.807	7.965.769	4,5%	
8. GERMANIA	2.320.438	2.994.013	3.922.344	7.207.514	4,1%	
9. SUD COREA	3.518.565	4.945.289	3.778.100	6.527.137	3,7%	
10. GIAPPONE	1.335.145	1.613.885	2.205.379	3.962.665	2,3%	
11. UAE	2.859.986	1.799.973	1.729.723	2.957.203	1,7%	
12. HONG KONG	1.658.515	1.696.226	2.776.161	2.907.527	1,7%	
13. CANADA	1.158.922	1.337.592	1.440.596	2.685.489	1,5%	
14. PAESI BASSI	2.610.884	1.137.984	2.134.854	2.313.850	1,3%	
15. NUOVA ZELANDA	1.968.974	1.605.292	1.435.584	2.185.965	1,2%	
16. TAIWAN	1.333.970	938.691	1.848.840	2.090.503	1,2%	
17. FRANCIA	1.075.234	955.364	1.418.353	1.944.918	1,1%	
18. SPAGNA	1.065.464	544.515	1.081.283	1.736.593	1,0%	
19. ISRAELE	735.388	344.854	746.012	1.596.062	0,9%	
20. CIPRO	76.676	187.853	1.106.769	1.585.039	0,9%	
TOP 20	62.587.795	66.652.162	109.449.257	155.410.163	88,5%	
LA MARZOCCO SRL	81.168.965	83.600.764	131.164.208	175.678.634	100,0%	

Figure 2.29 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

2.5 Key strategies for brand management

In the competitive context of the coffee industry, La Marzocco stands out for its unique strategies aimed at creating a memorable experience for customers and turning occasional consumers into loyal enthusiasts. The following paragraph explores the strengths of the company's strategies through a qualitative interview with Stefano Zagni, La Marzocco's brand manager, who provided significant insights into distinctive practices and the deep connection with the territory and coffee culture. The paragraph also considers the central role played by Accademia del Caffé Espresso in offering continuous educational experience not only to partners but also to distributors and customers, contributing to brand loyalty. Finally, the interview presents a careful analysis of the company's Points of Difference compared to industry competitors. Through this study, it is possible to better understand La Marzocco's distinctive positioning in the coffee industry, which focuses on the constant pursuit of excellence in product quality, thanks to the use of cutting-edge technologies.

Below are the interview questions with an elaboration of the answers received by Stefano Zagni:

“What are the distinctive aspects that La Marzocco uses to create a memorable experience for its customers?”

La Marzocco has always leveraged the enhancement of its history and craftsmanship, attributing great importance to its historical archive, the contribution of people, and the value the latter have brought within the organization throughout its history. Both internal and external relationships are crucial for establishing an authentic connection with the coffee world; that's the reason why they are placed at the center of the brand's strategy. On the other hand, La Marzocco values the whole experience, promoting the concept of a Made in Italy company, strongly linked to Florentine tradition and the surrounding territory. The company has always sought to integrate the influence of the territory into its operations, drawing inspiration from the local context even for the design of its products. It has actively collaborated with the Mugello and the city of Florence in

numerous initiatives. For example, during the devastating flood, the distinctive van displayed in the historical gallery of the Accademia was used to recover the coffee machines of Florentine customers damaged by the event. These were brought to the factory, restored free of charge, and returned to the owners. Additionally, the van was used by the municipality for museum interventions related to institutions affected by the flood. Subsequently, it was restored on the company's seventieth anniversary, rebuilt from scratch according to Piero Bambi's original designs. Another significant contribution offered by the company to the city of Florence was the restoration of the Marzocco, the company's symbol, located in Piazza della Signoria. These gestures testify to the deep bond between La Marzocco and the territory, highlighting the attention to the needs of customers and the fan base. It is precisely for this reason that in 2015, the company decided to open the Accademia del Caffè Espresso, with two main objectives: to offer enthusiasts and customers a complete experience, not limited to the simple use of machines, and to maintain a strong connection with the world of coffee. The Accademia is not only a showroom but also serves as a meeting point and facilitation for the company, allowing it to stay connected with industry realities, such as production chains and coffee operators, creating strategic alliances to enhance origins and promote the spread of quality coffee culture.

“What strategies does La Marzocco adopt to turn occasional customers into loyal and passionate ones?”

Accademia del Caffè is still an evolving process with this goal. It represents the focal point of La Marzocco's marketing, where the narration of events and hospitality for partners and affiliates are concentrated.

Scientific and applied research, together with the connection to the origins of coffee, are fundamental pillars on which the Academy's training offering is based. Through workshop packages lasting two to four days and the Airbridge program, which involves branches and employees in maintaining strong relationships and initiating new projects, the company aims to provide comprehensive and continuous training.

