Applicant's name:

Domenico Appio

Complete contact information:

domenico.appio@polimi.it

+39 3890213879

School:

Politecnico di Milano, Graduate School of Management

Area of Interest:

Entrepreneurship and Strategy

Year of entry into the PhD program:

2023

Expected year of completion:

2026

Name of the faculty member supplying a letter of recommendation:

Josip Kotlar

DOMENICO APPIO

Address: Politecnico di Milano, Department of Management, Economics, and Industrial Engineering. Via Raffaele Lambruschini, Milano, IT, 20156.
Email: domenico.appio@polimi.it
Website: https://www.som.polimi.it/people/appio-domenico/

EDUCATION

Politecnico di Milano, Graduate School of Management — **Milan, IT**
Ph.D. – Management Engineering — 2023-Ongoing

Polytechnic of Milan — **Milan, IT**
M.A. – Management Engineering — 2021 – 2023

Polytechnic of Bari — **Bari, IT**
B.A. – Industrial and Management Engineering — 2018-2021

PHD TRAINING

Doctoral Courses

"Scientific/Academic English: Writing and Presenting With and Without the Support of LLMs", Politecnico di Milano, Italy	2025 (Jan-Feb)
"Academic Publishing", Politecnico di Milano, Italy	2025 (Jan-Feb)
"Foundation of Strategy", Copenhagen Business School, Denmark	2024 (Jan-Feb)
"Family Business Research Methods" Nova School of Business and Economics, Portugal	2024 (Mar-Jun)
"Theorizing from qualitative data", Politecnico di Milano, Italy & UCL School of Management, United Kingdom	2024 (Apr-May)
"Ethics of Artificial Intelligence", Politecnico di Milano, Italy	2024 (May)
"Basic-Econometrics Analysis", Università degli Studi della Calabria, Italy	2024 (July)
"Literature Review in Social Sciences and Engineering", Politecnico di Milano, Italy	2024 (Sept)
"Case Study and Action Research", Politecnico di Milano, Italy	2024 (Sept)

Seminars

"Hidden Power in Formalized Structures: The Case of University F&A Rates", John Walsh, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA	2024 (Apr)
"Introducing the Academy of Management Journal", Davide Ravasi, UCL School of Management, UK	2024 (May)
"Start-ups, Hype and Morality: How Entrepreneurial Framing Affects the Moral Legitimacy of Hyped Ventures", Elena Dalpiaz, Università della Svizzera Italiana	2024 (May)
"Avoiding Common Pitfalls to Publish in Top Journals: Insights from Experience as Associate Editor at the Journal of Management Studies", Elena Dalpiaz, Università della Svizzera Italiana	2024 (May)
"Organizational Responses to Value Pluralism: Implication for Theory and Practice" Ricardo Flores, University of Victoria, Canada	2024 (Oct)

Webinars

"Writing is Reading: How to Join a Theoretical Conversation", Tammar B. Zilber, Hebrew University of Jerusalem & Copenhagen Business School	2024 (Sept)

PUBLICATIONS

Case Study for Teaching

Appio, D., Rondi, E., & Kotlar, J. (2024). Acetaia Giusti: A 17th-Generation Family Business at the Crossroads. Family Enterprise Day - The Hénokiens Inspiration: Embracing Dualities for Family Business Reinvention. Wendel International Centre for Family Enterprise, October 2024, INSEAD. Available at: https://www.insead.edu/events/family-enterprise-day-the-henokiens-inspiration-embracing-dualities-for-family-business-reinvention#491706

Working Papers

Appio, D., Kotlar, J., & Foss, N.J. (2025). Exploring the Evolution of Family Business Owners After Exit: The Role of Ownership Competences. Target Journal: *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice.*

Appio, D., Appio, F.P., & Kotlar, J. (2025). Error-Driven Emergence of Ownership Competences: Evidence from Early Ventures. Target Journal: *Academy of Management Journal.*

Appio, D., Pantalena, C., Kotlar, J., & De Massis, A. (2025). Prince or King? Bottom-UP Leadership Construction During Succession Processes in Family Firms. Target Journal: *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice.*

