PREFACE

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The power of space that communicates, as in the inspiring story of Nuvola Lavazza narrated in this book, takes us directly and instantly into the history of communication, which is ultimately the history of life—the life of people, companies, institutions, and countries. And we have been given the privilege, sometimes accompanied by some confusion, of spending the time given to us for our passage upon the Earth in the most comprehensive and thoroughgoing phase of the relationship between humans through communication. It is a relationship so totalizing that often the fact of the origin of the act of communication is forgotten, so that communication itself becomes the fact.

The dualism "on line"/"on life" has been suggested to describe a continuum whereby a part of our existence takes place in the so-called real world and the other (not minor) part in the virtual world—a world that is virtual but equally is real, to the point that real actions have virtual consequences and virtual actions have real consequences. The extension of our lives, societies, institutions, and companies across these two domains of reality generates a complexity with unpredictable ramifications that we, people of our time, are still learning to manage. Perhaps, many years from now, our era will be defined as a period of digital shocks, characterized by the inevitable widespread naivety about the use of very powerful means of communication suddenly in one's hands and pocket-sized, such as our smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, and so on.

Today the newcomer (which isn't so new after all) is artificial intelligence, whose infinite applications and exponential development capacity are giving rise to countless ethical questions and very concrete problems for those who work in communication, such as the problem of fake news and the virality of false but believable content produced with artificial intelli-

gence. Our near future is destined to be populated with an infinite amount of plausible digital contents, opposite and contradictory to one another.

A huge challenge for business communication will be maintaining trust. Wherever there is a message, there is someone who creates it and someone who receives it. Today there are many messages, in many directions; we are all creators and receivers of multiple messages and information contents. The loss of trust is the greatest damage both to markets and for communication. Certainly, after years in which, by multiplying the possibilities of expression, digital technology has meant that the importance of the quality of sources has been perceived to a lesser extent (for example, the publishing crisis is placed in this context), we are now recognizing a greater role for authoritative and reliable information sources and original messages.

An even greater space is therefore opening up for corporate communication, which has the opportunity to express itself fully in the light of Stakeholder Theory, thus giving voice to all stakeholders, in accordance with the need to enhance corporate culture according to the ESG (environmental, social, governance) parameters, which today are the lowest common denominator of all large companies, with the addition of the "Hs" for human and health, which I prefer. Nowadays, the commitment to the environment, to society, to the inclusion of people of different cultures, nationalities, genders, and abilities, and to transparency in management, are elements on which the overall reputation of a company might be at stake. It is necessary to commit oneself to bringing out not simple conformity, not the flattening on a pattern (which, as such, is outdated and surmountable), but enhancing the individual expression of the company and of the people who are involved in it.

Space can communicate, obviously. It communicates when conceived, imagined, and then built with the idea of transmitting the identity and values of a company such as Lavazza, which makes sustainability and respect for the environment its cornerstones. Every space communicates implicitly because it has shapes, smells, colors, and visible and invisible boundaries. In a corporate space, these elements are combined in a coherent way to explicitly communicate the values that inspire a company, those who work there, and those who govern it, as well as the role it wants to take on in the competitive and social context. From the site selected for the company's headquarters to the architectural choices, the materials, as well as the internal layout of the offices and common areas, everything was chosen to clearly

convey the relationship that the family wants to establish with its employees and, as a result, with all audiences.

In Nuvola, Lavazza's headquarters in Turin, nothing was left to chance, from the choice of the suburban neighborhood where the first stone was laid to the decision to integrate innovative and cutting-edge architectural elements with the remains of an early Christian church and an old power plant, and from the combination of different materials and eco-efficient solutions to the removal of every border, gate, and barrier in order to promote perfect integration between the company and the neighborhood. Lavazza is a collaborative neighbor, respectful of community life. This is the common perception of the community life, which is the result of intense communication and relationship activity with citizens, in the name of listening and dialogue, although never forgetting the meaning that some choices would have for the company's employees. There are many shared work and leisure areas, including terraces that can be transformed into outdoor workstations, a garden shared with the neighborhood where one can walk during breaks, a museum that testifies to the cultural heritage of a large industrial group in the country, and two refreshment areas open to the public.

It is not enough to create beautiful buildings; you also have to talk about them. Thus this meaningful book inspires a desire to learn more not only about Nuvola but also about Lavazza as a whole, not surprisingly a leading Italian company in the world. And it encourages good communication between people who, amid the din of millions of messages, might find time to talk to each other in one of Nuvola's spaces.