Distributors can take advantage of various packages for their customers, thus helping to strengthen the relationship between La Marzocco and end consumers. In addition, La

Marzocco promotes strategies to ensure general alignment within the company. For example, through the Family Days held every two years, it offers an opportunity for sharing and team building among all the branches, presenting new products and strengthening the sense of belonging. Internally, periodic staff meetings keep staff cross-informed about projects, technologies and financial trends, avoiding fragmentation and encouraging knowledge sharing. Projects such as the Quarterly Quarter Lee magazine and the YearBook, an annual photo book distributed as a thank-you to partners and suppliers, help to keep the relationship with the sales network alive.

“What are the competitive advantages or Points of Difference of La Marzocco compared to its competitors?”

Strategically, La Marzocco stands out for its ability to look beyond purely commercial aspects, paying attention to the real needs of the market and trends in the coffee sector. The company doesn't just promote its machines; it commits to spreading a culture of high-quality coffee, based on awareness of origins and the use of advanced technologies. From a strategic perspective, our main strength lies in the ability to observe the context in which we operate not only from an economic and commercial perspective focused on machines, but also in the desire to expand our brand presence in the market. However, our approach distinguishes itself in its willingness to start from the roots, evaluating the true market needs and monitoring trend changes, such as those related to coffee shops, chains, and types of beverages served. This aspect is crucial for La Marzocco's survival and continuous research.

It should be emphasized that the machine is just the final piece of the puzzle: it is a device that dispenses a beverage, but it is also strongly related to a story that begins on the other side of the world, involving people with experiences and perspectives completely different from ours. The company doesn't simply aim to saturate the market with many machines; it has always been linked to a concept of high-quality coffee made possible through the use of technology. It is important to understand that quality coffee cannot be produced on a large scale. Preserving micro farms, companies that adopt a conscious approach and cutting-edge technologies in raw material processing, is essential, ensuring a high standard of quality for the coffee that reaches the market.

All of this explains the philosophy behind the Accademia del Caffè espresso's project: supporting every phase of the supply chain so that the market is ready to embrace La Marzocco machines. Having full awareness and control of the process, from coffee cultivation to the moment the roasted coffee reaches the machines, is indicative of excellent work done in the supply chain preceding the use of the machine itself. On the other hand, through event organization and knowledge dissemination, La Marzocco also target the other side of the market, including domestic consumers. This is a comprehensive and sustainable approach that involves all stakeholders in the coffee chain.

To achieve this goal, the company has undertaken extremely ambitious scientific projects that stand out in the world of coffee and are not limited to passive interventions or relationship-based work but focus on revolutionary initiatives. One of these projects involves eMRock, Cisco, and PNAT (an academic spin-off of the University of Florence and ENEA - the national agency for new technologies, energy, and sustainable economic development - directed by plant neurobiologist Stefano Mancuso³⁰). Specifically, the company has developed control units connected to sensors, applied directly to plants, to analyze biological processes, water requirements, and CO₂ storage capacity. This approach allows for assessing the health of plants and optimizing water resource usage, contributing to environmental sustainability. La Marzocco is aware that coffee quality depends closely on origin care and responsible management of natural resources”.

2.6 Social strategy and corporate events

The evolution of digital media has radically transformed the way companies interact with their audience. Even in this dynamic context, La Marzocco has adapted to the needs of consumers, adopting a cutting-edge social strategy to reach its customers and build a community of coffee enthusiasts. With a strong presence on social media, La Marzocco

³⁰ <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/accademia-del-caffe-espresso-e-stefano-mancuso-insieme-per-la-ricerca-delle-origini-del-caffe/>

leverages the potential of the platforms to engage its followers with engaging content, ranging from sharing behind-the-scenes stories to promoting company events and initiatives. This online presence is not limited to the mere promotion of products, but aims to create an authentic relationship with users, conveying the company's core values such as craftsmanship, innovation and passion for quality coffee. Moreover, La Marzocco has developed an active engagement strategy, encouraging participation and creating an open and transparent dialogue. This direct interaction with the community helps to build a deeper and lasting bond with customers, transforming them from mere consumers into loyal brand advocates. Through a combination of original content, interaction, and a shared vision of coffee culture, La Marzocco has been able to create a dynamic and engaging social presence, consolidating its position as a point of reference in the sector and maintaining a strong bond with its global community of coffee enthusiasts.

Below are the data for the company's different profiles on the platforms enjoying organic growth thanks to the investment in sponsorship contents from 2023 onwards: these show how, even in the social context, La Marzocco holds a leading position, with over 800.000 followers.

Instagram:	
La Marzocco	= 339.000 followers (+7% vs. 2021)
La Marzocco Home	= 260.000 followers (+11% vs. 2021)
Modbar	= 52.000 followers (+10% vs. 2021)
Wally Coffee	= 1.500 followers (+130% vs. 2021)
Accademia	= 8.100 followers (+40% vs. 2021)
Facebook:	
La Marzocco	= 29.100 followers (+1% vs. 2021)
Twitter:	
La Marzocco	= 37.000 followers (-1% vs. 2021)
YouTube:	
La Marzocco	= 10.500 subscribed (+15% vs. 2021)
La Marzocco Home	= 20.000 subscribed (+15% vs. 2021)
LinkedIn:	
La Marzocco	= 26.100 followers (+61% vs. 2021)

oltre 800.000 followers

Figure 2.30 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

Underlying the strategy implemented by the company is a product narrative as a synonym for excellence. In addition to sustainability due to the product's durability (whose' initial cost is amortized), the sale of the product continues with customer care and

communication/marketing activities in order to maintain contact and loyalty with buyers or interested parties.