Conference Papers

Appio, D., Appio, F.P., & Kotlar, J. (2025). Error-Driven Emergence of Ownership Competences: Evidence from Early Ventures. *Academy of Management Annual Conference*. Under Review

Appio, D., Appio, F.P., & Kotlar, J. (2025). Error-Driven Emergence of Ownership Competences: Evidence from Early Ventures. *EURAM Annual Conference*. Under Review

Appio, D., Pantalena, C., Kotlar, J., & De Massis, A. (2025). Prince or King? Bottom-UP Leadership Construction During Succession Processes in Family Firms. *IFERA Conference Proceedings*. Under Review

Appio, D., Kotlar. J., & Foss, N.J. (2024). Phoenix Rising: The Owner's Journey of Family Business Sale and Revival through Ownership Competence. *Academy of Management Proceedings* 2024 (1), 12956. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMPROC.2024.12956abstract

Appio, D. & Kotlar, J., Frattini, F. (2024). Digitalization of Family Office: Embracing Technological Transformation through FinTech Solutions. How AI is changing Economic Systems, Organizations, and Society. *Proceedings of the XXXV AiIG Scientific Meeting*, 1-4.

Appio, D. & Kotlar, J. (2024). Digitalization of Family Office: Embracing Technological Transformation through FinTech Solutions. *IFERA Conference Proceedings*, 135.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Visiting Researcher, Copenhagen Business School, Department of Strategy and Innovation. I conducted research under the supervision of Nicolai J. Foss.	2023 (Jan-Mar)
Visiting Researcher, David Eccles Business School, Department of Entrepreneurship and Strategy. I will conduct research under the supervision of William B. Schulze.	2025 (Feb-May)

TEACHING

Strategy & Marketing: 1st year MSc class, Management Engineering	2023-present
Strategic Innovation: 2nd year MSc class, Management Engineering	2023-present
Postgraduate Master in Energy Management: Innovation Management in Established Firms	2024 (Apr)

APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS

Observatory of Family Office 2025: Investment Processes and Strategies for Family Offices	2025-present
Observatory of Family Office 2024: The Challenges of Competencies for Family Offices	2023-2024
Executive Program for Family Office Professionals	2023-2024

CONSULTING PROJECTS

Adidas: A Competitive and Financial Analysis	2021-2022
Chateau D'Ax: Strategic and Market Analysis	2021-2022
Mediaset: Blockchain adoption for revamping M&E industry	2022-2023
Roche (IT): Imaging meaningful directions for improving the care of Alzheimer disease	2022-2023
Moleskine: Envisioning strategic actions to enter the educational game sector	2022-2023
AM Instruments: Helping the strategic department to open a sale subsidiary in Germany	2023-2024

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Volunteering at Croce Rossa Italiana	2016-2017
High School Tutoring	2018-2019
Music Producer (Electronic music)	2018-2022

Domenico Appio



POLITECNICO
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PhD Student in Management Engineering
Politecnico di Milano - School of Management
Department of Management, Economics and Industrial Engineering
Via Raffaele Lambruschini 4B, Building BL 26, 20156 Milan (Italy)

I authorize the processing of my data in accordance with GDPR 2016/679 of April 27, 2016 (European Regulation on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data).

I authorize the publication of my Curriculum Vitae on the institutional website of the Politecnico di Milano (Transparent Administration section) in compliance with Legislative Decree No. 33 of March 14, 2013 (and subsequent amendments and additions).

