

# BUSINESS

## COACHING

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THIS EDITION'S TOPIC

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GOLDEN FRIEND



# THE EDITORIAL

## Winter is coming ...

Summer is over and there is no more lightness in the air. End of the year is the time when business people give their last atom of strength to achieve the goals they had ambitiously set at the beginning of the year.

Winter is coming, bringing not fear and danger but a new opportunity for everyone. In that sense, by printing this magazine, we have another chance to be a part of this demanding business environment, to challenge usual routines that we all have, to share best practices from successful people and companies, and to learn something new.

Heather McGough, who is on the cover of this edition, is holding a compass in her hands, giving us a clue that the main topic of this edition is "exploration". Why is exploration so important in business? The answers to this question for the magazine in this edition gave a lot of successful leaders from corporations, but entrepreneurs and coaches too. Grab your answer and just do it!

We are constantly trying to improve our magazine and its brand's reputation. We are a media partner to four big international conferences:

- 1 Lean Startup Conference in San Francisco
- 2 Global Scrum Gathering in Vienna
- 3 Lean Innovation Summit in Rotterdam
- 4 Web Summit in Lisbon

We got the right to republish the latest articles from Lean Startup Co. blog on our online edition: [www.bcoaching.online](http://www.bcoaching.online)

### What's next?

We will continue to explore more possibilities to experiment with the magazine, carefully listen to our readers and follow our North star.

Editor in chief:  
Srdjan Pavlovic



**HEATHER MCGOUGH**, CEO and Co-Founder at Lean Startup Company,  
San Francisco, California

# THE FUTURE OF WORK IS HERE

## Heather McGough Origin Story

Fourteen years ago, at the age of 24, I'd finished college and some nonprofit work in the southeast United States. Afterward, I headed back into my parents' house in the midwest, as I considered my next move. Should I go to law school? Nah. Become a pharmaceutical rep? Nope. I had an idea to move out west to California to further my nonprofit career, but I was told I definitely shouldn't move to San Francisco. Too expensive.

It was curiosity, independence, and being a confident explorer that brought me here. I was fortunate enough to borrow \$1500 from one of my favorite people - Grandpa. I told him I'd pay him back. A year later I still called him every week, and every week I didn't have the money to pay him back. Yes, San Francisco was expensive and he could sense I felt guilty.

I was working tirelessly at my dream job - a nonprofit - spending every day trying to win over the hearts and minds of parents and their children. My work spanned five public housing communities in southeast San Francisco, where the leading cause of death for youth was homicide. I wanted to prove to the community that the program we were building wasn't a flash in the pan. I chose a job of service that didn't pay much. I lived each day within a tight budget on an Excel spreadsheet, counting every penny. One day as Grandpa and I were talking about the usual topics - politics, current events and my job, he said, "You know, Heather, you are doing really important work. You do know that you don't have to pay me back, okay?"

Grandpa died many years ago, but I still plan on paying him back. I'd like to find a curious girl from the midwest who has a desire to come to San Francisco to do nonprofit work, and give her a "loan." I want to tell her she is capable, and she can do anything she sets her mind to.



## Heather, you are the Co-Founder & CEO of Lean Startup Co. Tell us about your role?

Beyond the typical CEO duties related to people and culture, strategy and growth, cash and profitability, I probably spend more time than most CEOs triaging opportunities. Because the Lean Startup has been so popular as a movement over the past decade thanks to Co-Founder and Board member Eric Ries' best-selling book *The Lean Startup*, I find it necessary to manage and prioritize the opportunities that come our way so my team can focus on making the most impact in our community. As Co-Founder and CEO of Lean Startup Co., I've spent as much time defining and exploring who we are and how we can achieve impact, as what we could be and should be. Those explorations also include coming to terms with what we shouldn't be.

This is an essential task for any business leader who wants their company to grow, change, and adapt to the needs of society, institutions, corporations, and individuals in real-time. Doing so keeps us focused on our True North. At our core, Lean Startup Co. is about empowering people and companies with their own internal muscles and know-how to reinvent the future of their business. We are the world leader in Continuous Transformation. Our work is rooted in the Lean Startup process, which revolutionized how companies innovate in a more scientific, and therefore, repeatable way.

I spend time asking myself questions like: What can make a meaningful impact? How do we measure it? What is important? What does important mean? Do we have the right team makeup to achieve our own and our clients' desired outcomes? How do we test for skills?

Every day we wake up to a host of large-scale societal issues that demand our attention - be it politics, journalism, education, healthcare or the environment. My entire team shares the feeling that we can't shy away from taking on these challenges, nor can we accept the old way of doing things as the only way. We believe entrepreneurial think-

ing will be instrumental in finding solutions to the world's toughest stumbling blocks, just as it has for countless companies and individuals. I believe that most people have good intentions and that we all want to leave a world full of resources and opportunities for those who are about to inherit it. What's more, we can work together to move in the right direction.

## For an entrepreneur, it's very important to be curious. Curiosity means to constantly explore. What is your stance on this?

I didn't follow a traditional path to entrepreneurship, i.e. I don't come from a family of entrepreneurs, I didn't attend a top-tier college, and I don't have an MBA. Curiosity, a desire to create positive change, and hard work all helped to drive me to where I am today. I tend to see possibilities where others see dead ends.

I never stop asking questions, which is one of the reasons why I'm able to elicit the very best work from my team. I am curious about what makes my team members tick. I am curious about their skill sets and how to unlock and leverage the potential of our network so we can learn and grow together, rather than isolate ourselves inside the silos of our own experiences. I see our varied backgrounds and patterns of thought as a tremendous resource and something to celebrate.

In the same way, the Lean Startup Co. could not exist without curiosity. We are curious about solving problems for our community and customers. One of our core values is empowering entrepreneurial behavior, and a key component of this involves staying hungry and curious. We are mentally tough, professionally adaptable, eager to navigate ambiguity, have a bias for action and love to search for both problems and answers.

## How can we explore even deeper in order to achieve mastery in what we are doing?

Company leaders must devote a great deal of thought and dedicated creative work to stay competitive over the next 10 months, the next 10 years, and, ideally, the next 100 years. The rate of accelerating reinvention means life is changing faster now than at any other point in history, but it's also slower now than it will ever be.

Markets used to be OK with one major product or organizational change per decade, but now the shelf life of any competitive advantage can be measured in years, if not months.



Organizations of all kinds must cultivate an internal bias toward continuous reinvention. This is not about creating a singular breakthrough innovation, but developing a process for repeatedly reimagining your future, no matter how the world changes around you. To do this effectively requires more than just efficient product development and launch strategies. You must instill a passion for entrepreneurship into the fabric of your organization and spark a culture of continuous transformation.

On the personal front, mastery begins when you make a conscious decision about the kind of life you want to lead.

I have been very lucky in that I grew up with two caring parents in an upper middle-class neighborhood. I'm white, a tall blond, speak English, and was fortunate enough to attend college. I have had many privileges that often pave the way to success. But what is success? Is it money? A big house? A nice car?

Success to me is none of those things. It's having the freedom to spend time with family and friends, and feeling fulfilled by experiences not objects. Success means seeing the impact of what you create, working with colleagues and clients who you can think of as family and friends, and being truly excited to go to work each day. Every morning, I wake up and ask myself, "What good will I do today?" It's a reminder that I have the power to do something meaningful that day, be it big or small.

Mastery is built on certain qualities, like perspective, empathy, and a positive mindset. It starts with seeing how big the world is, paying attention to the similarities, and appreciating the differences.

Mastery involves more than talking about problems. It means taking action to remedy them. It means helping people when they ask, but more so knowing when it's appropriate to offer help when they don't ask.

The world is a fantastic, messy, beautiful place full of lessons for those who aren't afraid to fail and learn. Every time you try something entirely new, either you win or you learn, and in both cases you grow.

Mastery comes from understanding the Western way of living isn't the only way, and only by appreciating the power of difference can you question the assumptions that are holding you back. I was fortunate enough to have the chance to spend time with a group of Maasai women in a little village in Kenya. I could see the joy and contentment in their eyes as they went about their daily routines. They thought my life was hilarious because I didn't have cows or children. They didn't need objects or technology to be fulfilled. It opened my eyes to a different kind of mastery of life.

I've chosen to live my life without judgment. My parents taught me to live life on my own terms with a positive outlook, a welcoming nature, and not to speak negatively about the choices of others. I know that everyone is fighting a battle I know nothing about.

