

DESIGN CONTRIBUTIONS TO ADOPT MEDITERRANEAN DIET. CASE STUDY ORANGES FROM SILVES

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ABSTRACT

The Mediterranean diet, considered Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 2013, represents a complete and balanced food model with numerous benefits for health, longevity and quality of life, it is characterized by the consumption of fresh produce and of the time, by the frugality, simplicity and sharing a meal.

Despite being a small farmer, Portugal can bet on cultural diversification and differentiation arising from the intrinsic quality of these products allowed by the unique climate and soil conditions.

Due to its work process design, can collaborate with the company, it can draw solutions with and for the people, taking into account technical, environmental and economic constraints associated. Through design we can develop partnerships, complement the offering, create educational activities to community, develop a narrative that shows that behind the products there is a history, a way of being and draw an experience based on the nutritional value of the offer and the recommendation of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid.

We purpose a model that allows Portuguese agro-food SMEs to evaluate the collaboration of design. The model builds a narrative that has underlying the motivation and values which are at the origin of the product and the company and it allows designing an experience based on the nutritional value of the product and the recommendation of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid to improve healthy eating habits or focus on a subject where the food has a decisive role.

Silves town is applying the design evaluation model in investment in the new brand - "Silves, capital da laranja". Its goal is to give notoriety to orange and producers in that region by associating to the name of Silves, recognized for its tangible and intangible heritage, and to the quality and accuracy with which orange is produced.

Keywords: Agro-food; Design Value; Investment; Return.

JEL Classification: Q13

1. INTRODUCTION

Portugal integrates the set of countries whose dietary habits characterize the Mediterranean diet, defined in 1993 at the *International Conference on Diets of the Mediterranean*. It is a way of eating that is distinguished by the abundant consumption of food of vegetable origin (vegetables, fruit and leguminous) as well as local fresh products poorly processed and from the season using olive oil as the main source of fat. Also, the frequent consumption of fish, low to moderate drinking of wine mainly at the main meals, the ingestion of dairy products specially cheese and yogurt and the low and infrequent consumption of red meat (Lopes, 2016). The Mediterranean diet, considered Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in

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2013, represents a complete and balanced food model with numerous benefits for health, longevity and quality of life, described by the frugality and simplicity of its dishes which are reflected in the production, preparation and taste of the food involved in sharing a meal. Based on their mode of production and preparation that characterize the agro-food products of Mediterranean Diet and on the focus to improve the quality of life in the community and boost the local economy, we purpose a model that allows Portuguese agro-food SMEs to evaluate the collaboration of design, because due to its work process design can collaborate with the company, it can draw solutions with and for the people, taking into account technical, environmental and economic constraints associated.

2. METHODOLOGY

We began this research with a literature review by Design Council that has been conducting different studies about design value and implementing SMEs supporting programs; European Union which has supported programmes and studies to encourage the invest in design, specifically the *Design as a driver of user-centred innovation*; *Design for Growth & Prosperity* and the *European Design Innovation Initiative - Measuring Design Value*, but also about sustainability and food, namely, *Assessment of resource efficiency in the food cycle*, *European Research on Traditional Foods* and *European Food Information Resource*; and the specialists in this theme Brigitte Borja de Mozota, Xenia Viladas, Gert L. Kootstra, Robert Verganti, Roger Martin, John Thackara and the recent project coordinated by Antti Pitkänen the *Design Roi - measurable design*. And focus as well on literature review about healthy eating habits and on Portuguese SMEs competitiveness, namely the *National Programme for the Promotion of Healthy Eating*, *PortFIR program*, Fundación Dieta Mediterránea, Slow Food, AICEP - Portuguese Trade & Investment Agency and INE. All this complemented with visits to fairs and conferences on this theme.

To work on this case study, we applied the Direct Observation method with mechanical support and Survey for data collection, which aims to obtained information about the company's strategy; financial data; characterize the company's use of design, where we apply The Design Ladder (2001) and the design Visibility Vectors develop by Xenia Viladas (Viladas, 2010: 39). The data collected so far indicate that most of these companies have as a priority to improve the quality and food safety of agro-food products. They usually invest in technologies, certification and environment friendly solutions to preserve and improve soil and the quality of products. They usually also in design, but as a technical skill, because despite they are interested on design skills they don't know how it can add value to the business.

