

“LA MIA IMPRESA ONLINE.IT” LAUNCHED TO BRING ITALIAN SMEs ONLINE FOR FREE

Google, Seat Pagine Gialle, Register.it and Poste Italiane have joined forces to offer SMEs a simple and free platform to grasp the business opportunities offered by the Internet

Milan, 5 May 2011 – For the first time Google, Seat PG with PagineGialle.it, Register.it and Poste Italiane are collaborating on a systemic project for the online launch of Italian SMEs that have not yet approached the Internet, through a free and extremely simple offer. With the tagline ‘**La Mia Impresa Online.it**’, the companies involved in the project guide Italian SMEs step by step to help them **go online, promote their business online** and **sell online**.

There are 4.5 million companies in Italy, and approximately 4 million of them are small businesses with fewer than 10 employees. According to Eurisko statistics,¹ only about 25% of all Italian companies have a website, and if we narrow this down to the businesses with under 10 employees this figure drops to 20%.

However, the “Fattore Internet” study,² which Google commissioned from The Boston Consulting Group, shows that SMEs active on the Internet sell more, hire more, export more and are more productive than those that are not present on the Internet or that merely have a showcase site. In particular, in 2010 businesses with an online presence enjoyed a 1.2% increase in turnover, compared to a decrease of 4.5% posted by offline companies, and boosted foreign sales by 15% versus +4% for those offline; 34% of the SMEs active online recorded an increase in personnel, and 65% stated that they had benefited in terms of productivity thanks to the Internet.

This clearly shows the potential — in terms of business opportunities — that has remained unexpressed and that the Internet could bring to the Italian economy if more small businesses should decide to go digital to some extent.

This is why Google, Seat Pagine Gialle, Register.it and Poste Italiane have decided to set up **La Mia Impresa Online.it**, a project established with the

¹ Source: Eurisko ICT Research 2010.

² The Boston Consulting Group, “Fattore Internet. Come Internet sta cambiando l’economia italiana”, March 2011. Downloadable free of charge at www.fattoreinternet.it.

aim of helping Italian SMEs create their own website — free of charge — and develop their business through the Internet.

A study conducted by Ipsos³ for Google reveals that the main deterrents keeping Italian SMEs from creating a website are the perception of high costs and of the difficulties involved. Consequently, **La Mia Impresa Online.it** has been designed to address these two criticalities on a specific level and allow small companies to test the advantages — at no risk whatsoever — that the Internet can bring to their business.

Companies that enrol in the programme will have the chance to create a website very easily, promote it through online advertising and set up an e-commerce platform entirely free of charge. Furthermore, they will also have the support of a call centre every step of the way.

The offer of La Mia Impresa Online.it will be valid for 12 months, during which each company can choose to activate all or only a few of the services offered, based on their needs.

The La Mia Impresa Online.it offer

Going online

- Domain name registration, hosting and platform to set up the website, with up to 10 GB of web space, content management interface, 10 e-mail accounts, system for real-time statistics and control panel free for 12 months, offered by Seat PG with PagineGialle.it

Promoting the business online

- AdWords coupon worth 100 euros to promote the business through advertising on the Google search engine. The AdWords coupon is valid until the credit runs out, without any time limits.

Selling online

- An e-commerce platform free for 3 months, offered by Register.it.

Free shipping and receipt of payment

³ Ipsos, November 2010.

- Five free shipments (up to a weight of 3 kg) for the first 500 companies that activate the e-commerce platform, offered by Poste Italiane.

This offer will be enriched over the next few weeks with an additional free service: the virtual POS.

At the end of the free trial period there is no obligation to renew and those who decide to use services other than the ones offered by the partners of La Mia Impresa Online.it can transfer their domains. For those who instead choose to continue using these services, the cost of the domain, hosting service and the platform to manage the site and the real-time statistics service will be less than 25 €/month for 12 months; for the e-commerce service the charge will be 67.50 €/quarter. There is no minimum or maximum amount for the investment in AdWords and advertising can thus be modulated according to the advertiser's needs. Those who are interested in continuing the promotional activity once the coupon credit has run out do not need to do anything but extend their planning. Those who wish to keep using the services of Poste Italiane can continue to ship at a base cost of 5.65 €/shipment (a sliding scale of discounts is available for larger quantities).

“Google’s commitment to make La Mia Impresa Online.it possible represents an investment in the country and a contribution to help the Italian digital ecosystem grow,” commented **Carlo D’Asaro Biondo**, President Southern & Eastern Europe, Middle East & Africa, Google. *“It is an initiative in which we strongly believe because we are undertaking it with major local partners, and because similar experiences already conducted in other countries have yielded significant results, benefiting not only the businesses participating in them but also the local economies in which they operate.”*

“We are enthusiastic about participating in this project, which is full of development potential and reflects our business model,” stated **Alberto Cappellini**, CEO of Seat PG. *“The objective is to encourage the approach to the Internet of the small entrepreneurs, commercial businesses and professionals that, so far, have not grasped the opportunity to go online. Last year Seat PG brought 60,000 SMEs to the Internet for the first time, but there are still over 2 million businesses that are not present online. This is a great growth opportunity for the Italian economic fabric, in which SMEs play a key role, but at the same time it is also an important business opportunity.”*

According to **Barbara Poggiali**, CEO of Dada S.p.A., the parent company of Register.it, *“La Mia Impresa Online is absolutely aligned with the mission of Dada, which has worked in digital technology for over 15 years, with 500,000 online companies in Europe to date. More than ever before, we are at the service of SMEs, offering them professional instruments so that they can be present on the Internet and continue to develop. Thanks to an e-commerce package that is complete, versatile and easy to use, we also offer them a great opportunity to expand their customer base on an international level as well. It’s like having a shop that’s open 24/7, and is easily accessible from around the world.”*

“The digital economy is a reality and Italian companies need to exploit its potential to the fullest,” stated **Andrea Rigoni**, E-Commerce Director for Poste Italiane S.p.A. *“Poste Italiane has always supported the activities of companies, institutions and citizens, and through La Mia Impresa Online.it, combined with our own evolved offer of eBusiness services, the goal of Poste Italiane is to support Italian companies in the development of services on the Internet and accompany small businesses as they take their first steps online.”*

Paolo Bulleri, Technical Secretary of the Department for Business and Internationalisation of the Italian Ministry of Economic Development, remarked, *“The Ministry has taken a great interest in this and other projects that strive to spread e-commerce and accompany SMEs online. We are convinced that the encounter between the quality of Italian products — the outcome of the capacity for innovation, flexibility and customisation of the products offered by the Italian approach to business — and the potential of the Internet can generate new and interesting opportunities to penetrate both the domestic and international markets, confirming Italy’s role as a country that can identify the trends of taste and beauty around the world.”*