I believe in the theory you become the average of the five people you spend the most time with. I proactively seek people who are positive, hard-working, see possibilities instead of obstacles, feel a sense of power over their future, and most importantly have a sense of humor along the way. You can achieve mastery in what you set out to do, if you know yourself first.

## There is a saying: A good leader must be a brave explorer. True or false?

Absolutely true. But how do we define bravery? I believe it's different for every person. Many people deal with trauma, health issues, loss of loved ones, or other challenges. Bravery includes things like asking for help when you need it, holding yourself accountable when you mess up, and saying no with confidence when you have to prioritize your own needs. Bravery is leading by example, but also understanding your own areas for growth. It is asking for feedback and not getting defensive when you receive it. It's listening, even when you think you know all the answers. At its core, bravery is having faith in yourself and a willingness to venture into unknown territory - whether it's swimming in the ocean or starting a company.

On the business front, one must admit when something is a lucky invention, e.g. a one-hit wonder that creates fireworks, but can't be reliably repeated. Being brave means embarking upon a journey of continuous, sustainable innovation. The difference is the underlying process that reduces risk in the creative phase and exponentially increases the probability that every effort will land on the dartboard, if not in the bullseye.

## In your opinion, what is the next phase after exploring, regarding the business?

Businesses must move beyond creating that first disruptive innovation.

As your organization grows and becomes more institutional, a sustainable culture of innovation must be scaled in tandem. It must become a part of your organizational DNA.

To create a culture of continuous entrepreneurship, most companies need coaches to help them hone in on practices such as Lean Startup, Design Thinking, and Agile. They need a roadmap for their innovation management and continuous transformation. This is our passion and sweet spot. For our clients, the mandate is: Innovate or Die.

## In coaching, the coach navigates and helps the coachee to explore every opportunity that exists. How can coaching be helpful when it comes to execution?

Coaching is mission critical to successful execution. Changes in behavior don't come easy, and doesn't happen after a few days of training. Innovation is constantly evolving, and without ongoing support to practice your new learnings and experimentation, it's highly likely participants will fall back into old ways.

Early in my career I oversaw a literacy program in the US. I recruited and trained volunteers to work with individuals struggling to find jobs and support themselves because they could not read. At another job, I supported adults who needed skills and jobs, because they were on their last leg of welfare and at risk of becoming homeless.

What really made a difference then still holds true today, whether I'm coaching teammates on their performance or others on an entrepreneurial mindset - people need encouragement to take a risk, validate their learning, and see how far they have come. Over time, coaching changes lives and resets what people believe about their own potential. It helps to create new pathways and consistency while practicing something new.





2019 Lean Startup Co. Team Onsite

**On the cover of this edition, you are holding a compass, a symbol of exploration. What is your final message to our readers?**

The compass is a reminder to never lose sight of your True North.

I encourage you to ask more questions and seek out new challenges every day. These challenges are yours alone and if you don't paint your masterpiece, no one ever will. Do your due diligence and make sure you are tackling the right problems at the right time in the right way. We are living in a crucial moment in history, on the verge of a new world of our own creation. It is vital that the work we do each day moves us closer to the world we want to live in and leave behind.

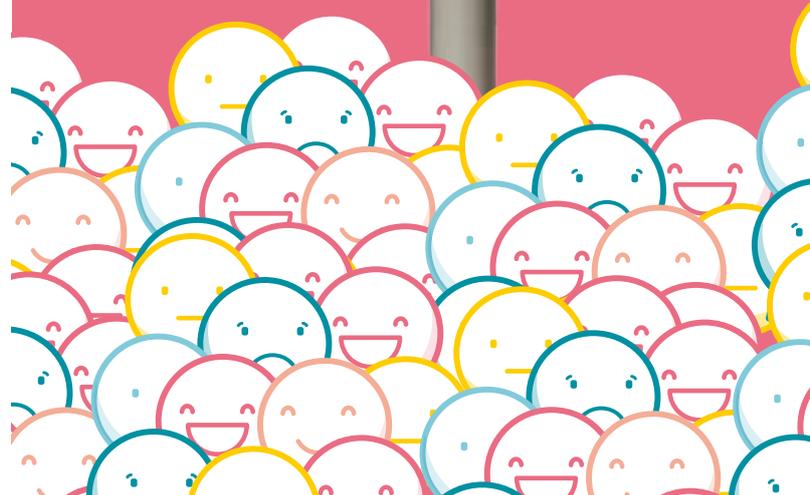
The future of work is already here and it looks like the end of jobs, and the beginning of an open marketplace of skills. You may work for many different companies, but you will always do your best work in pursuing what you love. In this new role as a life entrepreneur, you must push yourself to work smarter. You will see possibilities that others just can't, you will offer proof that there are viable alternatives, and by doing so, you will find yourself standing on the right side of history.



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# INTERVIEW



She fell in love with the world of training and development more than 25 years ago, when she started her studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Adult Education, and this love continued to grow. She considers herself a banker after more than 15 years of work in this area. She believes in change and human development, and good work-life balance – which, being a mother of three, she constantly strives to achieve.

Motivation is what determines the direction of people development, and by that I mean the motivation of employers to develop their employees on the one hand, and the self-motivation of each individual person on the other. It is employees themselves that decide in the final instance which potential they want to develop and to what extent, regardless of what their organization has planned for them.

The essence of a good HR function lies in identifying personal goals of employees and pairing them with the organization's business objectives.

Being in a position in which you recognize, encourage, support and develop employees is something that can fulfill you in all possible directions.

## **How important is people development in discovering the best options and in performing better?**

People often fail to connect their better results with development straightaway, and sometimes best performers hold on to old habits and skills that "work in the field". It is necessary to take into account their successes, and also to find the right way to explain to them the importance of their constant development and learning, the absence of which leads to failure in the long run.

However, the situation is improving. There is much greater awareness now that we are living in times of constant change, and employees have started to realize the necessity of constant learning and exploring new ways of getting things done.

All training goals are coming from the combination of our business objectives and individual capacities and aspirations of our employees.

We are currently implementing major projects arising from the process of Bank Intesa answers to our clients' needs and future banking trends and that is naturally connected with people development.

Our job is to help our colleagues to adapt to change, develop their performance and find the best possibilities for themselves in our vision of banking in the years to come.

The most important task of a modern HR is to create such organizational culture in which learning becomes a fundamental need and in which every employee can see the benefits for themselves of developing their competencies and skills.

I am proud to say that employees in our Bank are always looking for an extra chair in trainings and that they do not wait for the annual evaluation to seek development opportunities. We are getting different requirements daily for our colleagues' learning and development.

### **What is the next step in your people development strategy?**

In our Bank we have set up a system that focuses on the different categories of employees and covers various levels. Starting with careful monitoring of onboarding for each new employee or



colleague who has changed the type of work they do, through specific Academies for different positions, to the implementation of the three-level talent programs (for fresh graduates in the Junior program, for talents at middle-management positions and for our participants of the International Talent program). We are particularly focused on members of our "Business Intelligence community" who are developing a variety of data analytics and processing tools.

Of course, even when the system is set up on different levels, we constantly perform evaluations of multiple categories, from time to time we conduct research on the usefulness and impact of our programs. Based on the results, we introduce new activities and improve our processes. Also we introduce agile methods of doing business and promote a coaching culture (through group coaching and individual coaching for senior management).

One thing that we are particularly looking forward to is the work on the new talent program for non-managerial positions in which we recognize new future leaders and experts.

Investing in people is building of the future, and this is not just a phrase but a fact. The best companies are those that patiently wait to see the results of investment in people development. They realize that the results of development programs derived from business strategies cannot fail.

I strongly believe that we have set solid foundations for development in any required direction with our constant work to make our Bank the organization which continuously learns and develops.

### **How you define leadership, and the role of leaders in people development?**

*In many cases, the concept of leadership is confused with charisma or the manager's passion for good results.*

Being a leader is much more than that, a leader is a manager with a flair for innovation, who manages to lead people in the right way, determined to reach the company's goals, adapting his leader-

ship style to team members' personal styles, remaining humble and focused on his or her own development and supporting the development of others.

It is key that true leaders are not only interested in being better at what they do and developing themselves - their significant quality is pursuit of development of the people around them. They are people who encourage and make the effort to get to know others deeply. This dislocates their juniors from the comfort zone, and the leaders are present to help them express their best qualities.

This is what I clearly observed in our talent program for middle managers. This program, named the "Treasure Leadership Talent Program", connected our best managers in middle management positions with their mentors, who came from a higher level of management and had been selected as individuals with a wide range of different leadership qualities.

