

## Alessi, the *Dream Factory*, is now a B Corp

The historic Italian design brand is now part of a global movement of companies that, going beyond the goal of profit, see business as a tool to make a positive impact on the community.

Crusinallo, 21 June 2017 - Michele Alessi, Vice-President of the group, explains why it embarked upon the certification process: *“For Alessi, becoming a B Corp means having what has always been our idea of ‘doing business’ acknowledged through formal and recognisable certification: **ensuring that what is good for the company is also good for society as a whole**, through constant research for a balance between people, product and profit.”*

B Corps are companies which, convinced that their purpose is not merely to seek profit, strive to maximise the positive impact that they have on their employees, the communities in which they operate and the environment, by using the business as a force for regeneration and sustainability.

Bringing art and poetry into industrial production, satisfying the cultural and aesthetic needs of the public; operating responsibly and transparently when managing people, evaluating their work and creating opportunities for developing professional identity; seeking fair and sustainable profit, creating wealth for the local area: these three strategic objectives, each of which reinforces the others, create **a virtuous circle, where the success of the business and the good of the community can coexist**. This is the vision that has always inspired Alessi and its impact on local areas has now been recognised by an international qualified certifying body.

**Alessi is one of the first 50 companies in Italy to receive this prestigious certification and, to date, the only Italian design factory to do so.**

The certification was given after passing a complex and rigorous evaluation (B Impact Assessment), designed to assess that the company’s activities seek to have a positive effect on the community, not only in economic terms but also as regards to social and environmental impact. The assessment takes into account the practices, initiatives and results obtained in five core areas: governance, relations with employees, customer relations, the company’s role in the community and the environmental sustainability of processes and products. Alessi received a score in each of these areas that exceeded the average for the companies subject to evaluation – a total of 55.000 (of which only 2,178 in 50 countries and 130 industries have managed to obtain the certification so far). Without having to make any changes to its processes, Alessi achieved the score necessary for B Corp status.

In addition to the experience of the *Buon Lavoro* project, which saw company employees donate over 10,000 work hours to the community in 2013 as an alternative to redundancy benefits, there are a number of special initiatives that Alessi carries out for its employees and the local area. However, the main impact is derived from the company’s ordinary activities, and how they are performed.

*“What gives me particular satisfaction is that, for the first time, we are accurately measuring the cultural impact industrial production can have on its customers’ community,”* says President, Alberto Alessi. *“20% of the company’s turnover is generated through products exhibited in museums all over the world. Over 350,000 works of art brought into people’s homes, ever year.”*

*“Alessi is an icon of Italian design around the world and this is why we believe that the qualification as a B Corp may inspire many other entrepreneurs. ‘Beautiful’ can, and increasingly must, also mean ‘good’ and Alessi is providing concrete examples of how this combination can help create a future of shared prosperity,”* explains Anna Cogo, B Corp Unit Officer at Nativa – B Lab Country partner.

*“We’re thrilled welcome the leading design company, Alessi to the global community of Certified B Corporations,”* says Nathan Gilbert, co-executive director of B Lab Europe, *the nonprofit that certifies European B Corps. “Being one of the leading Factories of Italian design, Alessi brings a unique opportunity to build awareness of the B Corp movement in Italy and globally. Alessi’s openness to change and international development fully represents the aspirations and goals of the B Corp movement. We look forward to working with Alessi to inspire other businesses to join on this journey”.*

## **ABOUT ALESSI**

Founded in Omegna on Lake Orta by Giovanni Alessi in 1921, Alessi is one of the leading internationally renowned Italian Design Factories.

Alessi has produced thousands of products over the decades, many of which have become icons of contemporary design.

The Alessi universe is made up of more than three hundred designers from all over the world.

The Alessi main characteristics is its ability to combine the typical needs of a modern business with being a research laboratory in the field of the Applied Arts, and includes different categories of typical products for the kitchen, table and home.

The production of pieces in cold-pressed stainless steel is the company’s core business and still takes place in Italy, in the factory at the head office in Crusinallo.

[www.alessi.com](http://www.alessi.com)

## **ABOUT B Corp**

B Corps are for-profit companies certified by the nonprofit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.

Today, there is a growing community of more than 2,200 Certified B Corps (125 in 2008) from 50 countries and over 130 industries working together toward 1 unifying goal: to redefine success in business.

Certified B Corporations meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, legally expand their corporate responsibilities to include consideration of stakeholder interests, and build collective voice through the power of the unifying B Corporation brand.

