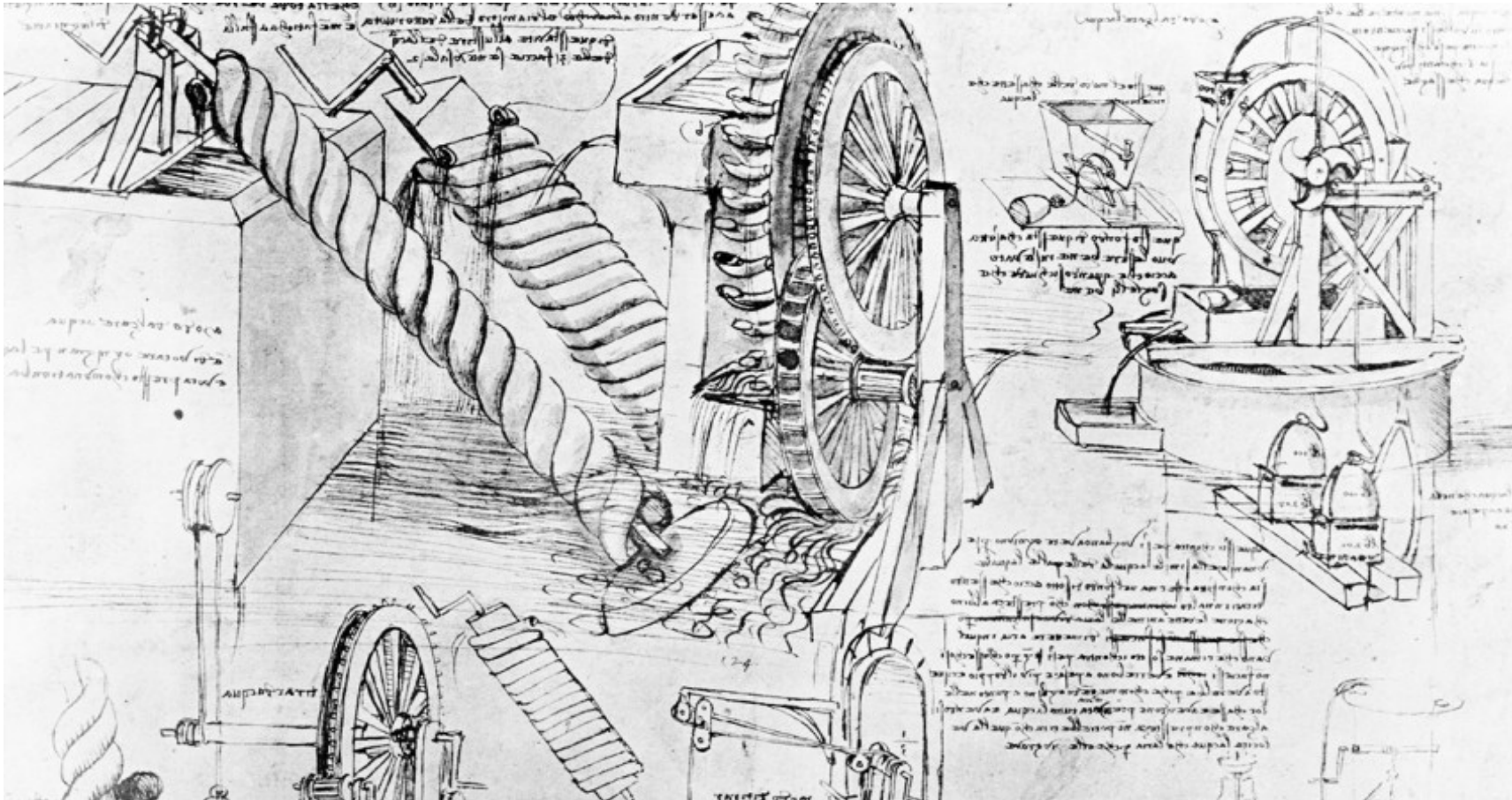


«Renaissance Florence Was a Better Model For Innovation than Silicon Valley Is»



Giovanni Bettarini. Councillor of the Metropolitan City of Florence

«Urban planners the world over yearn to replicate the success of Silicon Valley: witness Thames Valley (England) and Silicon Oasis (Dubai), to name just two of these attempts. Invariably, these well-intentioned efforts fail for the simple reason that they are trying to replicate the wrong model.

Silicon Valley is too new, too *now*, to glean lessons from. Those hoping to launch the world's next great innovation hub would be better off looking to an older, even more remarkable genius cluster:

Reinassance in Florence. The Italian city-state produced an explosion of great and brilliant ideas, the likes of which the world has not seen before or since. This hothouse of innovation offers lessons as relevant and valuable today as they were 500 years ago».

Eric Weiner. Harvard Business Review
January 25 , 2016

Let us look at some of them and actualize the experience today, as some models and patterns are continuing to be core assets of the DNA of the City...