Figure 2.31 La Marzocco 2022 Company presentation

In this sense, an important role can be attributed to the numerous events the company organizes with the aim of increasing brand awareness and brand loyalty. In fact, these activities make it possible to build a feeling of authentic love for the brand, as well as a sense of belonging, which leads clients to become brand lovers.

For this reason, La Marzocco attends approximately 80 events around the world, bringing its products to the center of these events: coffee has the power to bring everyone together, it is an element of conviviality, community and brand awareness. During exhibitions, the machines are usually sold to professionals at a slightly reduced price (they represent an investment) and are available to the public on a specific day.



Figure 2.32 La Marzocco 2023 Transparency Report

Chapter 3. Research phase: qualitative survey on customer preferences

3.1 Research phase design

In this chapter, following an accurate review of the existing literature on the main topic and conducting an in-depth analysis of the case study, the research goal is presented, focusing on a practical survey. Given the key role of sustainability, aesthetics and technological innovation in shaping brand success - as extensively discussed in this paper - the primary objective is to understand whether the commitment to sustainability is achieved through emphasizing the inherent quality, tradition and history characterizing a product, or through the enhancement of its aesthetic characteristics, such as visual impact, attention to detail or shape; moreover, the study aims to explore consumers' opinions regarding the importance of each element. After explaining the research objective, the chapter proceeds to describe the methodology employed in conducting the study. This includes detailing the techniques utilized, the sample of participants selected, the responses obtained and the subsequent analysis of the results. Through the analysis of the respondents' opinions, the chapter aims to understand the prevailing sentiment regarding the research topic and shed light on the elements to which consumers attribute the greatest importance.

By showing consumers' different viewpoints and preferences, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between sustainability, aesthetics and consumer behavior. Its goal is to uncover whether consumers prioritize sustainability over aesthetic appeal, or if both factors hold equal weight in their purchasing decisions. Through the interpretation of the collected data, this chapter's goal is to show details of consumer preferences and provide valuable insights for brands seeking to align their strategies with evolving consumer expectations.

3.2 Research goal

As already discussed in the first chapter on the analysis of the literature review, aesthetics and technological innovation play a fundamental role in achieving product sustainability by a brand. Aesthetics refers to visual and sensory aspects of a product, including factors such as design, shape, colors, lines, attention to detail, memorability, and recognizability. This aspect is crucial as it influences the attractiveness of the product to consumers and can have a significant impact on their purchasing decisions. If a product is aesthetically pleasing, consumers are more inclined to consider it desirable and, consequently, to support its sustainability in the long term. The technological dimension can also influence its sustainability in various ways, with the use of eco-friendly materials, efficient production processes, innovative technologies to reduce environmental impact, improving the overall quality. The concept becomes even more relevant when talking about Made in Italy companies belonging to the luxury sector, whose meticulous attention to these aspects is definitely the reason behind their success compared to competitors and a good reputation in the target market.

From this analysis arises the research goal of understanding consumers' opinions and preferences regarding the importance of sustainability, aesthetics, and technology in the products of an Italian company with a global presence. Particularly, the investigation focuses on how a company integrates sustainability into the aesthetics of its products and into its technological innovation strategies, and whether the brand's commitment to sustainability is achieved by emphasizing the intrinsic quality, tradition, and history that characterize a product, or by enhancing its aesthetic characteristics, such as visual impact, attention to detail, or shape. To which element do consumers attribute greater relevance? Which of these increases their propensity to purchase and encourages them to have a continuous relationship with the reference brand?

The research proposed in the following paragraphs aims to answer to these questions, providing an interpretation of the results obtained.

3.3 Methodology

After establishing the research goal, the methodology represents the next step, which consists in defining the research method - in this case a qualitative survey - and determining the reference sample to obtain suitable results. The qualitative survey was chosen for its depth of analysis: it is indeed a method aimed at exploring the opinions, experiences, and perceptions of the participants on a specific topic, providing a more thorough analysis. For what concerns the sample, it is necessary to specify that the survey - conducted with the aim of gathering information on the main topic of the thesis, namely people's preferences regarding the relationship between sustainability, aesthetics, and technological innovation in La Marzocco products - did not involve the attribution of specific sociodemographic data to the participants, as it was conducted exclusively on La Marzocco's consumers and industry experts, regardless of specific data such as age or origin. This choice aims to obtain relevant information directly related to the topic under examination. The survey counted 70 individuals over the age of 18 who had direct or indirect knowledge of La Marzocco's brand and its products.

