

The farmhouse of "smart connectors"

Fabio Zoffi has a dream: to offer low-cost technologies that allow companies to be as efficient and competitive as Amazon present and future

BY CLAUDIO KAUFMANN

Pictured, Fabio Zoffi. On the page on the right, ORS's headquarters.

More algorithms for everyone. "I like to think of a billion people who own their destiny and their business." But also "synchronicity", that is, the significant coincidences, a concept dear to psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung. "Yeah, because in life there are turns that, in retrospect, we recognize as a kind of destiny. For Jung was synchronicity." To pronounce these words is Fabio Zoffi, a Venetian, successful entrepreneur, "I like to turn ideas into business", shipped a quarter of a century ago to Munich, none other than by Gianni Mion, former head of Edizioni Holding, safe of the Benetton family, who sees in him, the young 24 years old and fresh from graduation at Ca' Foscari, the talent of the frontline manager.

Today Fabio Zoffi still lives in Munich, with his wife and children, German by adoption with a dual passport, after having made a career in the Ponzano Group, decided in 1999 that it was time for "synchronicity", to get a breakthrough, set up his own business and launch an incubator. Since then, other avenues, other routes, including in 2013 the purchase of the majority shares of ORS (Operational Research Systems), an IT company that for more than 20 years optimizes value chains: from production to services, from energy to marketing and more. ORS, in fact, makes algorithms, "We have over a thousand owners", explains Zoffi proudly, "thanks to a pool of scientists and developers. I tell friends that we live in Legoland, because the main thing about our trades is to make blocks of technology that we impose at different levels of the company." So welcome to Legolandia, "where anyone can become an entrepreneur", recoils Zoffi. "We are also writing," he adds, "the alphabet of new technologies: A as algorithms, B as blockchain, C as crypto-currencies." Here is the new breakthrough, another encounter with "synchronicity": entering the fantastic world of "blockchain & cryptocurrencies".

But first a step back. The thinking brain of The ORS is located in Roddi, Cuneo province, not far from Alba, the area of the best wines and truffles in the world. There are more than 70 computer scientists working there, "a jewel that in Silicon Valley they dream of", says Zoffi, "let's imagine that Pico della Mirandola also stayed in the farmhouse". In fact, more than a farmhouse, it is a village of thousands of square meters, not to mention the land. "An incubator will soon be born, as soon as we finish renovating the old stable." "A few months ago", continues Zoffi, "a professor at the Polytechnic University of Turin introduces me to two young people who study blockchain.

I listen, I think about it and they start exchanging ideas. I talk about it in ORS and we all come to the same conclusion: it can be done." Can you do that, Dr. Zoffi? "Follow the reasoning: any value chain, whether it's shoes or tyres, can be traced back to flows: goods and services, information and payments. So far as ORS we have mainly dealt with goods and services, not being able to optimize information and payments too often. Well with blockchain you can do it." The tool will be the "smart connectors", already renamed Hypersmart Contracts (to distinguish them from smart contracts). The existing ORS platform will become the marketplace where Hypersmart Contracts can be purchased and sold via the token. "My dream," says Zoffi, "is that a global network of developers and entrepreneurs is born that can make communities." The summary will be the launch of an ICO (Initial Coin Offering) and a digital currency called OrsT (the T stands for token). "We will have technical support from Eidoo Ico Engine," adds Zoffi. ICO, scheduled for April 28, has already raised 10 million

dollars in presale, the target is now another 15 million, "sold at the exact same price, without any privileges", insists Zoffi.

One doubt remains: why ORS, a very solid entrepreneurial company, with emblazoned clients in Italy and abroad (Pirelli, Luxottica, Vodafone, Sap, Hera, Bnl, Rothschild and even the Ministry of Defence), want to jump into a market as little regulated and volatile as that of cryptocurrencies? In recent days, for example, the news has been that 46% of ICO's in 2017 already have survival problems. Replica Zoffi: "I don't do it for money, I'm more than wealthy. But when I think about the future of my children, I wonder: what world will we leave?" Can you imagine that, Dr. Zoffi? "Without changes in trajectory in 20 years we will be governed by machines and robots, millions of jobs will disappear, at the head of everything there will be few men full of assets, owners of mega corporations. Think of Amazon, what stops it the most? It can get where it wants." So here's the dream: to be able to offer technologies, at very low cost, so that small businesses can be as efficient and competitive as Amazon, present and future. I mean, more algorithms for everyone. "Think of the small farmer, it is just an example, in Peru, Thailand or our parts, with one hectare of land, but competing with large farms that move tractors guided by satellites.

Our blockchain project can offer algorithms to analyze land, climate, prices, margins and identify markets and customers." And that would be only the first step. Then, that farmer, would see its organic product traced on the blockchain, the consumer could pay it with the smartphone, sure not to buy a fake. Finally, with the OrsT token the payment would be simultaneous. In short, concludes Zoffi, "any company, even not large, could run its own business, managing to fight with the big ones". In fact, on how to make an excellent a small reality thanks to artificial intelligence Zoffi has done experiments in his own home, with the vineyards of Nice, winery bought in Piedmont, where he produces high-end Barbera.

The secret? "I keep it for myself," smiles Zoffi, "an example I can do: predict the ripening curve of the grapes with algorithms." We will then see if the harvest in the future will also be made by human-like robots. By the way, what the machines are going to do is the debate. According to Stephen Hawking, one of the most authoritative theoretical physicists in the world, just disappeared, the future is already marked. Artificial intelligence and its army of robots will command us. "I prefer the other school," Zoffi concludes, "that any artificial intelligence can never compete with human intelligence, for a simple reason: machines cannot make moral choices." Waiting to understand, let's enjoy Legolandia. Until the next turn, indeed not, to the next "synchronicity".

Quote: "We are writing the alphabet of new technologies. A as algorithms, B as blockchain, C as crypto currency"

https://www.ors.ai/images/pdf/Fortune-Italia_ORZ_Zoffi_Mar2018.pdf