One-Page Essay

My current research centers on how entrepreneurial actors adapt in times of transition and uncertainty, with a particular focus on ownership competence. In one project, I explore what happens after family owners sell their businesses, shedding light on their "follow-up" entrepreneurial activities, how they retain or shift their roles, and how they grapple with questions like "Who am I now?" My preliminary findings suggest that, after a business sale, family owners tend to redefine their entrepreneurial identity by strengthening resource orchestration skills and moving toward more hands-off investing, reflecting an overlooked aspect of entrepreneurship research: while many owners excel as entrepreneurs, they may lack the competence required for financial investment. Another project examines how errors drive the emergence of ownership competence in early ventures. Errors are ubiquitous in entrepreneurship, yet the mechanisms through which founders learn from them remain underexplored. By combining insights from error management theory and the competence-based view of ownership, this research shows how startup founders shape their ownership competence through repeated experimentation and pivots, ultimately contributing to better venture outcomes. Additionally, I am collaborating on a study that integrates incentives-based and competence-based perspectives of family ownership to propose a "Behavioral Principal Model." This model reveals how family owners' ability to select and govern entrepreneurial ventures depends on both motivation and competence—while they may excel at choosing promising investments, their governance decisions can be complicated by competing personal and business goals. Building on these core themes, my future research extends to cross-country comparisons of institutional logics behind family business sales, the role of principal characteristics in shaping family office investments, and the dynamics of leadership transitions in family firms.

I am eager to attend the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp 2025 because it offers a unique forum to deepen my knowledge of cutting-edge research and contribute to pressing challenges in entrepreneurship. My motivation is grounded in the conviction that academic insights must create practical value. Since my undergraduate years, I have actively sought opportunities to engage with entrepreneurs across multiple industries. I attended several startup events, connected with Heads of startup networks (Italy, USA, Brazil), and conducted hundreds of interviews to learn more about startup challenges (e.g., founder-to-owner transitions, startup-scale up processes, learning mechanisms). Last year, I also completed a Professional Executive Family Office Program at Politecnico di Milano. Over seven months, I worked closely with family office advisors, bankers, lawyers, wealth managers, and members of prominent Italian business families, covering modules that ranged from governance and continuity strategies to asset allocation, entrepreneurial finance, and wealth planning. This invaluable experience not only enriched my knowledge of the complexities faced by business families but also helped me develop a strong professional network and a robust source of data for future research. The Boot Camp's rigorous program would be an ideal platform to refine my ongoing work, test emerging ideas, and engage with leading scholars who share my passion for improving entrepreneurial outcomes. By immersing myself in lectures and discussions, I hope to refine my methodological approaches and identify new intersections for future projects. Ultimately, I view this opportunity as more than a learning experience; it is a chance to collaborate with peers and mentors committed to advancing research that resonates beyond academia. If selected, I will bring my passion for inquiry, openness to new ideas, and determination to produce research with real-world impact. I am ready to devote my full energy to this endeavour!

TO: The Selection Committee for the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Bootcamp 2025
FROM: Prof. Nicolai J Foss
RE: Domenico Appio's application

8 February 2025

Copenhagen Business School
Department of Strategy and Innovation

Kilevej 14A, 3rd floor
2000 Frederiksberg
Nicolai J Foss
Mail: njf.si@cbs.dk

I have been asked to write a letter in support of Domenico Appio's application for participation in the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Bootcamp. I am most enthused to do so.

Domenico is a brilliant PhD student. He is one of those students who have an instinct for asking the right questions, and who is capable of independently defining a realistic path to addressing and resolving the questions. This has been evident to me since I met Domenico a few years ago, when he joined Copenhagen Business School for a three-month research visit, during which he worked under my supervision on his Master's thesis. This self-financed visit came about because Domenico had picked up on some of my ideas on "ownership competence" (Foss et al., 2021, *Strategic Management Journal)* and wanted to deploy these ideas in the context of family business research.

Domenico's intellectual agility, sharp analytical skills, ability to synthesize ideas across disciplines, and, not the least, enthusiasm for research were evident. His work on ownership competence in entrepreneurship quickly evolved beyond a standard thesis project, as it it raised fundamental questions that had been largely overlooked in the field. The results were so promising that we decided to continue developing the research together, and we are now working toward finalizing a submission to a top-tier entrepreneurship journal. This speaks not only to the quality of Domenico's work but also to his ability to generate meaningful research contributions early in his career.