Participants answered a total of 12 questions concerning:

- The aesthetic aspect of the product and its influence on the user experience, except for symmetry that is not considered in the study as La Marzocco's products do not present features related to this category.
- The importance of sustainability pursued by the company.
- Technological innovation and its influence on the product experience.

The qualitative questions asked to the reference sample on these topics were formulated in a general and specific manner: some of them required a single response and the possibility to choose from the following options:

- Very important
- Quite important
- Not very important
- Not important

Others allowed multiple responses based on product characteristics, company strategy, or shared values. Still others required an open-ended response, allowing participants to explain their own views on the topic.

Below are the 12 questions composing the questionnaire administered:

1. How important is the design of an espresso machine to you?
2. Which aesthetic features do you most appreciate in La Marzocco products? This question involved the respondents' being exposed to the following image:



Figure 3.1 La Marzocco's Linea Micra <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/home-products/macchine-da-caffe/linea-micra/>

3. How does the design of an espresso machine influence your user experience?
4. How important is the fact that an espresso machine is sustainable to you?
5. Which aspects do you consider to be the most important in a product?
6. La Marzocco is committed to promoting sustainability in its supply chain. Does this commitment influence your purchasing decision?
7. If so, how?
8. How important is the technology of an espresso machine to you?
9. Which technological features do you most appreciate in La Marzocco products?
10. Can you identify a particularly innovative technology used by La Marzocco?
11. If so, which one and why?
12. How does innovation influence your product experience?

The questions aimed to understand the general sentiment of consumers regarding the topics addressed and how they could positively influence their purchasing behavior.

Moreover, they aimed to identify which aesthetic, technological, and sustainable elements were considered most important in guiding purchasing decisions and in establishing a continuous relationship with the La Marzocco brand.

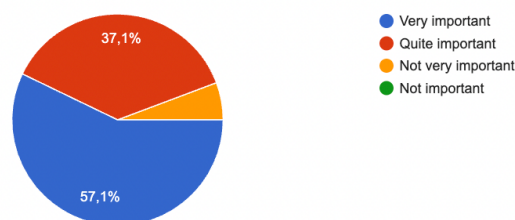
To sum up, the survey represents a method to explore how the mentioned characteristics contribute to the success of the brand and its positioning in the Italian luxury market

3.4 Results

The analysis of the results is the final step in the conduction of the research and it is structured with reference to the objective of the thesis. As explained in the previous section, the results of the survey below, along with the corresponding images, are divided into different topics of analysis: design, sustainability and innovation, with questions ranging from the general to the specific ones.

1) The first step concerns the aesthetic element, or product design:

How important is the design of an espresso machine to you?
70 risposte



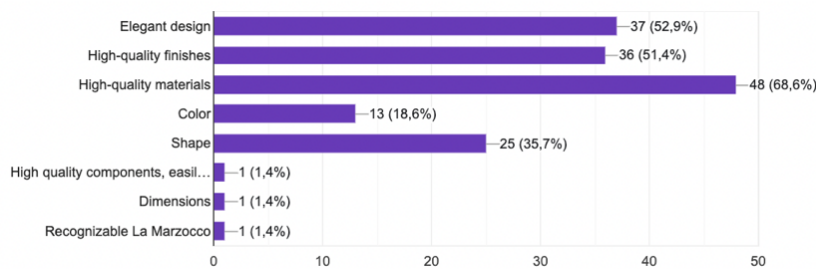
The following pie diagram shows the data concerning the respondents' opinions on the importance of design in their selection of a product. The results demonstrate that the aesthetics of it is a 'very important' factor for more than half of the sample, reaching 57%

and 'quite important' for 37%. On the other hand, those who do not consider it to be a relevant element are a minority (6%).

Then, the participants were asked a question to investigate their preferences regarding the specific aesthetic characteristics attributable to La Marzocco products.

Which aesthetic features do you most appreciate in La Marzocco products?

70 risposte



At the top of the list are high-quality materials, preferred by 68.6% of the reference sample: this data is not surprising considering that high quality has always been at the center of every strategy and action carried out by the company. This data is followed by the elegant design of the products, at 52.9%, and - shortly after - by high-quality finishes, preferred by 51.4% of the participants. The shape of the product and the color are considered less important features, although preferred by 35.7% and 18.6% of respondents respectively. The collected data confirm La Marzocco's attention to product details and justify a premium price as well as its belonging to the luxury sector.

The last question regarding aesthetics concerns how the product design can influence the user experience: the analysis of the 70 responses highlights a mixed sentiment on the topic, revealing two main lines of thought:

- a significant part of the sample believes that aesthetics and functionality should go hand in hand. Good design should be pleasing to the eye while also being intuitive and easy to use. Aesthetics can help understand how the machine works and enhance the overall user experience;
- the minority of the sample, on the other hand, considers aesthetics less important than functionality and ergonomics. For them, the priority is that the machine is easy to use, functions well, produces good coffee, and is built with quality materials.