*The mentors dedicated their time to their mentees, helping them cope in certain situations, advised them, encouraged them and often challenged them.*

The outcomes of this program were valuable. Besides getting promoted, our mentees also became empowered, motivated to learn towards clear development goals, and most importantly they established relationships that would last long after the program ended.

### **What has been your team's biggest success recently?**

In addition to the wide scope of work we all regularly do, working on large projects (such as the adaptation of a new banking model, or the preparation for employment of new banking applications), has made this year particularly demanding.

However, our team has proved to be very innovative, hard-working, and adaptable. Here we have shown our strength, and everybody has done their best and continued with the same motivation and enthusiasm as each new assignment has approached. I believe that we are a case where the well-known Confucius quote applies perfectly - "Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life."



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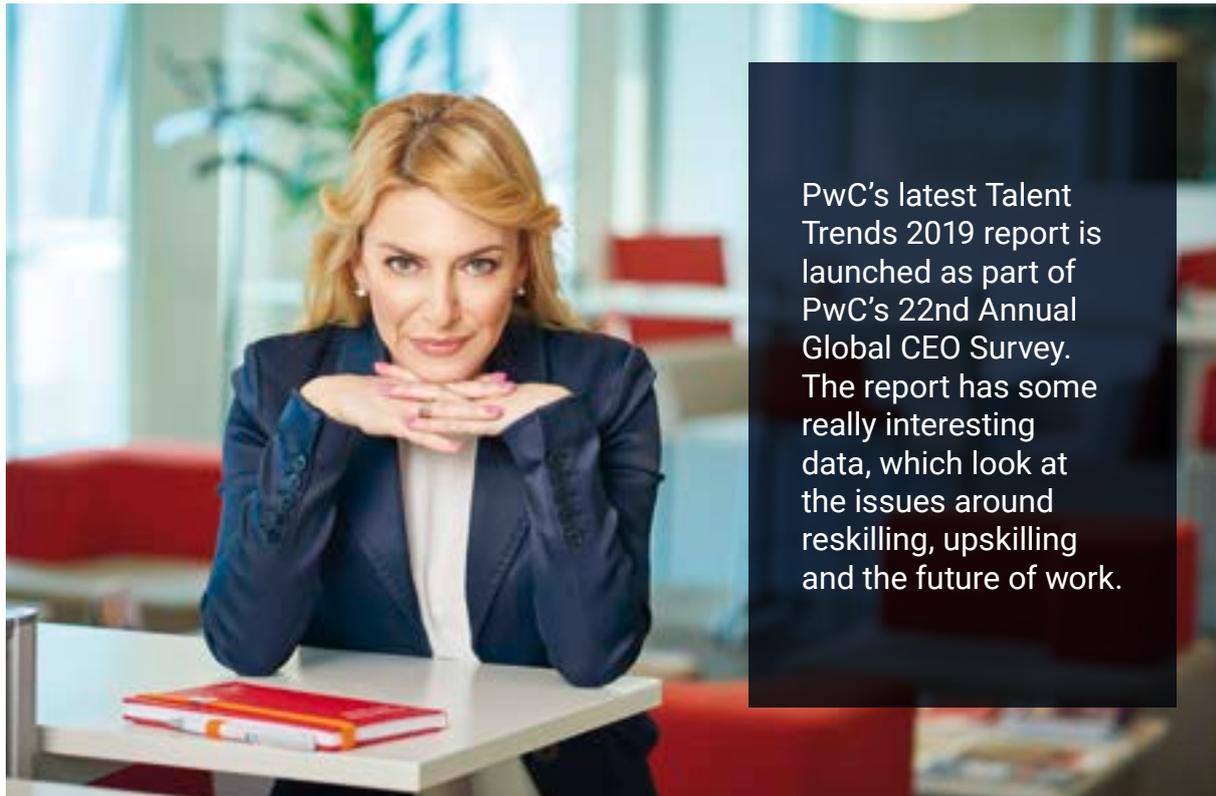
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# UPSKILLING FOR A DIGITAL WORLD



PwC's latest Talent Trends 2019 report is launched as part of PwC's 22nd Annual Global CEO Survey. The report has some really interesting data, which look at the issues around reskilling, upskilling and the future of work.

## Key findings include:

- **79%** of CEOs worry about the availability of **Key Skills** - it's a '**top 3**' **concern** for them.
- They say it's **stifling innovation** and **raising workforce costs** more than they expected.
- In 2008, CEOs were struggling to find people with global experience. Today, organisations **need tech-savvy leaders** and employees.
- **46% of CEOs say their number-one priority is reskilling** the workers they currently have - far ahead of the 18% who will focus on hiring from outside their industry or will look to strengthen ties with education (17%)
- But over **half (55%)** of business leaders **haven't yet created a clear narrative** about the future of their workforce and automation
- A lack of data to inform workforce improvement strategies is still an issue — only **29% say the data they receive are adequate**
- Business leaders aren't clear on where the responsibility for workers displaced by automation and AI should fall. **56%** believe that governments should provide a safety net for **displaced workers**

Top executives increasingly worry about the impact that their companies, strategies and activities will have on the environment, local communities and their employees – and how they can balance this with cost and market pressures and quarterly earnings targets. Against this background, one somewhat intractable challenge is beginning to stand out: the size and composition of the workforce. Automation, primarily in the form of robotics and artificial intelligence (AI), brings with it the promise of improved productivity and higher profits – but at what cost to employment and, by extension, to society? What responsibility do corporations have to reskill employees who otherwise would be displaced by technology? And what value does reskilling offer an organisation?

These are precisely the types of questions that keep CEOs awake at night, according to PwC's 22nd Annual Global CEO Survey.

### Four out of five CEOs bemoaned their employees' lack of essential skills and identified this factor as a threat to growth.

That concern has risen in line with the advent of new technologies over the past five years, and is voiced consistently across all regions: CEOs in Japan and Central/Eastern Europe are most worried, with 95% and 89%, respectively, naming it as a concern, whereas those in Italy (55%) and Turkey (45%) are the least anxious about it. The skills shortage stymies growth chiefly because it stifles innovation and raises workforce costs. There has been a clear shift over the past few years in the type of skills that leaders say they are looking for. In 2008, CEOs were struggling to find people with global experience.



## Today, organisations desperately need tech-savvy leaders and employees.

In other words, at every level of the hierarchy, people are needed who can harness innovative thinking, form the right strategies and apply the systems and tools that best fit the needs of the business.

Only then can an organisation, or an economy, maximise the productivity benefits of technology. Our recent study, preparing for tomorrow's workforce, today, found that businesses also see the nurturing of human skills, particularly leadership, creativity, empathy and curiosity, as essential if they are to take advantage of the potential benefits of new technologies. As a result, although purely functional skills related to automation and AI are often essential for business growth, they are not enough; they won't suffice without these more 'high-touch' managerial and people-oriented capabilities. With the right skills in scarce supply, CEOs must find cost-effective ways of sourcing what they need. Previous surveys have shown CEOs exploring the idea of hiring people from other sectors – particularly from industries that are further along the innovation journey – and making use of 'gig economy' workers when appropriate. This year's survey sees a shift. CEOs are now focused on reskilling and upskilling their existing workforce.

The World Economic Forum estimates that it will cost US\$24,000 per head to reskill displaced US workers, but when set against the alternatives – severance payments for workers who are let go and the cost of finding new workers with in-demand skills, amongst other things – reskilling is the more attractive option. It's understandable that organisations are concentrating on reskilling. Given the right context, people can be highly adaptable, and the ability of organisations to harness that adaptability will be critical as the world of work evolves.

## The good news is that employees are more than willing to reskill.

According to a PwC global survey of more than 12,000 workers, employees are happy to spend two days per month on training to upgrade their digital skills, if such training is offered by their employer.

Today's jobs are being unbundled into tasks that could be offshored, automated, augmented with technology or rebundled into new roles as organisations analyse how work gets done. Automation and AI will inevitably displace some workers, although CEOs aren't united on the scale or speed of that shift. Business leaders can't protect outmoded jobs, but they are responsible for the people who hold those jobs. The process of effective reskilling, though, is anything but straightforward. Most organisations' current learning and development programmes are simply not designed for the full complexity of the task. Upskilling efforts must target fundamental skills gaps, instilling at least a baseline of digital acumen, with an eye towards building a flexible workforce for the future.

Rather than classroom training exclusively, the programmes should focus on changing behaviours and mindsets on the job, encouraging people to innovate and solve problems in new ways.

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# TO EXPLORE OR TO EXPLOIT?



