



Conference

**„The Role of Women in the
Legal and Economic Reform Process
in Macedonia”**

- Proceedings -

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CREATIVITY OPENS A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES



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P The period of transition in the Republic of Macedonia caused the closure of firms with great capacities, leaving a high rate of unemployment. For many years, a solution was sought in stimulating SMEs, whose development except for resting on correct governmental politics, depended heavily on entrepreneurship spirit among the population. Only a small number of small businesses in the 90s managed to remain successful having started off with minimal financial investments, but great creativity and diligence. Unfortunately, this is mostly true of the country's female population. One of key success factors in businesses is realising the new idea at the right time, provided adequate skills and principles are used. Discovering and grasping possibilities as well as awareness of one's own capacities is still a limiting factor when it comes to establishing a business.

A Brief Introduction to "Izida" Company

Production, trade and services trading company Ltd. "IZIDA" was founded in 27.05.1994, and is located at 44/3-1 Turisitchka Boulevard, Ohrid.

The company's founder was Suzana Naumovska, born 23.03.1971, a tourism manager who graduated from the Faculty of Tourism in Ohrid, a wife and mother of two children.

The company started working in 1994, renting a cosmetic salon with a surface area of 20 m², and no more than one employee; herself!. At the time, working capacity amounted to a client per hour, and an offer of ten cosmetic services. Six months later, the business started developing, the number of clients and employees began increasing, so that today "Izida" covers an area of 120 m² with nine employees, and a capacity of 10-15 clients per hour, as well as offering over 100 services. The once small cosmetic saloon developed into a mini SPA center, employing the latest IPL & IRF technology and an expert team of physiologists, cosmetologists and *esthéticiens*.

In the past decade, cosmetology has grown into a popular profession, and cosmetics are a part of modern life. Cosmetic salons with "Izida" as the region's leader, slowly but surely have turned into an inextricable part of the region's total tourist offer.

Beginnings are tough, but persistence pays off immensely

Starting a personal business involves risks and anxiety, and during the 90s, there were only a small number of people prepared to become entrepreneurs and face the challenge of self-employment.

Dissatisfied with working in public institutions (being a laboratory assistant at the Clinical hospital in Ohrid), the bleak prospects for expressing my creative abilities, having nowhere to use my capacities and feeling the limitations in work as well as of finances made me start a business on my own at the age of 21. Furthermore, the successful management of my own problem – skin acne, as well as the traumas I suffered trying to heal my skin, made me want to share my experience and help others.

With a limited initial working capital, but with a love for cosmetics and my family's support yet faced with an environment of mistrust, I started my own business in cosmetics using the motto of the Goddess Izida "*Transformation and Fertility*" (transformation in cosmetics and fertility in terms of business growth).

Besides the casual problems surrounding the onset of a business, among the main problems I faced as a student consisted of fighting against clichés, prejudices, stereotypes and coping with the unwillingness of the small environment I grew up in to accept this type of profession. A general misconception about the profession's nature and importance required additional enduring efforts in cosmetology promotion and craftiness in market creation.

Should clients be women only? How will the social environment respond?

Will users of cosmetic services be stigmatised? How to increase awareness so this profession can be understood properly?

It was more than clear that work should be done in raising awareness.

On the other hand, entering the service sector with a new offer meant impossibility to draw information in terms of business organisation and follow other businesses' practice. There were no local suppliers for delivering necessary material in the time, causing further problems and demanding a lot of creative energy for solutions.

The basic precondition for endurance when promoting a new concept is believing in your own abilities. Driven by the maxim: "*A man achieves what he expects to achieve*", I started looking for ways to solve my problems.

In order to boost cosmetology and raise awareness of its importance and benefits on health and beauty, I started working as an editor and host of a TV series "In The World of Beauty" (*Vo svetot na ubavinata*), in partnership with local media.

In the beginning I paid humble visits to trade fairs and conferences in the nearest neighbouring countries, i.e. Sofia and Belgrade, and over the years I kept following the latest trends at fairs in Ljubljana, Paris, Nice and Bologna. Contacts were made and my skills improved. Hence, clients of "Izida" had the chance of using the latest developments in cosmetics without traveling outside the country. At this point, I have obtained 30 work licenses and certificates and I am the only cosmetologist with a master's degree from the Artisan Chamber under the auspices of the Chamber of Koblenz (Germany).

I believe in the principle of continuous professional development and keeping pace with time when things are bound to happen. Clients are always looking for the best, and the ones brave enough to introduce new ideas are going to take the lead. Of course there is always the risk that comes with new investments. Introduction of new ideas and following Western market trends calls for consideration of local predispositions and local market power, as well as constant accommodation and adjustment to prices and services.

During a 12 year long period in collaboration with the Workers' University "Kuzman Shapkarev", I have been in charge for the education of 200 professionals, based on a program and textbook I devised myself. Very often, they become part of my team, or established their own businesses. Competition increases every day, helping personal businesses make the necessary adjustments in their politics development.

On the other hand, owners of small business are employees as well; in order to become managers, it is necessary that they had the ability for

building professional teams that would serve as cornerstones. Therefore, I try to pass on my knowledge to the staff the best I can.

Today, I work as an educator for the Slovene company "Iskra Medical" in Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo.

You will often hear that financial means are crucial to business establishment. The story of "Izida" shows that very often, even a small amount of capital is enough to make a start, and successful operating will provide the capital necessary for future business growth.

My success and profiling of "Izida" in the area of service activities are the result of:

- Locality – it must be deserved, both in the world of business as in private life. *A loyal client - an important investment in your future, or once a client, always a client* by means of:
 - high-quality services;
 - an individual approach - all people are different;
 - a positive approach and ability to meet the needs of difficult clients;
 - client respect;
 - the first impression is more important than it seems; these are the vibes people use to start building their trust;
 - precise informing and counseling;
 - following of trends and keeping pace with time;
 - the implementation of new services and equipment modernization;
 - high-quality equipment and products;
 - an attractive workplace interior and continuous creative changes;
 - personal branding;
 - successful company organisation and team management.

Working conditions, team competence and services a company offers are mutually dependent. Their functionality creates synergy.

From a new service activity in the 90s, today, cosmetology has become an inextricable part of life and tourism. Modern lifestyles have caused a flourishing of wellness spa centers. Nourish your skin and heal your soul.

I hope that the implementation of new development strategies, with tourism as the leading industry in Ohrid and the region will receive the necessary support of local-self government and other tourist institutions/organisations.

My life and work is an example of boundless energy and a woman's

creativity. A wife, and a mother, a friend, and humanitarian (a member of the Lions Club in Ohrid), a successful owner of a personal business. *A woman with a hand of steel, and a glove of silk* - it is how clients prefer to call me. It is women's key feature – action/power, firm discipline and responsiveness to needs. Look inside your heart and find your energy and inner strength. Be creative and explore the world of endless possibilities.