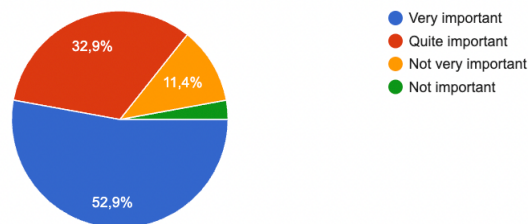
In general, from the responses, it emerges that the majority of survey participants believe that aesthetics plays an important role and see it as a determining factor for purchase: some users state that an elegant design positively influences their purchasing decision, as aesthetics can create a desire for the machine and serve as the first step in the purchasing journey; others emphasize how good design can make the user experience more enjoyable and rewarding.

As a result, the aesthetic aspect contributes to completing the overall consumer experience, associating an appealing design with a perception of product quality and reliability.

2) The second step of the analysis considers the theme of sustainability, studying its positive impact at the corporate level.

How important is the fact that an espresso machine is sustainable to you?

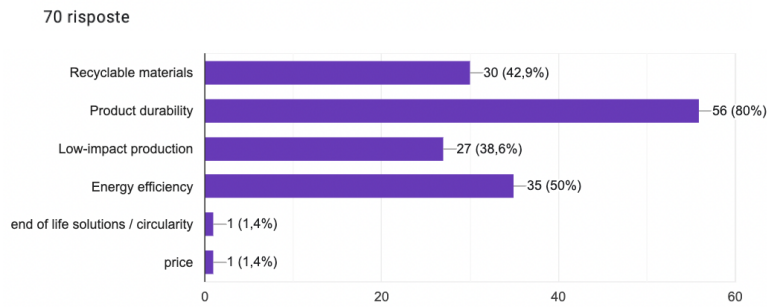
70 risposte



Analyzing the feedback received, more than half of the sample (52.9%) indeed considers it "very important" for a coffee machine to be sustainable, and for 32.9% the choice is "quite important". Only 11.4% of the sample examined does not attribute much importance to the company's commitment.

To gain further insights on the topic, people were also asked which aspects related to the sustainability of a product they considered most relevant.

Which aspects do you consider to be the most important in a product?

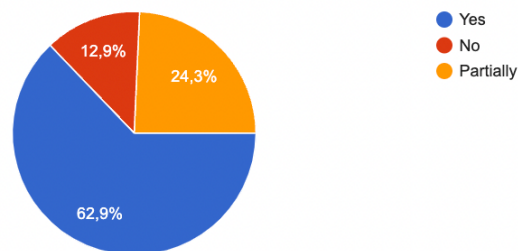


The favorite element is product durability, chosen by 80% of respondents: indeed, the overall quality - which resides in every component and in the excellent after-sales customer service - allows consumers to buy the machine only once and have it for a lifetime, counteracting waste; therefore, it is an investment that lasts over time. In second place is energy efficiency - with 50% of preferences - followed by recyclable materials (42.9%), and finally, low environmental impact production (38.6%).

The last question about the sustainability of the strategies pursued by La Marzocco concerns whether it is integrated into the supply chain and if it influences the propensity to purchase.

La Marzocco is committed to promoting sustainability in its supply chain. Does this commitment influence your purchasing decision?

70 risposte



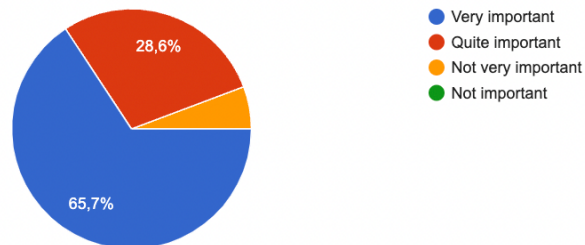
The results confirm and extend the positive opinion emerged from the previous analyses: for 62.9% of the sample, indeed, this characteristic increases their willingness to purchase the product, and 24.3% state to be partially influenced by it. Only a minority (12.9%) say that such commitment does not influence their choice of purchasing products.

Those who responded affirmatively to the question provided further insights on how a sustainable supply chain is the right choice: from the analysis of the responses, the general

sentiment is that sustainability has become a crucial issue for many people when it comes to purchasing La Marzocco products, and companies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability are viewed more positively and can positively influence purchasing decisions as an important selection criterion. In detail, many people's choice depends on the feeling of contributing to a more sustainable future and an inclination to buy products from companies committed to sustainable practices. The awareness that a company is committed to sustainability increases consumers' confidence in its products. There is also an acceptance of the importance of a circular approach to sustainability, including recyclability of materials and the possibility of repairing and reusing machines. Many participants also underline their personal commitment to purchasing sustainable products in order to be responsible global citizens. Others highlight that the choice is dictated by a personal belief, reflecting their personality and philosophical approach to products.