**Exploitation or exploration?** - This is no longer a question. If you want to survive in today's business environment, you have to do both in parallel. It is difficult to look at these concepts as isolated islands, because an organization is a living organism that is constantly changing, and its adaptability to change and agility depends on its ability to simultaneously exploit existing business models and also move forward through the exploitation of new ones.

This dual approach, which is necessary for the long-term sustainability of an organization, requires some new models from modern HR. **What is the role of Human Resources? How does HR help an organization to establish a dual/ambidextrous approach in a sustainable way?**

Topics that become an integral part of the HR agenda in this context are, above all:

- How to build a corporate culture that supports the duality, that is, the ambidextrous nature of the organization?
- How to build a leadership team that has a dual/ ambidextrous mindset?
- How to incorporate the principles of duality/ambidexterity into the key HR processes of talent acquisition, talent management, performance management and organizational learning?
- How to link organizational design and duality, or how to support dual/ambidextrous approach through organizational design?

The role of HR is not to launch a revolution; HR should certainly be a strategic support for the evolution of the organization.

The story of the evolution and duality/ambidexterity of an organization is actually the story of how to ensure success in the long run, and not lose the short-term focus in business. Optimizing your business and focusing on results in the short term will generate profits, but in the long run it will encourage stagnation. On the other hand, constant innovation that loses execution from focus, will cause the company to sway and even lose its place in the market.

The balance between innovation and optimization has to be embedded in a model that the entire organization is living. This means that duality/ambidexterity must be embedded in corporate culture, organizational design and all other processes within the organization.

Corporate culture is a complex concept and the process of creating/changing corporate culture is part of a long-term agenda, which requires a minimum three-year action plan through which the desired mid-set descends top down. It is not the organization that is changing - the people are changing. Some studies show that about 70% of the impact on culture comes from the leadership team; that is, their decision-making, behaviors and values they promote, while about 30% of the impact is from employee education, training and employee engagement programs.

That is why one of HR's key tasks is to win top management commitment to set the right corporate culture model. The leadership team needs to be actively involved in setting values and competency models that, through their behavioral indicators, will support the mid-set and behaviors that we want our organization to have. In this case, these are competencies that will support the dual/ambidextrous nature of the organization - a simultaneous focus on results and performance, but also on change, innovation, an agile approach. These competencies will form the basis for recruitment and selection processes, talent acquisition through talent programs, organization talent mapping, performance management, employee and organizational development.

In this way, we help the organization to identify and recruit people who already possess the desired values and behaviors, thus "importing" in the organization resources that help us shape the corporate culture we aspire to. On the other hand, if we combine the principle of duality/ambidexterity through competencies with performance and talent management, we direct our existing employees towards the desired behaviors.

The key ingredient, let's say spice of HR cuisine, in all these processes, must be intensive, structured work with top management.

#### What does this mean?

Just as a business must continuously evolve in order to survive, the concept of leadership must also change. Leaders, as catalysts for change, should be carriers and main proponents and promoters of this dual/ambidextrous principle. The mindset, mentality for innovation has to live through them as role models and through corporate culture they create.

The question is, is it at all possible to establish a culture in one system that will simultaneously support both - exploitation and exploration? Because, essentially, here we have two different mindsets, two different approaches to business. This is especially challenging in traditional, rigid systems, where everything that is new "just doesn't fit", or the idea of innovation is declaratively supported, but measured through the traditional prism of profit and focus on short-term performance.

The dual/ambidextrous approach means to reconcile the entrepreneurial spirit, the willingness to take risks, change, experiment, research, out of the box thinking, visionary, on the one hand, and on the other, focus on cost, efficiency, continuity, productivity, less risk and more direct approach. Exploration is focused on long-term goals and requires a flexible, decentralized organizational structure that allows us rapid change, while exploitation is all about short-term goals, execution and a centralized approach. Some companies seek to implement such a dual/ambidextrous model through an organizational structure that allows organizational units to function as relatively independent, with quite a decision-making autonomy, while at the same time there are broad frameworks that provide general guidelines for them. In this way, the organization can simultaneously apply different strategic approaches, and as a result of this duality we get innovation. The ambidextrous organization is capable of creating innovation, and various studies have shown that ambidexterity affects performance, sales growth, customer satisfaction and profit.

Corporate culture and leadership style in such organizations are specific. The top management mindset must also carry an ambidextrous, dual note to enable the duality/ambidexterity of the organization.



In today's business environments where disruption and change is the rule rather than the exception, ambidextrous leaders not only strive to maximize existing efficiency, but will also be prone to innovation and risk.

Leaders who do this successfully, manage to embrace duality, uncertainty and tension. For them, it is a comfort zone when exiting the comfort zone. They encourage innovation and then implementation, and they need to be able to apply different leadership styles depending on phase of process. In the exploration/innovation phase, they must be prepared to empower people to approach the problem from different points of view, experiment and make mistakes, while in the implementation phase the focus shifts to implementation of plans and minimizing mistakes. Tolerance of errors here should in no way be equated with tolerance of incompetence.

Leaders who live this duality use their vision to build and strengthen environments and corporate cultures that rest on the same principle - a principle that puts the sign "strategically" on both exploration and exploitation. This is how top management practically promotes different subcultures



that share a common denominator. This denominator is a solid framework, while everything within that framework is fluid and flexible, but with a clearly defined direction. That direction is what connects. The path to reach your desired destination is wide open, and there is a space for creation and innovation.

One of the approaches we can come across is to create separate innovation hubs that allow the employees to distance themselves from the culture and processes of the mainstream business. However, these hubs cannot exist as completely isolated units if they are to add value to the business. The connection must exist. The main content for the hub needs to come from the business, and the outcomes of the hub's work must return to the same business and help it to be successful. That is why it is important for the innovation strategy to be a topic for top management and the CEO.

Let's go back to the beginning - exploration or exploitation? If the company strives for long-term success, it must adopt a dual/ambidextrous approach and a mid-set. Successful transformation of corporate culture is based on intensive work with top management and unconditional promotion of goals and results as well as innovations. A clear framework and targeted destination, because you need to know where you want to get, and freedom to explore trails.



“Can you tell me where to go from here?”

“And where do you want to get to?” Cat said.

“I don't care ...” Alice said.

“Then it doesn't matter where you go,” Cat remarked.

“...Just to get anywhere,” Alice explained.

“You're sure to get anywhere,” Cat said. - You just have to go long enough. “

*(Alice in Wish for Miracles, Luis Carroll)*



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# EXPLORATION IN COACHING



Without trust between two sides, we cannot do coaching. So simple, but 100% true.

After we had established almost the same level of energy and trust, we would define what could be the best outcome of this coaching session. When we have a clear goal and we provide a safe environment, we start to explore. After exploration, we need to narrow down all the options and possibilities and create few action steps. The crucial thing to get a commitment from coachee's side that they will do additional effort in order to fulfill these action points. In the end, we should clarify that goal is 100% dependable on coachee, and that the coach just sparkles ideas and lights the way for the coachee to follow.

Now, let's get back to the most inspiring part of coaching, both for the coach and the coachee - the exploration.

Exploration helps the coach to use the most powerful tool in coaching - to ask powerful questions. By asking the right questions, we provoke and ignite the process of thinking.

Asking the right questions can unleash the full potential of the coachee and initiate changes in one's behaviour. Because the purpose of coaching at the end leads us to personal change to achieve goals that the coachee has set.

Using exploration, through powerful questions a coach helps a coachee to see even beyond the horizon the coachee can see or even imagine at this moment. Exploration can lead the coachee out of the comfort zone, and that is the crucial reason why we need to be persistent as coaches in exploration. Because, without leaving the safe, well known, comfort zone there is no opportunity to change ourselves. Exploration also widens our point of view, helps us understand other people better.

Coaching is one of the most powerful tools for people development. Using coaching methodology, we could even say philosophy, may help in many areas of our life.

In business, we learned to ask the right questions, focus on the customer or be brave to experiments with uncertainty and unknown outcome.

In private life, we learned to be patient, how to love unconditionally, how to set long-term goals.

When it comes to the process of how to coach someone or how to coach the team, we could write about many different approaches. No one wants to be judgemental and say which approach is correct or which isn't. Or even shouldn't be. But, we can follow a certain path in the coaching process and this is an only recommendation, not a rule.

First, we need to establish rapport. That means that before any conversation between a coach and a coachee (or a team) we need to establish the same level of energy (chemistry). That helps that the coach and the coachee (or the team) start to build trust within.



Exploring is like using the compass, moving slowly to one side or another until we find our true North.

