

Innovation Journalism in Slovenia

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Innovation Journalism in Slovenia

Innovation as a driving force is effective when it becomes the value system and consciousness of a general socio-economic community. To position itself successfully worldwide, Slovenia has made significant progress in the last few years in raising public awareness about the importance of innovation and creative thinking. Entrepreneurs and successful businesses have played a mayor role in this process. Lately, especially with a systematic approach of the MPI group to innovation as a public value, the national media started to respond. The needed critical mass of informed and stimulated people has been created. The next push is towards higher- quality reporting and writing on innovation, thus deeper understanding of innovation as a long-term driver of progress and prosperity.

1 Innovation and Social Development

Innovation as a driving force is effective when it becomes the value system and consciousness of a general socio-economic community. It is significant for communities when the state, scientific community, administration and ultimately the media are interconnected for this purpose.

Public awareness of innovation as a tool for greater competitiveness and long-term prosperity, is beginning recognised at all levels of society.

2 Entrepreneurial Initiatives

Stimulating innovation in Slovenia started in the late 1980s when a well known Slovenian publisher, Jože Vilfan, began issuing the “Revija za Razvoj” , renamed “Podjetnik” . He used this journal to promote the idea of entrepreneurship and diversity.

Recent initiatives for accelerating and promoting innovative thinking originated in 2003, when the company Vibacom started issuing the newsletter “Aktualno 1.0” . This was also the reason for establishing the project “Moč podjetniške inovativnosti (MPI)” . The project founders are three corporate entities: Vibacom, TV Pika and Mediade, who entered a strategic partnership at the start of this three-year international project. Its core mission: assert innovative Slovenian business thinking into global competitive markets, emphasizing Slovenian business models, business logic and socio-economic results. The project promotes ‘Created in Slovenia, Europe.’™ The trademark’s goal is to achieve higher visibility for Slovenian business logic and higher value for Slovenian products on international markets. The project uses multimedia as the primary tool for market penetration and focuses on business community.

The central project in its first year includes the dynamic monthly business-education program “Poslovni ritmi” . The monthly ‘45 minutes’ TV program presents competitive Slovenian companies successfully penetrating global markets, via innovative breakthroughs. The program promotes advanced leadership based on the business-relations model ‘8+1 business relations’ by the MABS® methodology, with innovation as the primary driver for overall development and prosperity. By presenting these companies, we are strengthening national confidence and awareness of the opportunities and tools needed to create successful business. At the same time, we want to establish the perception that innovation is a mindset, a ‘can do’ attitude. Every program ends with the slogan “And remember anyone can be innovative — even you!”

November 3, 2005 represented a turning point in the MPI project, when D. Nordfors and V. Bulc met. This meeting resulted in the immediate introduction of innovation journalism concepts into Slovenian media and the business community. Articles for local and national newspapers, including radio and TV, followed. An interview with D. Nordfors on ‘Innovation Journalism’ was published in the leading business magazine “Manager.” In February 2006 the project was officially announced at the “1st Festival of Innovation” as an independent entity with a respected round table, including leading Slovenian opinion leaders. The entire team has already participated as guest in the program “Studio ob 1700” on prime national radio . The discussion covered innovation journalism in Slovenian media.

In November 2005, a personal blog , “Innovation here and now,” was created, dedicated to spreading awareness of the significance of innovation and creating the proper conditions for stimulating innovation processes and creative thinking in Slovenia.

All these activities mentioned are part of the external simulative activities. Our experience shows that it is also important to link external media with internal business communication. Fulfilling such a need is the primary mission of the innovative publication, “Podjetniki v podjetju” by Mediade . Publication started in May 2005. It is a mix of business education and the media, e.g., the external initiatives on one hand, and the business environment and their employees on the other. Publication strategy is to introduce an independent, external viewpoint about core management issues, especially for middle management.

The basic purpose is to create an effective internal business environment of entrepreneurship and competitive individuals. Innovation and innovative thinking have become competitive, distinguishing advantages for employees; it will help employees acquire this attitude as rapidly as possible. The importance of individual competitiveness can hardly be overemphasized, as individuals overcome socialist traditions to embrace self-management and self-motivation. Under socialism, everything was the same for everyone—being average or ‘part of the crowd’ was seen as virtue rather than a weakness.

The publication “Podjetniki v podjetju,” with the column “Slovenska zgodba” , shows companies good practices of other successful and innovative Slovene companies and is building a network of know-how and knowledge between companies.

A web of local radio stations is also building a special network: “Gospodarstvo v etru” is a business program broadcast daily, simultaneously, by 14 local radio stations. The MPI project obtained a weekly media slot to present successful Slovenian companies and their innovative breakthroughs. Radio stations extend media coverage of the MPI project in Slovenian public space. This is how we achieve wider coverage and critical mass of informed individuals on innovation and the importance of self involvement as the way to business success.

The MPI project also covers different reviews. An opinion article on innovation is published in the monthly magazine “Glas gospodarstva” , issued by Slovenia’s Chamber of Commerce .

Agreements with more media organizations are being established, including SBR (Slovenian Business Report), Manager , Dnevnik (second biggest national newspaper) and Gazela . The national radio and TV broadcasting house has also shown interest: TV Pika , with its program “Business Curves” and an MPI project partner, has been a supporting medium from the first.

Media were not the only ones touched by the MPI project. It has also created new sub-projects. Among others it handles promotional projects for innovation awareness at the Regional Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia, as well as the project »City of Innovation« and the project» ”The Best Innovative Contribution in the Media Award” in cooperation with TIA, Slovenian Agency for Technological Development.