3) The last step analyzes the participants' opinions regarding the third key element examined during the thesis writing: technological innovation.

How important is the technology of an espresso machine to you?
70 risposte

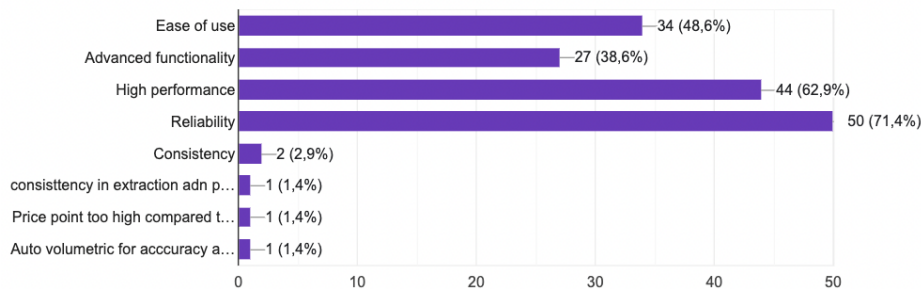


Once again, the importance attributed to this element is confirmed, as explained in the earlier chapters of the thesis. For 65.7% of the sample, the technology inherent in a coffee machine is "very important," and for 28.6%, it is "quite important." Only 5.7% do not consider it so relevant.

The ninth question of the questionnaire investigates respondents' preferences regarding the technological feature they prefer.

Which technological features do you most appreciate in La Marzocco products?

70 risposte

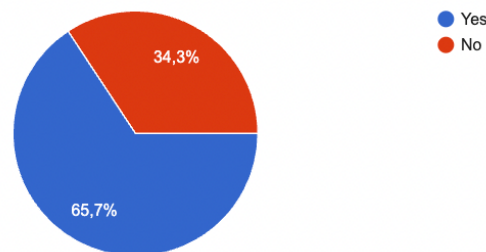


As evident from the results, reliability (71.4%) is at the top, followed by the high performance of La Marzocco machines (62.9%), ease of use (48.6%), and advanced features (38.6%).

Moreover, the questionnaire investigated respondents' knowledge of the technologies used in La Marzocco products, finding 65.7% affirmative responses and 34.3% negative ones.

Can you identify a particularly innovative technology used by La Marzocco?

70 risposte



It then invited those who had responded positively to indicate them; from what emerged, the most appreciated technologies by consumers that positively influence their perception and purchasing decision of La Marzocco products are:

- Dual Boiler: The technology is mentioned multiple times for its ability to provide thermal stability and temperature control.
- Saturated Group: the use of saturated groups to maintain stable temperature during extraction is an appreciated feature.
- Brew-by-Weight: “An exclusive collaboration between Acaia and La Marzocco Home that automates the extraction of your espresso shot. Designed for the Linea

Mini, this scale enhances the home espresso experience with a predictive extraction algorithm for unparalleled precision. Set your dose on the app, pull the lever, and let the machine and scale do the rest. With auto-taring and auto-timing at the beginning of extraction. Precision and convenience, simplified for the Linea Mini.”³¹ .

- Hi-tech Polymer: The use of high-tech polymers to ensure thermal stability and reduce heating times is mentioned several times.
- IoT Connection: The IoT connectivity, which allows monitoring performance and simplifying maintenance, is also mentioned several times.
- ModBar: The model is appreciated for its modular and integrated design, which transforms the traditional barista counter into a more efficient and customizable system. The Modbar consists of separate modules for espresso, steam, and hot water dispensing, which can be positioned under the counter, freeing up space on the work surface. The technology underlying the product is designed to be integrated into the counter, reducing clutter and offering a cleaner and more elegant presentation. The dispensing modules are equipped with precise controls for temperature, pressure, and other parameters, allowing the barista to precisely adjust coffee extraction. The Modbar is designed to minimize energy consumption, with efficient heating systems and optimized power management. Thanks to its modularity, it can be customized to meet the specific needs of each café, allowing baristas to create their ideal configuration.

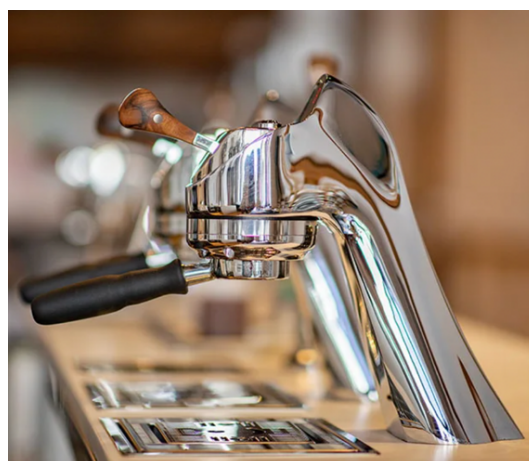
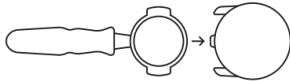


Figura 3.2 ModBar - <https://modbar.com/>

³¹ <https://lamarzocco.com/it/it/prodotto/bilancia-brew-by-weight/>

- Straight-in Portafilter: The technology simplifies the espresso extraction process, making it faster, ergonomic, and more efficient. Here is an insightful explanation of the system:

kb90 Features and Specifications



Straight-In Portafilter

Designed to simplify the motions required to engage the portafilter and reduce the strain by 12 times on the barista for even greater performance and everyday usability. High volume coffee environments demand that a barista can work fast and efficiently to produce drinks during busiest periods of the day. The Straight-In Portafilter can noticeably mitigate the repetitive stress injuries occurring through its ease of action improving the natural workflow and output of barista.

