

Call for papers
SIM Affiliate Conference
WORKSHOP & SPECIAL ISSUE OF MERCATI E COMPETITIVITA'

Consumer entrepreneurship and its reflections on branding theory and practice

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore
Milano, May 28, 2019

Contemporary consumer activism in catalysing and channeling intellectual resources, affective labor and extraordinary expressive and productive abilities is subverting the company-driven logics traditionally associated to market formation and entrepreneurial development. Consumers, enabled by networked platforms, are increasingly engaging in the creation of new business models that impact the world of brands.

Traditionally studies on market formation and dynamics focused on companies as the main agents responsible for the creation of new markets. In contrast with this view, current streams of thought (see for instance Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006, Schouten et al., 2016; Venkatesh, Peñaloza, & Firat, 2006) suggest that markets are socially constructed, and marketers and consumers co-create the marketplace. Nowadays consumers are able to co-create and self-produce both symbolic contents and tangible outputs (Campbell, 2005; Cova, Dalli, & Zwick, 2011; Merz, He, & Vargo, 2009; Ritzer, 2014). Through these activities consumers and consumer collectives may foster the emergence of new creative practices and innovations (Thomas, Price, & Schau, 2013; Arnould, 2014) and new products (Martin & Schouten, 2014).

Research on market system dynamics (Giesler & Fischer, 2016) highlights how consumers not only possess the capacity to affect market trajectories, but also may play a role in envisioning and creating new markets (Arvidsson, 2008; Geiger, Kjellberg, & Spencer, 2012; Scaraboto, 2015; Biraghi, Gambetti & Pace, 2018a). In addition to the role of consumers as modifiers of an existing market offer, the new role of unconventional consumer-entrepreneurs (Cova & Guercini, 2018) is currently emerging and affecting (or even creating new) marketplaces beyond the modification of existing products (see for instance Biraghi, Gambetti & Pace, 2018b; Ashman, Patterson & Brown, 2018; Pedeliento et al., 2018; Mardon, Molesworth & Grigore, 2018; Milanese, 2018).

This increasing entrepreneurial fervor is raising new challenges to the world of brands and branding: what role can traditional brands play in this evolving scenario? Which new brands are emerging? How are the relationships between consumer-entrepreneurs and brands reconfiguring? Which new business models are the new consumer entrepreneurs creating? How are the new consumer entrepreneurs-as-brands building and managing their bond and influence on other consumers?

These questions represent the starting point for our workshop and upcoming special issue of *Mercati e Competitività* to revisit the concept and the role of brand and branding in light of the emergence of new forms of consumer-entrepreneurship. This on the background of the big cultural changes related to the progressive emergence of social phenomena such as liquid and accelerated society, network society, networked individualism, technocapitalism, and the reconfiguring of the agency among consumers, brands and objects.

Topics of interest include, among others:

- New sources of consumer entrepreneurship and how they affect the world of brands and branding;
- Understanding new branding models and markets created by consumer entrepreneurs;
- The rise of consumer entrepreneurs as new brands;
- The relationship between consumer entrepreneurs-as-brands and consumer collectives in networked platforms (i.e. Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Reddit, Pinterest);
- The role of the web and networked platforms in branding consumer entrepreneurship projects;
- Theoretical developments of consumer entrepreneurship as related to brand management, consumer culture and marketing communications;
- Emerging methods to investigate consumer entrepreneurship and its impact on branding;
- Measuring the effectiveness of branding strategies of consumer entrepreneurs.

Keynote speaker

Bernard Cova, Kedge Business School, Marseille.

Submissions and Special Issue

Scholars who wish to present a paper at the workshop are invited to submit an extended abstract in English of 750-1000 words to: rossella.gambetti@unicatt.it; silvia.biraghi@unicatt.it; federica.ceccotti@uniroma1.it no later than **April 5, 2019**. Authors will be notified of the outcome of the selection process by **April 15, 2019**.

Mercati e Competitività will announce a call for papers for a special issue on this topic.

With this workshop the scientific committee aims to stimulate interest in the special issue, spark intellectual exchange on the topic, generate debate and provide feedback to prospective authors who may consider submitting a paper to this special issue.

Program

The academic program will start in the morning at 10.00 and end in the afternoon, approximately at 16.00. Professor Bernard Cova, who is an academic pioneer and has conducted groundbreaking research on this topic, will give a keynote speech to introduce the workshop. Then the selected extended abstracts among the ones proposed to the scientific committee will be presented with a power point presentation and then discussed with the other workshop participants for about 30 minutes (20 minute presentation + 10 minutes Q&A).

Registration

There is no conference fee for members of SIMktg. Participants should register no later than **May 10, 2019**, by sending an email to: rossella.gambetti@unicatt.it; silvia.biraghi@unicatt.it; federica.ceccotti@uniroma1.it

Scientific committee

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Other information

For any information please contact: rossella.gambetti@unicatt.it

Important dates to remember

Deadline for extended abstract submission: **April 5, 2019**

Deadline for registration to the workshop: **May 10, 2019**

Selected references

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