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From Made in Italy to Made in Montana: A Guiding Framework

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University Grant Program Report
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
“From Made in Italy to Made in Montana: A Guiding Framework”

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Project Background and Objectives

In the spring of 2017, I was awarded a GRIP (Global Research Incentive Program) fund from the University Small Grant Program in the amount of \$3,550 for a project entitled “From Made in Italy to Made in Montana: A Guiding Framework.” This proposal is a joint collaboration with business and economics faculty from our partner university in Milan, Italy, *Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore* (hereafter Cattolica), to investigate and translate the worldwide success of the “Made in Italy” certification and brand to the *Montana Department of Commerce’s* “Made in Montana” designation. “Made in Italy”, a merchandise mark by the Italian Trade Commission used to designate products that are planned, manufactured and packed in Italy, represents the most successful international certification of authenticity initiative for design, quality and craftsmanship. From pasta producer Barilla to global fashion brand Armani to Illy, maker of premium espresso coffee, these brands have leveraged the “Made in Italy” association and endorsement in expanding globally. The project aim is to examine and understand the “Made in Italy” certification requirements, governing guidelines, campaign strategies, and branding approaches in select Italian industries and, subsequently, to translate our findings into a prescriptive “best practices” framework and related case studies to help enhance the “Made in Montana” program for Montana-based companies seeking to enhance their national and global competitiveness.

The funds were used to initiate the exploratory phase of this project in collaboration with Professor Benedetto Cannatelli at our partner institution, Cattolica in Milan. The project involved traveling to Milan, Italy to collect primary data by engaging in site visits and conducting interviews with producers “Made in Italy” designated food and beverage sector. The funds were also used to meet with “Made in Montana” producers at the annual “Made in Montana” fair. Lastly, funds were used to purchase secondary data in the form of publications on the success of “Made in Italy”.

Uses of Funds

Primary Data Collection: My first trip to Italy was in January 2018. While I was able to secure travel funding (airfare) through our partner institution, Cattolica, I used a portion of my GRIP funds for site visits to Italian manufacturers who have secured the “Made in Italy” designation. For example, Professor Cannatelli visited Fratelli Beretta, Italy’s largest producer of cold cuts where we had an exclusive opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews with Lorenzo Beretta, 7th generation family member and manager of the company, and tour the production facilities. Another visit was to ComoNeXT, an incubator focused on bringing international visibility to food-related innovations in Northern Italy. The second trip to Italy, in July/August 2018, allowed for additional site visits and interviews of “Made in Italy” producers and to extend the collaboration with Professor Cannatelli. Funds earmarked for this airfare were used.

In March, 2018, I attended the annual “Made in Montana” fair, visiting with Montana-based manufacturers about what the designation means to them. These manufacturers included, among others, Big Sandy Organics, the producer of *Kracklin’ Kamut*, Bison Bites, producer of *Roam Free Jerky*, and *Blind Haut Sauce*.

Secondary Data Acquisition: Funds were used to acquire necessary text on the success of the “Made in Italy” designation, including *Made in Italy: Food and Stories* by Giorgio Locatelli, John Dickie’s *The Delizia: The Epic History of the Italians* and *Their Food and Italian Cuisine: A Cultural History* by Alberto Capatti.

Education: Lastly, funds were used for an online course and related materials through Udemy to understand technological innovations and their implications on brand protection and product authentication. The Udemy course was entitled *The Basics of Blockchain*.

Deliverables to Date

On February 23rd, 2018, I presented an hour-long presentation entitled “From Made in Italy to Made in Montana: A Guiding Framework” to faculty members from UM’s College of Business. Subsequently, I was invited by John Baldrige, Project Manager of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of Montana, to share my insights on designations with the United States Cattlemen’s Association. Based on this work, I was invited to write, together with Professors Cannatelli and Stan, an article based on our research findings to date. Our work entitled “Buying Genuine Montana” appeared as the lead article in the Summer 2018 issue of the *Montana Business Quarterly*, the magazine published through the BBER. We are now in a position to use this work to date to apply for additional grant funding from the Montana Department of Commerce and/or possible the Rural Business Development Grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for the generous support I received from the University Grant Program that allowed me to initiate this fascinating and highly relevant research. The lead article in *Montana Business Quarterly* entitled “Buying Genuine Montana” is a testament to the importance of this research and I look forward to continuing my inquiry to help Montana businesses and the Montana economy at large to maintain its competitiveness in an increasingly global marketplace.