Figura 3.3 - Straight-in Portafilter - <https://lamarzoccousa.com/La-Marzocco-KB90.pdf>

Below is an image of the gs3 model, a “Professional-grade espresso equipment, built for the home”³² which features many of the technologies mentioned above:



Figura 3.4 <https://lamarzocco.com/it/en/home-products/espresso-machines/g3/>

- Dual PID (coffee and steam): It allows the user to electronically control coffee and steam boiler temperature.

³² <https://lamarzocco.com/it/en/home-products/espresso-machines/g3/>

The last question posed to the 70 participants aimed to investigate whether innovation influenced their experience with the product, improving coffee preparation and consumption.

The analysis of the responses highlights a generally positive sentiment: the sample perceives innovation as a factor that enhances coffee quality, makes the user experience more convenient and satisfying, and promotes sustainability.

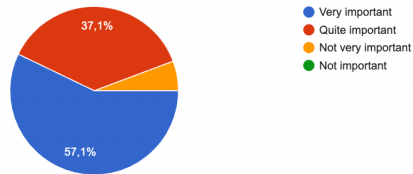
The main features of innovation identified in the responses include:

- Improvement of the user experience: many of them believe that an innovative and user-friendly product has a positive impact on the overall satisfaction of the consumer.
- Introduction of advanced technologies such as IoT connectivity, PID control, and the use of innovative materials such as high-tech polymer.
- Enhancement of coffee quality and its characteristics through the implementation of new extraction technologies.
- Attention to sustainability, with emphasis on energy efficiency and the use of more ecological materials, allows the company to keep up with the times and remain competitive in the industry.

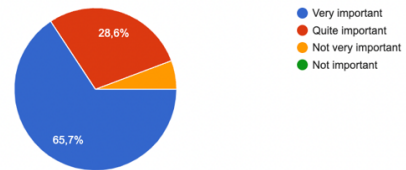
In order to conclude the first part of the research, the analysis suggests that innovation plays a crucial role in the coffee industry product experience. The innovative efforts of many companies, such as La Marzocco, can lead to increased consumer satisfaction, improved product quality and competitiveness, brand trust, and promote sustainability. However, it is important to maintain the accessibility of innovations to ensure that the consumer experience is not overly complicated and that everyone can benefit from them.

After examining consumers' sentiments regarding the importance of aesthetics, sustainability and technological innovation and confirming the significance of incorporating these three elements into the company's strategy, this section of the results aims to analyze the research objective: understanding which characteristic consumers attribute greater relevance to and whether sustainability is pursued more through the aesthetic of the product or its intrinsic qualities, such as high quality and technological innovation. Therefore, in presenting the results, the question arises as to whether consumers are more influenced in purchasing products by aesthetic appearance (extrinsic quality) or by innovative technology and promoted values (intrinsic quality).

How important is the design of an espresso machine to you?
70 risposte



How important is the technology of an espresso machine to you?
70 risposte



The results of the analysis highlight a preference for the intrinsic characteristics of the product over its aesthetic appearance. Although design plays an important role in the propensity to purchase – especially if it meets the sustainability criteria mentioned in the first chapter – technology is considered more relevant by consumers. 65.7% of participants indicated technology as "very important", while 57.1% gave the same value to aesthetic appearance. These data suggest that the internal properties of the product, such as technological innovation and promoted values, have a greater positive influence on the propensity to purchase than aesthetics. This trend could be attributed to the growing consumer awareness, in today's context, regarding product performance and sustainability. Consumers are increasingly inclined to carefully evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the product's features, rather than its external appearance, although aesthetics also have a positive influence.

The importance given to technological innovation and sustainability suggests that consumers are primarily interested in features that enhance the user experience and have a positive impact on the environment. This may be influenced by increasing environmental awareness and the search for products that offer innovative and sustainable solutions. Therefore, consumers seem to place greater importance on the intrinsic values of the product, which contribute to its functionality, efficiency, and environmental impact, compared to pure aesthetics when making purchasing decisions.

The overall results of the research confirm the importance of the positive impact of sustainability, aesthetics and technology on consumer preferences in the coffee industry. The collected responses have highlighted a strong connection between these three dimensions and the propensity to purchase. However, while aesthetics still play an

important role, the intrinsic characteristics of the product, such as technology and sustainability, have demonstrated a greater influence on the propensity to purchase.

