



From design driven innovation to meaning strategy

Cinzia Battistella, Gianluca Biotto and Alberto F. De Toni
*Department of Electric, Managerial and Mechanical Engineering,
University of Udine, Udine, Italy*

Abstract

Purpose – In the stream of works showing the semantic dimension as a core concept of the product innovation (e.g. design driven innovation), the paper aims to present a new business modeling approach driven by design and meanings. Similarly to the concept that the product is not represented only by form and function but also by meaning, the entire business model of a company does not transmit economic and technological value only, but tells a lot of the company from a semantic point of view. The work seeks to point out that companies can focus on the management of meanings to “make sense” of their entire business model moulded in building blocks, and realize what the authors called meaning strategy.

Design/methodology/approach – After a detailed overview of the theoretical background grounded in the strategy literature and design one, to support the authors’ perspective, an in-depth study of meaning strategy performed by illycaffè is presented.

Findings – The value of the work lies in underlining that the design driven (product) innovation’s application can be extended further than only describing successful (product) strategies of design-intensive manufactures and in the suggestions on how to implement a meaning strategy, creating new meanings not only in the products, but also in the building blocks of a company’s business model.

Originality/value – The meaning strategy content and action-oriented framework proposed and the matrix business model meanings versus building blocks can become tools to communicate the company strategy’s pivotal elements and its evolution and they can drive strategists in developing and managing new/existing meanings and building blocks.

Keywords Strategy, Meaning, Business model, Building blocks, Design driven innovation, Case study, Innovation, Design

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The recent theories of the knowledge economy and the experience economy teach us that the value is increasingly conveyed by the sense and the meaning of things (Drucker, 2002; Pine and Gilmore, 1999). As successful organizations are those that are able to co-evolve with their environments at the edge of chaos (Pina and Vieira da

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This paper is dedicated to the memory of Dr Ernesto Illy, who once enchanted the audience in his lectio magistralis at the University of Udine ranging from complexity theory and management to the concept of love as attractor and people and companies as receptors.