[www.bcorporation.net](http://www.bcorporation.net)

## **ABOUT B LAB**

B Lab is a nonprofit organization, founded in 2006, that serves a global movement to redefine success in business. Its vision is that one day all companies compete not only to be the best in the world, but the best for the world. B Lab drives this systemic change by:

1) Building a global community of Certified B Corporations, today nearly 2200, who meet the highest standards of verified, overall social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability;

- 2) Promoting Mission Alignment using innovative corporate structures like the benefit corporation to align the interests of business with those of society and to help high impact businesses be built to last;
- 3) Helping tens of thousands of businesses, investors, and institutions Measure What Matters, by using the B Impact Assessment and B Analytics to manage their impact—and the impact of the businesses with whom they work—with as much rigor as their profits; the BIA is till today used by over than 55.000 companies;
- 4) Inspiring millions to join the movement through story-telling on bthechange.com.

B Lab is present in Italy through the country partner Nativa.

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## CSR HIGHLIGHTS 2012-2016

Here is a selection of practices and special initiatives implemented by Alessi, aimed at both the local area and community. They show how our company is fulfilling its long-held commitment to its stakeholders, now reflected in our certification as a B Corp.

### 1. Impact

- **Production:** the strategic decision to keep the production of cold-moulded metal objects at the Crusinallo facility (40% of total production) in our view represents the company's main social impact in the region.
- **Safety:** constant assessment of all safety risks and a commitment to the continuous improvement of company services in terms of preventing accidents and occupational diseases. The periodic checking of these aspects has been entrusted to the occupational health and safety certification authority (OHSAS 18001:2007).
- **Environment:** Since 2004, the company processes have been subject to UNI EN ISO 14001:2004 certification, which checks the management of impact in terms of raw materials, energy, water, biodiversity, emissions, effluent and waste. Alessi is also committed to developing, producing, distributing and marketing products whose environmental impact, both during the manufacturing and end-of-life phases, is constantly reduced. Particular attention is paid to studying packaging; using sortable, green or recyclable packages and outer packaging with limited size can help to keep transport needs to a minimum.
- *Overall: the production of high-quality stainless-steel objects, products that last for 20 or 30 years without needing to be replaced, is the main and best contribution that Alessi can make in terms of reducing and producing less waste.*

### 2. People

- **'Buon Lavoro' Project:**
  - **2013:** employee volunteering as a response to the crisis. In 2013, during a period of production over-capacity, instead of activating the CIGO (Ordinary Redundancy Fund), Alessi suggested that employees spend some of their time, as regular, paid employment, on socially useful work. 88% of the employees concerned signed up to this entirely voluntary scheme: a total of 10,000 working hours given to the community.
  - **Since 2015,** faced by the unavoidable need to activate periods of CIGO, the company came up with a new edition of the project, drawing on the same key values and promoting work by redundant employees for the community. The company also agreed to increase the wage paid by the INPS (Italian National Social Security Institute), from €5.60 to €8.80 gross for all employees laid off for every hour of voluntary work done. The initiative is now repeated every time CIGO is activated.

- Family support
  - Additional paid leave for child care (up to 40h/year)
  - Contribution to cover nursery school fees for employees' children (€31/month per minor)
  - Annual €250 gift card for each child up to the age of 6, which can be spent in shops selling products for children
  - Annual merit based study grants for employees' children (around €10,000/year)
  
- *Overall: Alessi is aware that the success of a company is the fruit of everybody's work. As a concrete reflection of this, we have created an employee profit-sharing system: 5% of EBIT is divided among all employees as a Results Bonus, and a further 5% distributed, in proportion to wages, to over 100 employees located in Italy and abroad, as a Profit Share.*

### 3. Culture

- Annual donations in support of cultural foundations in the art and design field
- Alessi Museum: private collection of prototypes, plans and design objects which, together with the Alessi's manufacturing history, can be viewed free of charge by researchers, schools, journalists and students.
- Organisation of exhibitions of monographs dedicated to the history of the company, a specific episode of this or a particularly important project; or cooperation with international museums and cultural institutions for the loan (or donation) of pieces and prototypes (Alessi objects can now be found in over 50 museums around the world).
  
- *Overall: 18% of company turnover is generated through the sale of products exhibited in some of the world's leading contemporary art museums. Over 350,000 works of art brought into people's homes, ever year.*

### 4. Community

- Financing, through the Alessi Anghini Young People's Fund, established at the Fondazione Comunitaria del VCO, of socially useful projects in the local area, submitted by employees (a total of around €180,000)
- Cause Related Marketing:
  - Creation and implementation of the Alessi for Children programme for the financing of children's projects around the world, through specific operations (e.g. "La fabbrica dei Sogni" (The Dream Factory) Project: €300,000 between 2006 and 2011; Christmas 2012 Campaign: overall donation of €250,000; "charitable wedding favours", approximately €100,000 between 2012 and 2016)
  - Creation and distribution of products for the international programme promoted by (RED), a non-profit body created in 2006 by Bono and Bobby Shriver to help the fight against AIDS in Africa.
  
- *Overall: Alessi has always been aware of the debt it owes to the local areas and communities where it is located and thanks to which it has been able to develop and prosper. One of the ways in which the company chooses to give back to society is by devoting 2% of taxable income every year to solidarity initiatives.*