Specifically:

- The analysis confirmed that sustainability is a crucial element for consumers. Most of them have expressed interest in products that promote sustainable practices, such as the use of eco-friendly materials and the adoption of technologies that reduce environmental impact. This demonstrates that consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainability and that it positively influences their purchasing decisions.

- From the research, it is evident that aesthetics is a significant factor in the propensity to buy, although it is not the predominant feature. Many consumers have indicated the importance of appealing design and aesthetically pleasing products; however, it has emerged that the intrinsic characteristics of the product, such as technology and sustainability, weigh more heavily in the overall evaluation.

- Technological innovation has been identified as a key element in consumer preferences. The introduction of advanced technologies has generated strong interest among participants. This demonstrates that consumers want to buy products that offer cutting-edge technological solutions to enhance the user experience and ensure optimal product performance.

Conclusions

The writing of this paper aimed to examine the positive influence of aesthetics and technological innovations on sustainability pursued in company strategies in the Italian luxury sector, focusing on La Marzocco's case study. Through an in-depth analysis of the topic, the strategic choices adopted by the company and the preferences of its customers were examined to understand which feature is particularly relevant in La Marzocco's products.

The main results from the analysis highlighted and confirmed what was already stated in the first chapter of the thesis, during the review of existing literature: the importance of each one of the three pillars - aesthetics, technology, and sustainability - in determining the long-term success of company strategies, consistent with the literature review. In particular, the qualitative survey provided another significant insight: the greater importance of the technological element compared to the aesthetic one in the choice of purchasing a La Marzocco product by respondents. The results demonstrated that the adoption of innovative technologies can improve product performance, increase operational efficiency, and offer a superior user experience. Many of them in fact, such as the Straight-in Portafilter, IoT connectivity, Hi-tech Polymer, and Brew-by-Weight, played a fundamental role in consolidating the company's position as a leader in the luxury espresso coffee sector. However, aesthetics also maintained its relevance for the reference sample - although less impactful – and was identified as a key element in creating value for the consumer, especially in a sector like Made in Italy luxury. Studies reported in the first chapter have indeed shown that the aesthetic design of a product can evoke desire and satisfaction in consumers at the time of purchase, contributing to the perception of value and brand differentiation. In the context of the analyzed case study, the aesthetics of La Marzocco's espresso machines not only reflects craftsmanship and elegance, which are the peculiar features of a Made in Italy company, but also represent a distinctive element that attracts consumers to the brand. All these motivations constitute the reason why customers are willing to pay a premium price for the product, justifying its placement in the luxury sector.

Moreover, it is necessary to specify that design and constant innovation are fundamental elements for a company that wants to pursue sustainability; at the same time, the integration of the latter into the product's aesthetics and technological innovation represents a challenge and an opportunity for Made in Italy companies. The potential to follow a sustainable strategy not only lies in adopting a series of actions aimed at preserving the environment but also in enriching the brand's value, improving the consumer experience, and ensuring lasting competitiveness in the global market. Companies that successfully combine aesthetics, innovation, and sustainability can distinguish themselves in an increasingly environmentally conscious context and increase their reputation. It is not a coincidence that in recent years, there has been a growing consumer awareness regarding the environmental impact of products and the search for brands that adopt sustainable practices, especially in the luxury sector. La Marzocco continues to make a concrete commitment to sustainability using eco-friendly materials, adopting of eco-friendly production processes, and integrating efficient energy solutions, as repeatedly emerged during the thesis writing process.

In summary, the research has confirmed the proposed literature analysis, which identifies aesthetics, technology, and sustainability as fundamental pillars for a successful strategy in the luxury sector. A thorough understanding of these dimensions and their coherent integration into company strategies can allow a company like La Marzocco to maintain its leadership while satisfying the ever-increasing needs and expectations of consumers.

The research conducted during the thesis writing has important practical implications not only for La Marzocco but also for other companies in the analyzed sector: the results show that the adoption of innovative and sustainable technologies can significantly improve product performance and the overall consumer experience; companies could use this information to improve their marketing and product development strategies, focusing on integrating innovative technologies and sustainable practices. Investing in research and development activities of new technologies, collaborations with specialized suppliers, and targeted communications to highlight sustainability efforts could be concrete actions in this regard. At the same time, it is necessary to recognize the limitations of this study, including the limited sample of respondents and the focus on a

single company placed in the reference sector. Future research could further explore the effect of innovative and sustainable technologies on other luxury sectors.

Finally, while acknowledging the limitations of this study and identifying possible future research directions, it is crucial to emphasize that aesthetics, technological innovation and sustainability will remain fundamental pillars for the success of companies in the Italian luxury sector, which places high quality at the core of its operations. The latter requires the constant adaptation to market changes and continuous technological evolution, remaining a priority for companies that aim to maintain their competitiveness and relevance in the global market.

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