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WILKINSON MARKET SHARES

Between the 1960s and the 1970s, the shaving market was still largely limited to traditional razor blades, and every manufacturer tried to do its best.

The industry had moved from propaganda to persuasion, and then into what could only be called imitation by commission. Every company followed the same unwritten rule.

If you wanted to sell more of a single product, marketing always suggested the same solution:

Change the outfit. Change the name. The body remains the same.

Yet sometimes a single word was enough to create an emotional bond with consumers.

That is exactly what happened with Bolzano Blades.

The Bolzano Steelworks began manufacturing razor blades under the name Falco Blade, which later evolved into the famous Bolzano Blade.

Two million blades a month were produced by a workforce of 350 employees, most of them women. And that was no coincidence.

There is also a political detail that is rarely mentioned.

The factory was established following a direct policy of Mussolini's government to encourage industrial development in Bolzano and further the Italianization of South Tyrol, a territory acquired after the Great War but inhabited largely by German-speaking communities.

Bolzano Blades were therefore more than an industrial product.

They were also an instrument of national identity.

The advertising slogan left little room for interpretation:

"Bolzano Blade, shave Italian."

The postwar economic boom became a boom for the brand as well. Bolzano turned into one of the symbols of Italian mass consumption.

Then came the 1970s.

Disposable razors arrived.

The decline began.

The brand struggled to adapt until one final attempt was made.

A press release proudly declared:

"BOLZANO BLADE is the official supplier of Wilkinson Sword of London."

Italian journalists rushed to cover the announcement.

It was a bomb exploding after the war had already ended.

The consequences arrived immediately.

One journalist, a woman, conducted the interview with remarkable skill.

After carefully preparing the ground, she asked the managing director:

"*In the number of blades you claim to sell, are knives included as well?*"

The executive was stunned.

"*Why are you asking me that?*"

The journalist replied:

"So you can use one to cut through all the nonsense you're telling us."

The room burst into laughter.

Wilkinson never replied.

As was its style.

An aristocratic aunt of noble origins who would rather not eat Italians simply to avoid having to digest them afterward.

Today, little remains of that great industrial adventure.

A roundabout.

A signboard.

A few fading memories.

And the nonsense of which Italians — myself first and foremost — remain proudly fond.

Via UK
Ferdinando