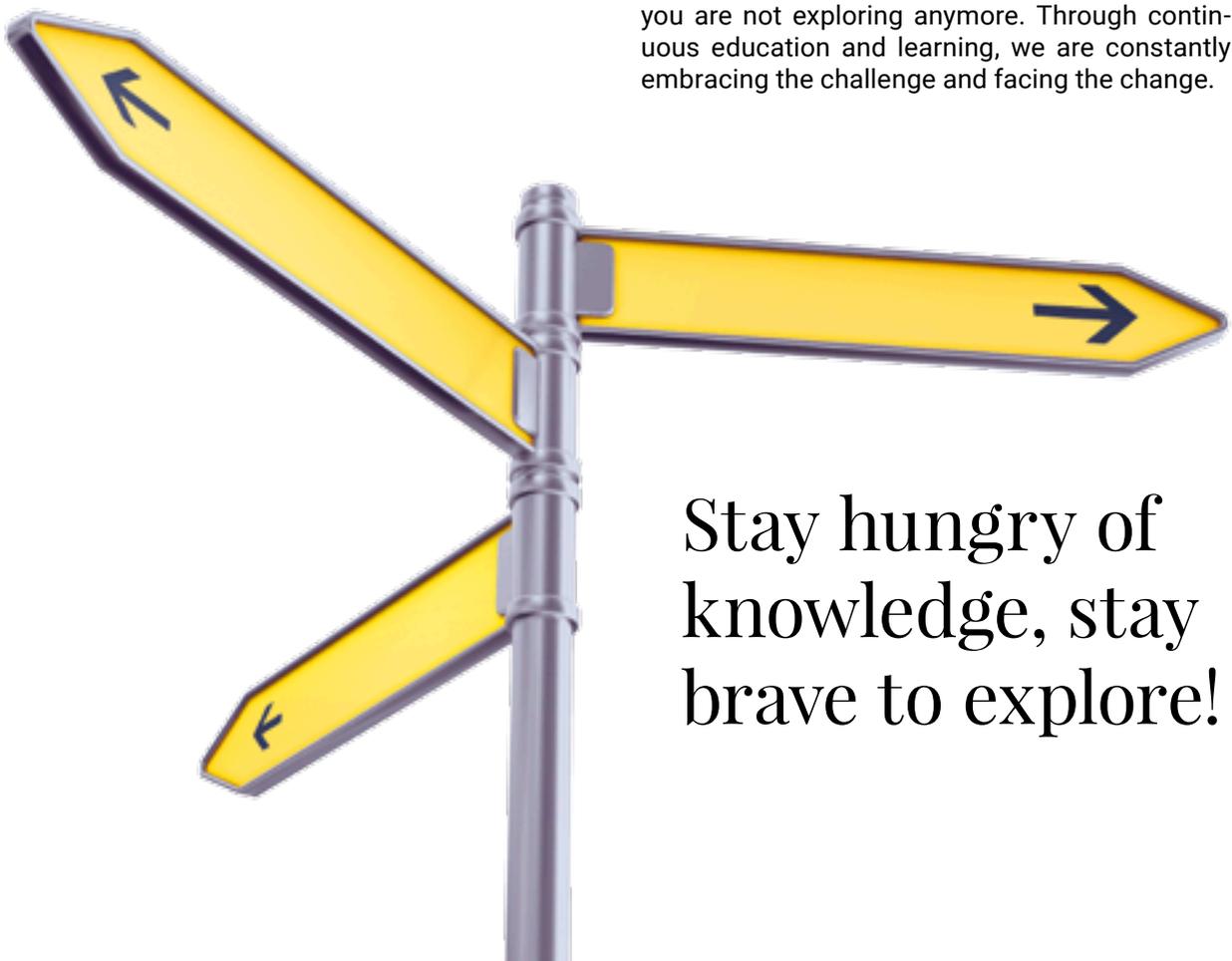
Using powerful questions, we also seek our true North and align with our core values. In that sense, our goal will always be achievable, no matter how long your journey could take.

Through exploration, a leader learns to lead team, complex relations among the members of the team, and how this could influence the final outcome. The outcome could be anything in any area of our lives. But it must be clear and understandable to us and to other people that are depending on our actions.

How can we explore? In coaching, there are numerous techniques and frameworks that a coach can use to inspire a client or a team to explore. Through exploration, the client needs to feel like there is a sandbox for all failures that might emerge. In exploration, trust is crucial, because the client during exploration could feel vulnerable and insecure.

Regarding the teams, exploration is very powerful because it can use diversity as synergy among team members. Leading the teams is the most challenging role in today's business environment. That is because the team can influence your business to be better, but also to be worse. It doesn't matter whether you are a coach, an agile coach, a lean coach or a team leader in any industry, using the exploration enables you to move the mountain in business. That is the reason why we need to pay attention to exploration.

In the end, we should be brave to explore, because it is just one step into a long journey of development, which never stops. Once you stop learning, you are not exploring anymore. Through continuous education and learning, we are constantly embracing the challenge and facing the change.



Stay hungry of knowledge, stay brave to explore!

MILAN RANĐELOVIĆ, Chief of Office for local economic development and projects at City of Nis, Serbia

# YOUR INVESTMENT ADDRESS

CITY OF NIŠ OFFICE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROJECTS



This is a year when the Office for Local Economic Development and Projects celebrates a decade of its work.

It was established in 2009 with the support of US-AID's MEGA program and the Danish LEDIB program, as the 26th office of this kind in Serbia. Although the Niš office was set up later than the other offices in Serbia, it took only a year to record its first significant results. After a period of almost 30 years, new factories began to be built in Niš. Neither the city administration nor the office staff was initially fully prepared to work with the investors. Through the first projects, new experiences were gained, problems were identified, and other institutions in the city were introduced to the reasons for the existence of the newly established OLEDP.

One of the first tasks was to change the approach to the work of the city administration with the investors, as well as to familiarize all of the stakeholders with the importance of investments,

investors and new employment for the development of the local community. The newly formed office was a kind of bridge between, rather rigid local administration, the local business community in Niš and the investors.

Objective indicators and figures, after 10 years of work, show that the goal has been fulfilled and the office has justified its existence.

The Office for Local Economic Development and Projects has participated in, or has carried out, a number of city projects, most significant for the development of the City of Niš in the last decade.

Thus, the number of unemployed from 37,000 as registered 10 years ago, was reduced to 23. 115 in June 2019, while the number of employees rose to almost 80,000, which is almost 20,000 more than 10 years ago. The number of start-ups increased,

as well as the number of active companies, from 7,614 to 9,513.

Out of 175 investors who came to Niš, 46 investments, with a total value of EUR 362.5 million, were successfully implemented. The largest among them were Philip Morris, Yura Corporation, Shinwon, Leoni, Johnson electric, Aster textile, Zumtobel and IMI, while 19 investments, worth € 323 million, are under implementation. The construction of the Science and Technology Park, WWTP in Niš, the construction of a shooting range, the reconstruction of the ramparts of the Niš Fortress, the reconstruction of the Museum building at the Mediana archaeological site are just a few of the projects currently underway and implemented by KLERP.

By recognizing the importance of the SME sector, the City of Niš continuously, through the Office, supports their growth and development through grants awards and other forms of clearly defined support.

Over time, the Administration was reorganized, the single City Administration was formed as a body that deals with all administrative affairs in the city, and KLERP as a development unit and an independent body of the City of Niš, with a different organization, concept and capacities.

**Today, 34 highly educated people work in the Office for Local Economic Development and Projects. The working manner with investors stands out in comparison to the common practice in Serbia.**

Support to investors is provided at all stages of investment realization, from initial contact and elementary information about the city, through visits to potential sites and submission of very specific, different data, depending on the investor's interest. The professionalism and commitment of the people in charge of investing are reflected in the fact that investors feel good in Niš and believe that they have a reliable partner in the city. Long-term investor confidence is also created by the fact that the employees of the Office represent the interests of investors for the sake of the general interest and that they are ready to be available to them all around the clock and to cope with and solve together with them the problems encountered during project implementation.

The specificity of the team of the Office for Local Economic Development and Projects is that after the realization of the investment, employees

continue to stay in contact with newly established members of the local business community. They solve problems encountered during the operation of the factory and show that they can rely both on the Office and the City of Niš. One of the significant successes of the Office is reflected in the fact that the majority of investors who came to Niš have reinvested, ie, expanded their capacities and built another factory in Niš or Serbia.