3 Other Innovation Projects in the Region

Innovation means an independent and innovative lifestyle. It is penetrating the consciousness and thought processes of teams and individuals as a huge, contagious and positive virus. Additional initiatives being implemented in Slovenia with similar goals include:

- The campaign »Created in Slovenia« vs. the traditional ‘Made in Slovenia’ emerged from three projects: MPI, Japac Jakopin (creator of the most expensive and most innovative sail boats in the world), and Jože Vilfan, mentioned earlier, who focused on the interest in the products from the crafts and trade sector and entrepreneurship;
- »PODIM « – A conference on business and innovation with a long tradition in awarding the best business ideas upgraded also with awards for the most innovative company.
- »Mesec designa « – a business initiative by Zmagov Novak, who organizes a month of daily events on advanced design, integrating designers, business people and top class experts in the form of workshops, social events and lectures;

- The scientific research institute IJS and their EU office for development in cooperation with IRC Slovenia;
- »Ti povej «; a public initiative, which offers help to young people in realizing their innovative ideas;
- »Inštitut za inovativnost in tehnologijo « and Borut Likar, who has focused on awakening and realizing innovation in young people.

4 The Challenge

Most of these projects originated from the initiative of entrepreneurs and individual believers, to establish business networks. A critical mass of journalistic contributions has also been accumulating in the media for three years, allowing innovation to position itself as a value. The next step is needed: raise the contributions to a higher level. It is not enough to write about innovation. It is also important to write qualitatively, analyzing short- and long-term (business) results with a focus on the future. This is why more professional journalistic knowledge, experience and willingness to understand is needed.

5 Conclusion

We did not listing all the initiatives. Our contribution is limited by our awareness and the power of our network. Yet we will continue with our work as an integrating point, especially in innovation and advanced thinking. We seek as many initiatives as possible for promoting innovation—more or less on their own today—that will combine their power. These could generate essential team energy and could catapult Slovenia into the group of leading global economies. These are not just empty dreams. The Technological Agency of Slovenia has implemented a good starting point when it established the “1st Festival of Innovation” with the Ministry of Development in February 2006 and it continues to do so with a pro-active, ambitious future strategy.

Innovation is in each of us. It is a natural process, enabling individuals to optimize their intellectual capital and stimulating effective pooling of resources. Let's get connected; in a spirit of new media and new models that bring the best out of us.

Polona Pibernik is co-founder and general manager of Mediade. The company has evolved from the GV Revije, the leading business print publisher in Slovenia, which was restructured in 2005. Mediade is known for developing a brand new concept of business-educational volumes, focused on the development of intrapreneurial organisational culture in the corporate business environment.

She has been involved in media for two decades. She started her career with local radio station Radio Koper and continued with the famous independent students' radio Radio Študent. Later she worked for five years for the Slovenian business magazines Gospodarski vestnik and Manager. She knows media from different points of view, having worked as journalist and then switching to marketing. She transforms her media and business experiences into developing new concepts of media, especially those linked to promotion of innovations and formation of knowledge networks. She is co-author of business-educational TV series "Poslovni ritmi" (Business Rhythms) and secretary general of the multi-media project MPI: The power of business innovation. The project, aimed at promoting innovative cultures was established by three Slovenian companies: Vibacom, TV PIKA and Mediade and acts as a leading integrative force in developing and promoting the highest achievements of the Slovenian innovative business environment.

Violeta Bulc, Vibacom, House for Business Solutions. Ms. Bulc is recognized as an opinion maker for advanced technologies and innovative business models. She is an excellent promoter of change with great people skills and a visionary sense for developing business behavior. She believes in the power of networks, holistic, individual and positive energy. She has received several awards for business innovations, including the national FENIKS Award for Consulting Project of the Year. The European Commission appointed Ms. Bulc to its Advisory Board for the e-Europe Action and Strategic Plans initiative for 2012 and 2020. Among her latest achievements is establishing the MPI business partnership (Power of Business Innovation) and the Institute for Business Growth and Creativity. The MPI Business Partnership is in cooperation with Mediade and TV PIKA, and its primary focus is the promotion of innovation culture and the Slovenian way of doing business. The Institute for Business Growth and Creativity is in cooperation with 3 additional experts (Andrej Bertonec PhD, Ladeja Godina Košir and Darko Kovač). The primary focus of the Institute is creating advanced management tools for sustainable business growth. Ms. Bulc is the author of many professional articles on innovation, expert studies, electronic publications and co-author of a popular business series called "Poslovni Ritmi".

Edita Kuhelj Krajnovič, MSc. is an editor and co-founder of Mediade, innovative publishing. She started her professional career as a teaching assistant for corporate finance at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana. After eight years she switched from academic to business environment. She took a managerial challenge as Director of Marketing and Public Relations at the third largest Slovenian bank, SKB bank. After a period she moved to the leading business print publisher in Slovenia, GV Revije as a Director of Advertising. She was also appointed as a marketing manager for the Gazelle project. In the same period she initiated the Student Business Conference as a partnership of Gospodarski vestnik magazine and Faculty of Economics, Ljubljana. In 2004 she was a President of 13th Slovenian Advertising Festival. After re-structuring of GV Revije she decided to pursue an entrepreneurial path and co-founded Mediade, innovative publishing where she works as an editor-in-chief. She is an executive manager of the Power of Business Innovation project and co-creator of the Ustvarjeno v Sloveniji. Created in Slovenia, Europe. brand.