

*Dynamism and Competitiveness of Italian Companies: High-Growth Enterprises and Family-Run, or Not, Gazelle Companies*

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A high percentage of businesses comes to an end shortly after birth. This highly vulnerable condition is a hallmark of young businesses, as early stage survival rates are low in all countries and industries. This paper recalls the main causes of vulnerability of companies in their start-up phase, whose knowledge is useful to prevent their manifestation and, in this way, to encourage the creation of companies more likely to overcome the difficult first stage of life. To promote economic development, however, it is not enough to create businesses, they have to last over time. To identify the characteristics that businesses – and therefore also young ones – must possess in order to survive and grow, this paper focuses, secondly, on Italian high-growth businesses. The high competitiveness of these companies can only derive from their strong vocation for excellence. Therefore, these companies and, above all, the entrepreneurial values inspiring their choices, must be considered to plan successful businesses. Consequently, decoding their «genome» is the prerequisite, not to «clone» them – by replicating a successful company you do not get another successful company –, but to focus on the entrepreneurial values inspiring their choices and indicate the latter as excellence paradigms that companies, also young ones in their start-up phase, must take as a reference point. Since entrepreneurial success depends on an entrepreneurial culture expressing a vocation for excellence, economic development must be pursued by Eu and national policymakers also through an investment in entrepreneurial culture in school and university institutions.