Talent needs patronage



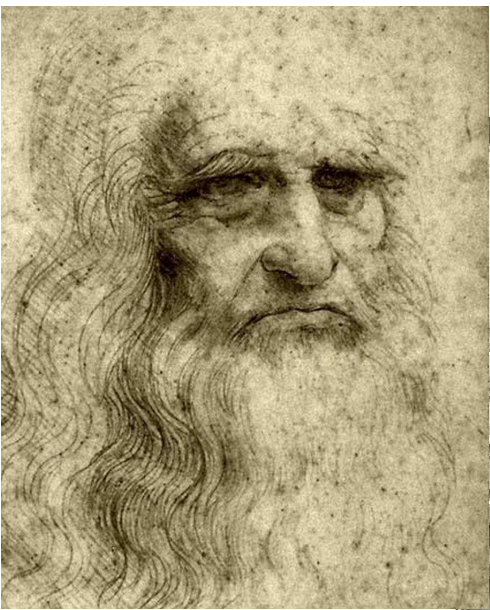
Lorenzo the Magnificent invited the 14 years old unknown stonecutter Michelangelo to live in his residence. When Medicis spotted genius they took calculated risk and opened their wallets wide.



Florence sponsors fresh talent through incubation, coworking, exhibition places, mentoring programs and a huge learning infrastructure. Not just in the science and tech fields, but also in creative industries, such as arts and crafts. Wealth is rooted in education.

Sponsoring fresh talent not as an act of charity, but as a discerning investment in the common good

Mentors matter



Leonardo da Vinci spent a full decade, longer than was customary, apprenticing at a Florentine *Bottega*, or workshop, run by Andrea del Verrocchio. Leonardo clearly valued the experience he acquired in that dusty chaotic workshop

The City is committed to protect and facilitate the activity of the Florentine workshops through incentives, regulations, etc. Workshops are the roots of the Florentine top design and fashion industry

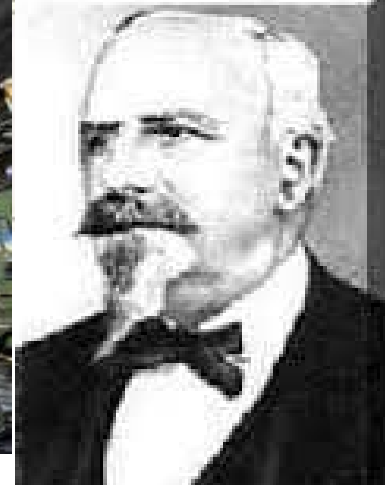
Don't value youth over experience. Value programs that entail meaningful, long-term mentoring relationships

Potential trumps experience



The unexperienced Michelangelo was not the first choice as painter of the Sistine Chapel. Still the Pope clearly believed that, when it comes to «impossible» task, talent and potential mattered more than experience, and was right.

GE Nuovo Pignone, the most important Florentine company, entered the Oil&Gas industry thanks to the commitment of the former Mayor Giorgio La Pira, who believed in the huge talent of the Company workforce in a time of big crisis. A former military company is today a world leader in the Oil&Gas industry



Assign difficult task to those who may not seem like to be the best fit, but who can succeed innovating.

Disaster creates opportunities



The City's Renaissance blossomed only a few decades after the Black Death decimated the City, and in part because of it. The plague shook up the rigid social order, and that new fluidity led directly to artistic and intellectual revolution.



The disastrous flood of 1966 damaged thousands of pieces of art. Today Florence hosts globally renowned labs and expertise in the field of restoration of cultural heritage . Florentine Cultural Institutions and Companies, leveraging on the talent developed after the flood, support the preservation of cultural heritage globally

Upheaval almost always precedes creative awakening. Where is the opportunity hidden amid the distress?

Embrace competition

Reinassance Florence was rife with rivalries and feud. The two giants of that age, Leonardo and Michelangelo, couldn't stomach one another, but perhaps that is what propelled them both to produce such fine work



Lorenzo Ghiberti won over Filippo Brunelleschi the commission to build the Gates of the Paradise

Brunelleschi retired in Rome to study the ancient structures, then brought those lessons home to build the city's iconic landmark the Duomo.



The strong attitude toward competition may have facilitated the development of the significantly export oriented manufacturing industry of Florence.

The Florentines appreciated the value of healthy competition. Both «winners» and «losers» benefit from it



Seek out new



The bylaws of the Opera del Duomo, the Committee that oversaw the construction of the now-iconic Cupola in the city center, demanded that leadership change every few months, no matter how well the group was performing. Nothing hampers a creative environment as complacency.

Unlike the habit of the Italian politics, Florence Metropolitan area is run by a community of young Administrators. Florence has the record number of Administrators younger than 35 years old in Italy.

Recognize the importance of injecting fresh faces and ideas on a regular basis

Synthetize ideas



The Salone of the 500s, in Palazzo Vecchio, the Town Hall. Huge, to host hundreds of representatives. The iconic place to syntetize the different ideas of the citizens of the reinassance age. A real institutional innovation for the time.



1/1/2015. Birth date of the new Metropolitan City of Florence. 40 Municipalities networked In the same new Institution and in a shared Metropolitan Strategic Plan. Institutional innovation continue...

Innovation, like democracy, involves syntesis of ideas