2.1 The Model

Based on the management tool Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan, 1996) we built a model for investment evaluation in design, which principles are: To produce with quality, respect food safety standards, invest in solutions that preserve and improve the soils and products quality and maintain or increase the consumer's trust; To promote healthy eating habits in society, through the nutritional qualities of supply and the recommendations of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid (Fundación Dieta Mediterránea); To create sustainable value based on social welfare, environmental friendliness and economic prosperity.

The model consists of two categories of assessment, the first category the Strategic Guidelines involves defining the company's strategy, aiming the creation of social welfare, environmental friendliness and economic prosperity, the foundation of sustainable development. The Strategic Guidelines category includes the phases of Project, Objectives, Targets and Initiatives.

The Project is a starting point to achieve certain goals outlined by the strategy. It should reflect the purpose of contributing to improve the quality of life, informing the society about the benefits of adopting a healthy diet within the recommendations of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid or focus on a subject where the food has a decisive role as for instance during pregnancy by avoiding diseases and complications for both the mother and child, in preventing diseases such as cancer, oral health, type 2 Diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular diseases or alert to inequalities and social problems.

Objectives should focus on the creation value based on social welfare, environmental friendliness and economic prosperity, to seek to improve community health and knowledge about the benefits of changed eating habits and adopt a Mediterranean Diet. And raise awareness community about how their food choices cause impact in biodiversity and in local economy and in the end in our quality life.

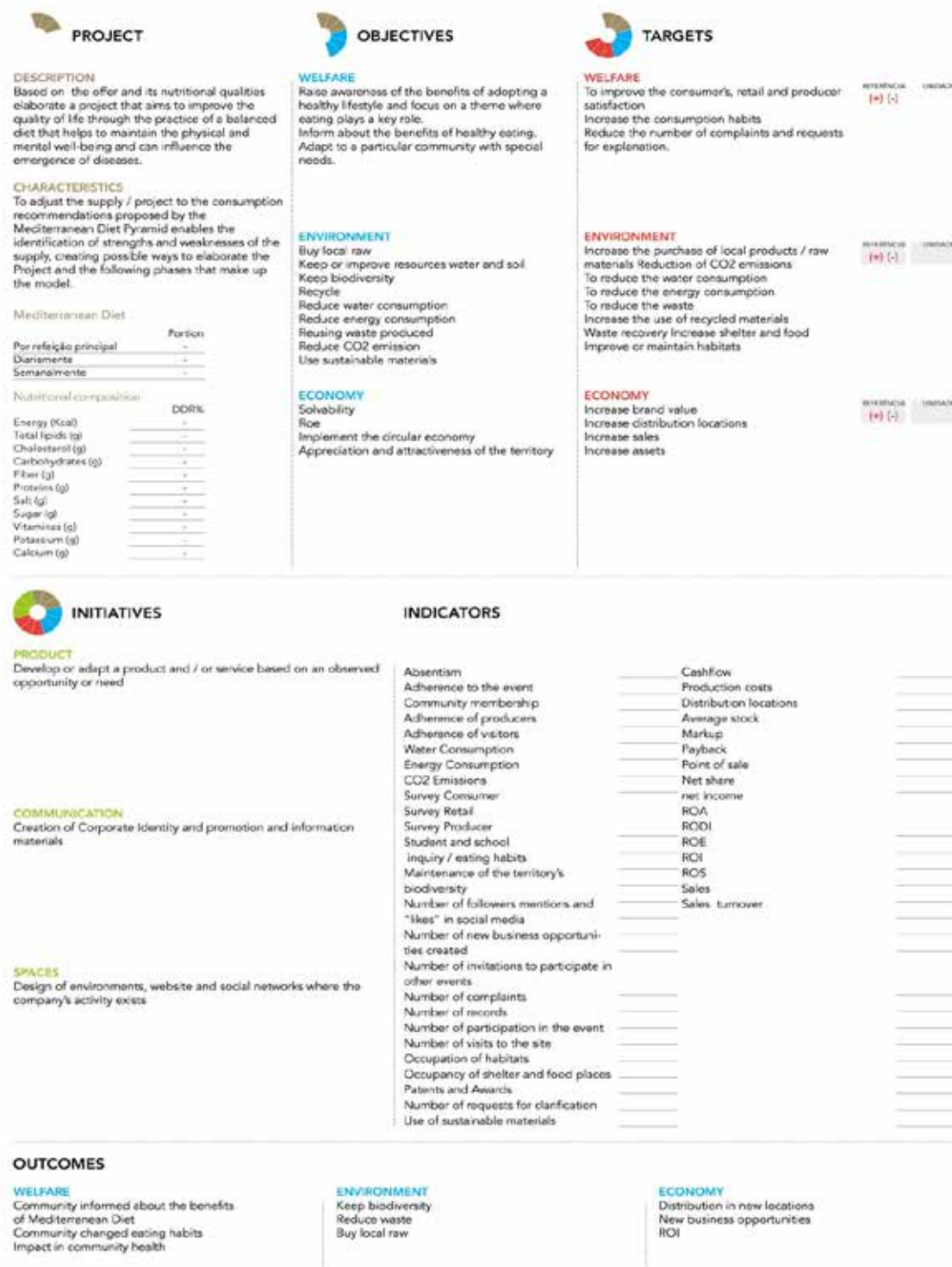
Targets translate into value what company want to achieve at a pre-defined period of time.