Development of the city and the work of the Office were recognized by the others: the City of Niš is one of the five cities in Serbia to be selected as the first "Champions of Local Development", in a competition conducted by NALED, in order to select the best practices of LSGs. In the ranking of financial, economic and business potentials of cities and regions of Europe, Financial Times FDI magazine has officially ranked the City of Niš as the 7th small European cities of the future 2018/2019. Niš, as a region, was ranked 3rd among small European regions by the same criteria in the category FDI attraction.

The City of Niš was also nominated for the Emerging Europe Award at this year's European Leaders' Meeting in London in the category of FDI Attraction Strategies of the Year. Niš, found itself side by side with the cities of Debrecen in Hungary, Galata in Romania, Vilnius and Klaipeda in Lithuania and the cities of Krakow, Lodz, Poznan, Wroclaw and Sosnovik in Poland. In this category, the creativity, effectiveness and success of city department strategies were evaluated, in this case the Office for Local Economic Development and Projects of the City of Niš, in the field of FDI attraction.

**The City of Niš had this "YES RELATIONSHIP" from the start, said one of the investors who came to our city from the North of Europe as one of the first investors.**

This is what the Office is doing and is always a guiding principle in business, making business partners feel safe and confident that challenges will be solved in collaboration with local authorities feeling no fear to invest. The City of Niš, thanks to this "YES TO RELATIONS", has great potential that lies within the local administration and the Office for Local Economic Development and Projects. For the Office, the greatest satisfaction is that investors who have already invested in Niš are not disappointed; on the contrary, they are happy for choosing our city and for the fact that they can contribute to the development of the local community.

SANDER HOOGENDOORN, Chief Architect at Quby -  
Founder at ditisagile.nl, Utrecht Area, Netherlands

# ABOUT EXPLORATION

## Sander, please tell us something about yourself?

Hi, I am Sander Hoogendoorn, born 52 years ago in the Netherlands. I am a co-parent to my three kids, aged 23, 19 and 14, which teaches me a lot about autonomy and self-organization.

I started programming at the age of 15, and made money first as a developer when I was 19. After graduating, I started working for large consultancies, and moved slowly from traditional, waterfall projects to iterative and incremental development in the late 1990s. In that era my team and I developed a methodology called Smart, which became a reputed agile approach later. As such, I became a pioneer in the world of agile, later to become a global agile thought leader for Capgemini. In 2014 I went independent, and I help organizations to change, both culturally and technologically.

## Exploration is a very important topic in every business today. What is your opinion?

There is an interesting framework called Cynefin. It was developed by Dave Snowden, now a professor at Bangor University in Wales. It describes different contexts organizations can find themselves in. In obvious and complicated contexts, good practices exist that can be implemented to solve the problem in hand. In complex or chaotic contexts, such practices do not exist (yet), and need to emerge from exploration.





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Many organizations are led and populated by people that grew up in a highly predictable world where the predictable models from the industrial era prevailed.

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As far as I'm concerned, many of the organizations I work with find themselves in such complex or chaotic contexts. Maybe the market they are in is emerging, such as with my current client, which is a company rooted in the internet-of-things, and operating in the smart energy market. Or maybe their market is changing rapidly, often as a result of new competitors, coming into the market and changing the business models in that market. Especially organizations that operate in tech markets see the possibilities of technology change so fast that they cannot afford themselves not to continuously explore.

As a result, solving problems, or even discovering direction or vision, requires intensive and never-ending exploration. Traditional or linear approaches fail here, as they rely on a predictable path to follow. Hence, continuous exploration is key.

**There are a lot of methodologies when it comes to execution. But not so many for exploration. How do you explore?**

That is a good observation. I suppose the reason for not many approaches based on exploration is historical.

This is highly visible for instance in request-for-proposal processes for government projects. Often, these requests for proposal contain highly detailed and extensive lists of requirements and demands, which can only be implemented in long-running linear projects. However, they do not take into account that in the meantime the world and technology will change fast. Faster and faster even. Many government organizations unfortunately do not really understand how fast the world around them changes, and instead fall back on highly traditional methodologies.

Allowing your organization to explore new possibilities and allowing vision and practices to emerge is just not something leaders and managers are often used to. However, many of them, operating in complex and chaotic contexts, will need to adapt really quickly, or get overhauled by competitors who will be able to lead by exploration.

**On the other hand, many agile approaches, when implemented with care and flexibility, offer room for exploration.**

Or even better, are based on continuous exploration and improvements.

**We are talking a lot about innovation. What makes the difference between a company that has succeeded in innovation from the less successful one?**

Organizations that are used to doing projects often treat innovation as something you can and should manage as a project. Often highly linear too. Innovation, however, is best when it is ongoing and continuous, and where teams and people in organizations can experiment. Continuously.

Organizations which succeed in innovation are the ones that survive in this complex or chaotic,



and often confusing world we live in. But it's hard to turn a big ship around. It takes cultural change, and a change of attitude, both with leaderships and with people in organizations.

### **What about people? What kind of leadership do we need?**

With the current state of technology, and its speed of change, **anyone can come into any market, at any time, from anywhere**. For most organizations finding themselves in such markets, and most organizations do, leadership needs to start acting, and quickly.

Exploration is best conducted when a decision can be made at the appropriate level. For most decisions, this means that they are made as low in the organization as possible. When a team wants to use a new tool, acquiring a license to use that tool shouldn't have to go up four levels in an organization, and then sideways to a procurement department. In the end, too many decisions are made at levels in the organization where people are not knowledgeable about most of the work that is done in the teams.

Teams and people in such organizations are then enabled by leadership, and will need to pick up responsibility for their own work. However, responsibility is only felt with true autonomy. In too many organizations I've witnessed pseudo-autonomy, where on the surface teams and people are mandated, but where managers regularly overrule decisions made by the teams.

My new book, currently under review, discusses these topics, and how to organize for exploration. I hope that it will be published before the end of the year - hopefully before I've explored even newer ideas, and have to rewrite the manuscript :).

At best, leadership provides strategy and vision that can be used to guide the teams and people exploring new opportunities and possibilities. From there, practices can emerge and lead to great things.

Leadership in organizations that would like to best explore exploration allow for high levels of autonomy and self-organization to optimize making fast decisions at the right level.

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**MILA MILENKOVIC**, Head of Digital Innovations and Applications Dept at Digital transformation and IT Planning, IT/ICT at Telekom Srbija, Belgrade, Serbia

# INTERVIEW



## **Mila, tell us something about yourself first?**

Innovation and exploration are of great interest to me, both as a part of my daily job within Telekom Srbija and in my parallel academic research. The team for innovations that I am managing at the moment is responsible for enabling opening API interfaces that, in turn, enable the outside-in process of innovation and bring innovation into the portfolio of the company, all based on solutions and applications developed by external partners and startups. Our responsibility is to give IT support for the development of both the external and the internal ecosystem, and to provide integration with our back-end systems in a standardized and structured way. In parallel to this technology-focused segment of innovations, I am continuing my academic activities and working on the business focused side of the innovation process – exploring how business models and agile project management are influencing innovations in general.

## **How could you connect exploration with other parts of the innovation process?**

The team for innovations has an integral role in the managed innovation process, because it needs to support new products and services, new business models, new partnerships, all based on opening up our core platforms in an organized and secure way. We are acting as a part of a broader concept of services and product development at the company level, based on a strategic goal of branching out into a new area of business and bringing innovations to our product portfolio through cooperation with other companies. When our team receives an initiative for the implementation of an in-

novative product from the product and business development departments through portfolio management, our task is to work together with the product development team and provide support in the research phase, in order to provide IT support for opening up our external interfaces. The complete model for the implementation of innovations is based on our initial research, where roles within the company are defined and the whole team works based on the information that is gathered from different sources – from a top-down perspective in ICT research trends, from technological trends followed by the startup community, market requirements where the bottom-up approach recognizes a so-called gap for which an adequate solution needs to be created. Furthermore, we follow the product road map of our company, its core competences and organizational capabilities for innovations. These processes require a multi-disciplined, cross-functional and projectized approach in the research phase and development of innovative products and services, as decided by the company.

**Exploration is a huge, very important part of innovation. How do you use exploration in your daily job?**

The team for innovations strives to provide IT support for the development of external, as well as internal ecosystems and supports changes in corporate culture through different projects with teams such as product development and HR.

It is important for our team to have both perspectives –to have an external perspective and also to support internal capabilities and standard practices of the organization. However, it is necessary to drive new growth and look beyond the obvious. New convergent services seek a wide array of knowledge, as well as learning new technologies fast, which requires an agile approach in the everyday functioning of the team. The team for innovations implements a project-based approach and every team member has a lead for a specific research topic. That provides the team with the capability to quickly adapt to any changes in the requests or course of the research and gain knowledge in order to support the development of new products and services. In day-to-day activities, our team uses brainstorming as well as





individual exploration. Our exploration process combines both traditional and unconventional elements, and half of our team members have a background in technology, whereas the other half is for the most part business-oriented. It helps us when thinking both through the lens of traditional telco and in an entrepreneurial way.