His research addresses critical yet underexplored issues: What happens when entrepreneurs transition into investors? How do they make sense of their role post-exit? His approach blends strategy, behavioral theories, and entrepreneurship, carving out a space at the intersection of multiple disciplines—an approach that aligns well with the interdisciplinary ethos of the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Bootcamp.

Beyond his academic strengths, Domenico is intellectually fearless. He is not afraid to engage in difficult debates, rethink his own assumptions, and challenge prevailing perspectives—a trait that will serve him well in an environment as rigorous as this bootcamp. He has already demonstrated a remarkable ability to connect with both scholars and practitioners, and I have no doubt that he will contribute insightful, provocative, and valuable perspectives to important discussions in entrepreneurship.

I can think of a few young researchers who would benefit more from this opportunity—or, frankly, who would make better use of it. Domenico will not just be a participant; he will be an active contributor, challenging ideas, testing frameworks, and engaging deeply with fellow scholars.

I strongly and enthusiastically recommend Domenico Appio for this opportunity. I expect he will leave a lasting impression—not just at the bootcamp, but on the broader field of entrepreneurship research.

Sincerely,

Nicolai J Foss

Prof. Nicolai J. Foss

Josip Kotlar
Full Professor of Strategy, Innovation and Family Business
Politecnico di Milano – School of Management
josip.kotlar@polimi.it

Milan, February 1st, 2025

To the Attention of: Selection Committee NBER Entrepreneurship Research Bootcamp 2025

Subject: Recommendation Letter for Domenico Appio

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am pleased to write this letter in strong support of Domenico Appio's application for the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Bootcamp 2025. As his PhD supervisor, I have had the opportunity to closely observe his research development and intellectual growth. Domenico is an exceptional second-year PhD student in Management Engineering at Politecnico di Milano, and his trajectory, curiosity, and commitment to advancing entrepreneurship scholarship make him an outstanding candidate for this highly selective program.

Domenico's research investigate the evolving role of ownership competence in entrepreneurship—a theoretically rich and practically significant area. His work explores critical transitions, such as how family business owners navigate post-sale reconfiguration and how early-stage founders develop ownership competence through learning from errors. His studies offer fresh perspectives at the intersection of entrepreneurial strategy and competence development, positioning him as a promising scholar who contributes novel insights to the field.

Beyond his strong research focus, Domenico has demonstrated an exceptional ability to bridge academic knowledge with real-world practice. He has actively collaborated with family offices, industry experts, and startup ecosystems across multiple countries, attending executive programs and conducting numerous field interviews. This is not just an academic interest for him—it is a passion that drives his work. He has been an integral part of the Family Office Observatory, where he has worked alongside me to explore how family offices develop investment strategies, assess entrepreneurial opportunities, and build governance structures. His contributions to this initiative have been invaluable, helping to generate impactful insights that connect entrepreneurship, ownership, and finance.

Domenico's academic record further underscores his dedication. He has undertaken specialized doctoral training at leading institutions in Italy, Denmark, Portugal, and the UK, deepening his methodological expertise in strategy, qualitative theorizing, and econometrics. His research output is already gaining recognition, with working papers targeting top-tier journals and conference presentations at the Academy of Management, EURAM, and IFERA.

What truly sets Domenico apart is his intellectual drive, resilience, and openness to interdisciplinary thinking. He thrives in rigorous academic environments, actively seeking to challenge existing paradigms and push the boundaries of entrepreneurship research. His ability to synthesize family business scholarship, competence theory, and entrepreneurial finance into a coherent, forward-looking research agenda is particularly impressive.

I am confident that participating in the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Bootcamp will further refine Domenico's research, expand his scholarly network, and contribute to his growth as a leading researcher in entrepreneurship. He is highly motivated, deeply engaged in the field, and eager to both learn from and contribute to this unique intellectual community.

I wholeheartedly endorse Domenico's application without reservation. I am confident that he will bring intellectual rigor, enthusiasm, and fresh insights to the program. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,



Josip Kotlar
Full Professor of Strategy, Innovation and Family Business
Politecnico di Milano – School of Management
josip.kotlar@polimi.it