The Initiatives are the operationalization of the Project to achieve the Objectives, namely the creation of a program of activities that seeks to raise awareness of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle, it can be focus on a subject where the food has a decisive role to improve quality of life. In this phase design is *visible* through the visible vectors propose by Xenia Viladas: Products that comprise the offer, Communication that comprises the corporate identity and Spaces where the company's activities are developed.

In the second category, the Performance Indicators include the Qualitative and Quantitative Metrics to evaluate the process.

The model proposes a narrative that has underlying the motivation and values which are at the origin of the product and the company, focus on improve well-being through adopt eating healthy habits or on a subject where the food has a decisive role. It allows designing an experience and contextualizes the collaboration of design which can be of social, environmental or economical scope and fits its intervention: Products, Communication and Spaces.

Figure 1. Model to evaluate the investment in design



Source: Pias, 2017

3. CASE STUDY – ORANGE FROM SILVES

In the Algarve, citrus production accounts for 84% of the country's total production (Statistical Yearbook of the Algarve Region, 2014: 199) and has been part of the landscape for many years, since the Portuguese brought sweet oranges from India in the fifteenth century and planted them in the region and along its routes to prevent and combat scurvy affecting seamen. Silves is part of the Algarve region and has decided to give visibility to the local citrus fruits production, with special emphasis on orange. For this purpose, the Municipality of Silves created the brand "Silves" capital of orange, capital da laranja". Its goal is to protect the local production and to give notoriety to orange and producers in that region by associating to the name of Silves, recognized for its tangible and intangible heritage, and to the quality and accuracy with which orange is produced.

Silves town is applying the design evaluation model in one of the initiatives carried out so far – *Fim de semana com sabor a laranja* - held in November 2016 and composed by a tasting of dishes made with orange by the local restaurants that joined the initiative. With the purpose of evaluating the initiative, small questionnaires were distributed to the producers, the participating restaurants and the people who were involved (clients). The questionnaires were distributed by the Municipality, which has shown great readiness to support this research and to which we would like to express our appreciation. The questionnaire is composed of 8 questions, which aim to measure the knowledge that all stakeholders (clients, restaurants and producers) have about the fruit, its benefits and the initiative accomplished by the municipality. We do not have information on the number of producers and restaurants that joined the initiative, nor on the number of customers who received the questionnaire. In total, 9 customer surveys, 2 restaurant surveys and none of the producers were received.

The clients showed willingness to participate in the initiative and interest in having access to post event products. As a selection criteria, they tend to consider the origin as important as the price.

As for the Restaurants, we have only 2 questionnaires with diametrically opposed answers to the different questions, we consider the information obtained scarce for analysis purposes.