### **How can you support your team/people to explore even more, beyond the limits?**

Leadership is often considered to play a critical role in enabling innovation within an organization. It is crucial to provide learning and development opportunities for the team members, as they need to feel free to be creative, innovative, to have their own progress, but also to have a sense of the group achievements through collaborative projects. Agile leaders need to keep a team focused, but at the same time to enable each team member to have the initiative to explore and try to innovate without being afraid of failure. My belief and my experience is that people who believe that exploration and the learning process both further their own professional improvement and enable them to show creativity or even lead on joint projects, always give huge support to new projects and try to exceed in every sense.

*In my opinion, it is important to give people the freedom to think and try, but they also need to be led by setting an example.*

### **How can you manage a healthy balance between exploration and execution with your team?**

Our main focus is to enable the leveraging and extending of our corporate assets through the part-

nership program and startup program that will provide higher levels of integration with the solutions developed by external, more agile companies. Therefore, exploration basically consists of outside exploration through working with external companies with the goal of making our product offers more innovative. Throughout the years, we have established a process for working with partners from the first presentation through a parallel approach of providing both proof of concept – PoC – and proof of business concept – PoBC – for new products and services. A portfolio approach is very relevant for innovation, as working on a number of innovative projects increases the chances of getting a desired result.

*Within the team for innovation, we try to extend the portfolio approach that is in place on the company level and to work in a more agile way with external companies.*

The goal is to combine both a technological and a business perspective in the implementation phase with the aim of using the best of both worlds – corporate stability and external agility for the sake of innovation.

### **Any final thoughts for the end?**

It is necessary that companies, as well as their professionals, keep learning and exploring their business opportunities through a combination of traditional and non-traditional approaches; particularly in the exploration and execution phases of all innovation initiatives. It is all about people with a strong skillset and mindset ready to bring the company from an idea to a successful business.



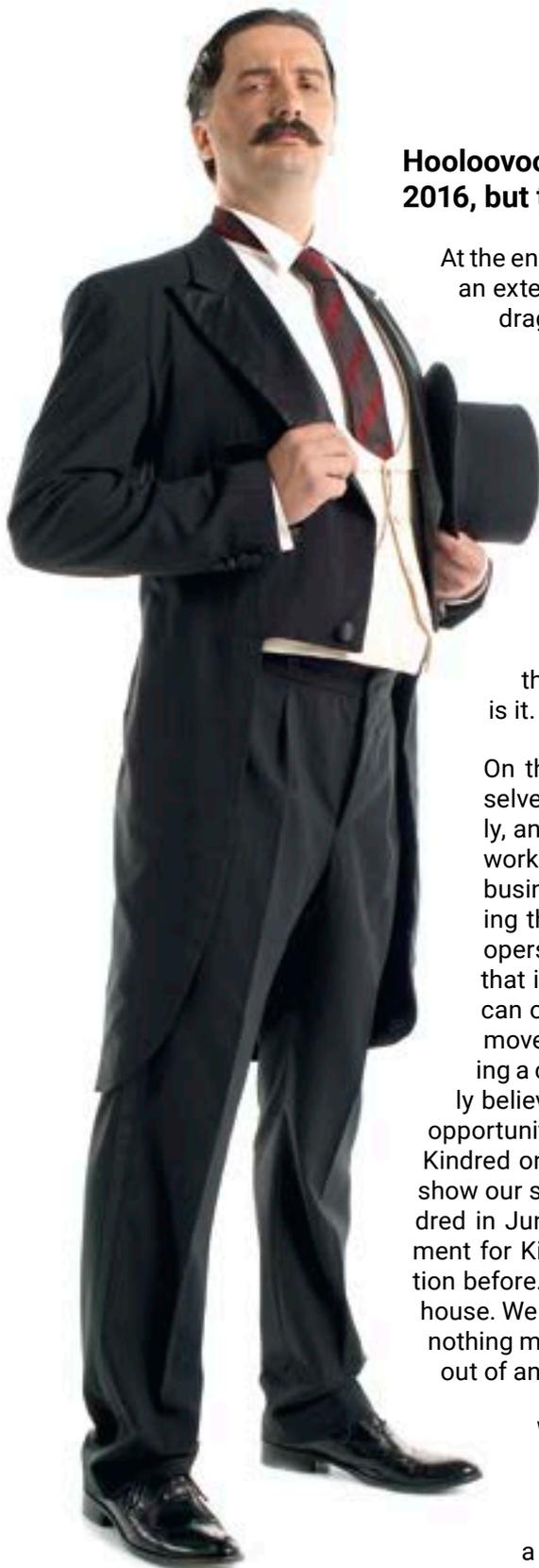
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# HISTORY OF HOOLOOVOO



**Hooloofoo was officially established in June 2016, but the story started a few years before.**

At the end of 2014, after working for more than 2 years as an external contractor for company called iGame, Predrag, the owner of Hooloofoo, made a deal with iGame to create a development team of 5 developers in Belgrade. Everything started very well, great team, great motivation, great plans... but 6 months later iGame was sold to Kindred, one of the biggest names in iGaming industry in the World. They immediately decided to shut down iGame platform that was developed by Predrag's team and to migrate all iGame's brands to Kindred platform. Future of Predrag's team didn't seem so bright. Migration takes time, so they have a year, maybe a year and a half and that is it.

On the other hand, we had a chance to prove ourselves and to make a deal work for Kindred directly, and if that happens - it is a jackpot. Being able to work for one of the biggest companies in iGaming business was amazing. So we went all in for making that happen. We increased the team to 9 developers. We knew that a small team of 5 people is not that interesting for Kindred, but a full size team that can own some domain - that is a different story. We moved to a bigger office and invested a lot in it, sending a clear message to our developers that we strongly believe in the future of the company. We used every opportunity when we worked together with people from Kindred on migration project and a few other projects to show our skills. That all led to signing a contract with Kindred in June 2016. That was a big exception and experiment for Kindred as they never had that kind of cooperation before. Before us, they had all the development in the house. We knew that contract would give us just a chance, nothing more, but we decided that we are getting the best out of any given chance.

We assumed that Kindred's will to cooperate with us was not just for having a team in Serbia, but also to see the potential of hiring more people. We live in the world where it is hard to find a good developer everywhere, so companies are

seeking opportunities to everyone for finding the right people. We wanted to be in a position to be able to grow as much as possible when and if Kindred asked us to hire more people. That meant that we needed to become well known and preferred employers very soon. Immediately after signing the contract, we set the name of the company "Hoolooovoo". Our first public appearance was at Voxxed Days Belgrade (the conferences in called HeapCon now) in September 2016. We went all-in again, but this time in marketing. Since then we are focused on 2 directions. One is to absolutely provide amazing results in software development without any compromise so we can grow our cooperation with Kindred, and the second is to become an employer of choice for developers in Serbia so we can hire great developers at needed pace.

### "Matori" Developer

This campaign was a tipping point for us; we became well known after this campaign. Everything started in June 2017 in a flight from Belgrade to Stockholm. Predrag was reading an inflight magazine; there was an ad with a funny old guy at the disco – so he got an idea.

### We are looking for senior developers, and what exactly does "senior" mean?

It means old, senior is old, old is Matori in Serbian slang, let's create a campaign where we will be searching for "Matori" developer. We launched the campaign in late 2017 and ran it throughout 2018. It was a great success. The Campaign was awarded as the best digital campaign in Serbia in 2018.

After the period of growing and maturing of the company. We are not a kid anymore, we are a serious player in Serbian IT market, but fast growth comes with lots of challenges. We've built a specific culture in the company and here some big question that



Although the campaign was funny, the message was very serious: that we had extremely challenging projects with some amazing fact 1.2 million active customers, 1 billion of data in Big Data platform... and that we were very focused on the happiness of our developers with some great benefits. That put us in the position where we wanted to be - an attractive IT employer.



## Life after “Matori developer”

follows: How to maintain and improve the culture with so many new people coming to the company? How to keep high retention rate we have established? How to make new people feel welcome and accepted, how to keep our old developers happy and satisfied while the company goes through a lot of changes?

The key focus for us at the moment is retention. Hiring, although still complicated as it is for every IT company, is at its needed level; people see us as a preferred employer and are willing to join us. The key to future success is to keep retention at the highest possible level. Within this year we did lots of internal activities. We have 4 people in HR plus one external consultant; we also have a Line Lead whose focus is mostly on people, but from a different perspective than HR. In total there are 6 people focused on almost 40 developers that we have at the moment. That is, most probably,

the highest rate in the industry and well worth investment. We created lots of internal processes to empower developers to do their jobs in the best possible way while maintaining the feeling that the company cares about them. Onboarding is one of the crucial processes when there are so many new faces in the company. It is the key to enable newcomers to understand Hoolooovoo, understand the culture and to feel free to start improving the Hoolooovoo. We are a company that constantly changes and it is of a great importance that every employee contributes to the change. In order to do so, he needs to feel free to suggest and make changes. Open and honest communication, unfortunately, is not something that is a common practice in many companies - and for us, it is the key for everything. Therefore, we need to put an effort so that new employees understand that and feel free to communicate in this way.





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**JOVAN BOLJEVIC**, Director of HRM and General Affairs, Lovcen osiguranje AD, Podgorica, Montenegro

## INTERVIEW

**Mr. Boljevic, you have been in the position of HR Director "Lovcen insurance" for a couple of years now. As you look back to this time, what was your biggest challenge at the beginning?**

Lovćen insurance AD is a part of Triglav group and for that fact the first challenge was to get familiar with Triglav's work performance system, to the group's standards and strive to implement the acquired competences and experience to the values of the Triglav group. Human resources are the a significant segment of every company, therefore it is essential to learn about the organizational structure of the company and regular work performance as well as with the culture of the company.

Along with the HR tasks, the additional challenge was taking up general affairs that cover a wide range of responsibilities, and that are not directly related to HR duties. It was primarily challenging to find out how general affairs department operates in order to achieve improvement of these operations in the company.

**During this time, your function has evolved and changed responsibilities. What are the key activities you are currently dealing with as HR Director? What are your functions as a Director of General Affairs?**

Along the regular job duties in HR domain, key activities are focused on the implementation of the strategy of the Triglav Group, which reflect on the organizational culture development, i.e. improve em-



employee satisfaction and higher work performance. These measures include coaching, soft skill development training and professional education, thus encouraging employees' mobility within the Triglav Group.

One significant segment is establishing an optimal organizational structure through the work processes evaluation. Also, one of the things I am proud of is a project of targeted leadership, aimed at linking rewards for achieving goals, which contributes to better productivity and respect for the work of each employee.

The general affairs that I perform cover a wide range of duties such as, procurement, purchase orders and the company's account control, supplier management, business projects investments, a vehicle fleet management etc.

**Continual human development is indispensable for the company to survive in today's dynamic environment. What are your team's activities now?**

Investing in people and the development of their personnel potential, is certainly an investment in the company.

It is in line with that we strive to identify as essential, promising resources and directing their career paths towards their personal growth in line

with the best interest of the company. One way is through our mentoring and shadowing system.

Present activities are being developed into direction of trainings and education, adjusted to the needs of Lovćen Insurance AD, as well as coaching of the management personnel.

**How often do you organize internal training for your employees?**

Lovćen osiguranje is a company oriented towards clients and insurance development business. In this sense, in cooperation with our holding company, we organized the training of internal trainers, who were trained to organize internal trainings, in accordance with the

requirements of the work and the organization of the work performance.

Also, digitalization itself imposes some new ways of work in the field of HR, and in that direction we introduced the E-learning application, prepared the organization of internal trainings and education, in accordance with the needs of the company.

The idea is that employees, through prepared presentations, get acquainted and trained with a new product or method of work more quickly.



After seeing presentations, the employees complete a test and check the acquired knowledge on their own. In this way, they apply the acquired knowledge more quickly and efficiently.

### **Does your HR team work at this time on some exciting new project?**

Our HR team is involved with all strategic projects important for the company. Namely, we are currently engaged in several projects such as the realization of goals defined by the Strategy for the period 2019-2022, the development of the Company's culture, the digital skills of employees, the implementation of a system of targeted leadership, and the establishment of a system for workplaces evaluation.

### **Coaching and training are the most powerful tools for people's development. How are they used in your company?**

Internal trainers and coaches are recognized as a need for modern business.

Lovćen in cooperation with other Triglav Group members invests into their education. Currently, in cooperation with an external coaching house, we implement coaching for top management, while internal coaches are responsible for other levels of management. Coaching is based on the Gallup methodology, that is, on the development of present capacities. The philosophy of this methodology, the existing strength-based development, is unique since it builds the area of the greatest potentials instead of focusing on weaknesses and thereby uplifts self-awareness that enables us to be more productive.

### **For the end, share with us a moment when you were particularly proud of your impact on the development of your employees?**

In my opinion the greatest success of someone who manages a team is to enable the team members to perform assignments independently. I consider that a successful manager is a person who knows how to transfer knowledge to employees and who knows how to accept and appreciate the knowledge of the employees.

The satisfaction of the team you lead, the awareness that we are all part of one team is the key to successful management, which I realise that the employees have recognized as the slogan of the work of our Sector.

## **Is there an English language skills gap in your team?**

If you are an IT outsourcing company, most likely there is.



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# INTERVIEW

**We are working in a fast-paced world and world of new emerging trends, where the market and its players are changing on a daily basis. What are the challenges when working in this sector?**

Every industry and sector of work has its own specifics which when combined with the latest discoveries, technological inventions or in our case in the food industry, the scientific research and nutritive trends, create challenges which we have to overcome. Exactly here, maybe the greatest changes appear in this sector sometimes even on a daily basis and come up with something new, recommended and necessary. All of that results in constantly changing and improving the food industry. Such changes are caused by the latest nutritive trends, legal regulation, safety, and qualitative standards as well as market i.e. consumer demand. So the food industry is modeled as a combination of all these influences. The speed of following the changes is what is creating our challenges, which we overcome daily.

**What do you think is crucial for better following and adapting to the new market conditions?**

Mainly, it is the awareness of the need for change. Nothing can remain the same as last year, not even as the last month. Every process is subject to change for further development, and mostly the FMCG market. The awareness of the need for change goes hand in hand with education, and that is why a continuous education is crucial in the upgrading process, not only individually but also mostly on a company level. I believe that education is the starting point because knowledge gives confidence, developing self-initiative and proactivity, inventiveness and creativity, which are very necessary for the company management.



## Education encourages divergent thinking and how to find an appropriate solution for every situation.

When speaking about the market, we personify it too much, but still, every change or market movement is encouraged by the people, the consumers or the manager, the person who owns these characteristics. The one having the knowledge and the power for change.

### **Do you have any coaching experience and what is your stand on this way of work improvement?**

Every education form means building an advantage over the others, it guarantees the company's success. Improving, obtaining knowledge in a particularly productive way is reflected on a manager level because it creates an effect of confidence and decisiveness, characteristics which are very often crucial in a business environment.

## Coaching, as an especially differentiated form of education is the perfect link of new knowledge, practical part, and application in the specific area.

In my experience exactly this approach goes into the essence of education and gives the most precise directions for development. That is the biggest advantage of such education, which is tailor-made and specific appropriately for various industries according to the requirements. When speaking of changes, the vast application of coaching confirms exactly the same, that segmenting is appreciated in the educative approach versus generalizing.

### **Vitaminka employees around 700 people of different professional profile; how necessary and important is their professional development for a modern company?**

It is necessary, actually; the education and upgrading of employees bring changes, innovations and creativity for the company and in Vitaminka as well. And no company can prosper if it is not inventive in its operation. And not just regarding the products, but literally in all sectors, laboratories, development departments, distribution, network, merchandising as well as communication. In all its segments, the company should develop in new

directions, and it can only be done by the people, employees and by their education, training and all types of upgrading.

### **In your professional career, while working in one of the most dynamic and most competitive sectors and additionally even in the most fragile departments, in the past and today, have you ever felt that being a woman is an obstacle in meeting the goals?**

I am personally convinced and of course based on my experience, that success depends only and solely on personal commitment. The base of success is knowledge and hard work, and those are obtained by education.

## There is no obstacle, in terms of gender, for someone to obtain a quality education, there is no excuse to build yourself with knowledge, competence, and expertise for the work you do.

All of that will give you the competence to manage, organize yourself and the work, to create a team for achieving success together. And also, no one and nothing does not have to be left behind, the home, the social life, neither the job. It is simple - if you are confident in what you do, you will easily be able to manage professional and private obligations. It is my formula for success, and I believe it is the formula of many other professionals from my surroundings.

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