4. CONCLUSION

Despite being a small farmer, Portugal "can bet on cultural diversification and differentiation arising from the intrinsic quality of these products allowed by the unique climate and soil conditions. These are real endogenous assets that urge to protect and develop" (Dieta Mediterrânica, 2014: 63). Portugal integrates the set of countries whose dietary habits characterize the Mediterranean diet, defined in 1993 at the International Conference on Diets of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean diet, considered Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in 2013, represents a complete and balanced food model with numerous benefits for health, longevity and quality of life, described by the frugality and simplicity of its dishes, which is reflected in the production, preparation and tasting the food involved in sharing a meal.

Due to its work process design, can collaborate with the company, it can draw solutions with and for the people, taking into account technical, environmental and economic constraints associated.

Based on their mode of production and preparation, that characterize the agro-food products of Mediterranean Diet and on the focus to improve the quality of life in the community and boost the local economy, we purpose a model that allows Portuguese agro-food SMEs to evaluate the collaboration of design.

The model we propose to evaluate the design collaboration in the process, builds a narrative that has underlying the motivation and values which are at the origin of the product and the company and it

allows designing an experience based on the nutritional value of the product and the recommendation of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid to improve healthy eating habits or focus on a subject where the food has a decisive role. The model also places in context the collaboration of design which can be of social, environmental or economical scope and make visible its intervention through Products that comprise the offer, Communication that comprises the corporate identity and Spaces where the company's activities are developed. The model consists of two categories of assessment, one with Strategic Guidelines and the other with Performance Indicators. The Strategic Guidelines is the first category and includes the phases of Project, Objectives, Targets and Initiatives. It involves defining the company's strategy, aiming the creation sustainable value.

The Project is a starting point for achieving certain goals outlined by the strategy. It should reflect the purpose of contributing to improve the quality of life, informing the society about the benefits of adopting a healthy diet within the recommendations of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid. Objectives should focus on the creation sustainable value to improve community health and knowledge about the benefits of changed eating habits and adopt a Mediterranean Diet. And raise awareness community about how their food choices cause impact in biodiversity, in local economy and in the end in our quality life. Targets translate into value what the company want to achieve at a pre-defined period of time. And the Initiatives are the operationalization of the Project to achieve the Objectives, namely the create a program of activities that seeks to raise awareness of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle or focus on a subject where the food has a decisive role. Design make visible its intervention through Products, Communication and Spaces. In the second category, the Performance Indicators include the Qualitative and Quantitative metrics to evaluate the Initiatives.

We just began a new collaboration with Silves town (Algarve, Portugal) to apply the design evaluation model in the new brand - "Silves, capital da laranja". Its goal is to give notoriety to orange and producers in that region by associating to the name of Silves, recognized for its tangible and intangible heritage, and to the quality and accuracy with which orange is produced.

In collaboration with the Municipality we are in the process of evaluating the investment in design in one of the initiatives carried out so far – *Fim de semana com sabor a laranja* - which took place in November 2016 and was composed by a tasting of dishes made with orange by the local restaurants that joined the initiative. With the purpose of evaluating the initiative, small questionnaires were distributed to the producers, and to the participating restaurants and people (clients). These questionnaires were distributed by the Municipality, which have shown great readiness to support this research and to which we would like to express our appreciation. The information collected indicates that the Customers had a positive opinion about the initiative but as for the Restaurants, the information obtained was scarce for analysis purposes.

Based on the nutritional value of the product and the recommendation of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid, the model proposes a narrative that has underlying the motivation and values which are at the origin of the product and the company, describes the steps required to implement a project that should focus on improve well-being through adopt eating healthy habits or on a subject where the food has a decisive role, namely to reduce and prevent diseases and social problems in our society. The model shows what you want to achieve as well as its procedure, it provides an overview that helps to focus on the essential and to monitor the development process. Instead of competing with a product the

model gives guidelines to propose something that is done instead of something that is sold. The model allows designing an experience and contextualizes the collaboration of design, which can be of social, environmental or economical scope and make it visible through Products, Communication and Spaces.

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