

Entrepreneurial Alumni



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Sona is a graduate of Comenius University, Bratislava and ESCP Europe.

Describe your business and your role within it.

Currently, I am working as a country manager in Slovakia for an Austrian start-up called bookgoodlook.sk. Bookgoodlook is the online home for health, beauty and wellness products. It also has comprehensive listings of the spas, salons and health centers throughout region - Slovakia.

Also, I am proud to say that I am the CEO and co-founder of an online directory and service for

coaches, psychologists and psychotherapists in Slovakia. It is called pozitivnamysel.sk ("positive mind"). We are creating an online marketplace where people can find the best specialist, according to their individual criteria. The two individuals then work together, to solve personal problems and issues or to just pursue specific self-improvement initiatives.

Moreover, this website and service endeavours to educate the Slovak society in the field of mental health, which, I feel is absolutely essential. In this way we are also contributing to a happier and healthier society.

How did you get into this line of business?

The year I spent in NYC with the Mountbatten Institute was, honestly, the best year of my life. I am so happy I had the chance to do it, and would do it again in a heartbeat. I had always been interested in start-ups and during my year at Mountbatten I was a board member of The Center for Entrepreneurship. Through this experience I gained a lot of knowledge about entrepreneurship and the start-up communities. I sought to create something similar on my own in Slovakia, but then, while analyzing the field I found out that [bookgoodlook](http://bookgoodlook.sk) was entering the Slovak market. I started to work for them as I already had some understanding of this segment. This in turn allowed me to pursue the idea of pozitivnamysel.sk.

My time at the Programme helped me identify this potential "problem" of a [bookgoodlook](http://bookgoodlook.sk) competitor into multiple opportunities.

How did you go about setting it up and getting established?

With pozitivnamysel.sk I have been able to apply all my experiences from bookgoodlook.sk directly to my own startup. Without bookgoodlook.sk it would have been much harder. It is great to see this synergy of both projects, even though sometimes prioritizing between the two is difficult. I often find myself asking: "Should I work more on bookgoodlook.sk or pozitivnamysel.sk?" In either case, it's still a win-win for me!

What else is in the pipeline?

Regarding pozitivnamysel.sk, we are now testing the beta version and making sure that everything is working correctly. Next, we are going to approach the professionals and institutions throughout the mental health industry to create profiles at pozitivnamysel.sk. Then hopefully within one month we will launch it to the public.

What has been the proudest moment in your working life thus far?

My proudest moment was leaving my safe, known, and comfortable corporate career to start a completely different life, to follow my dreams, and to create my own project...it was not easy, but it was really the best decision of my professional life.

What has been your biggest mistake/learning experience?

Listening to too many people while making a specific decision...others will never give you the right answer, and will take a lot of your time and energy, resulting in frustration and confusion...you have to make your own decision and follow your gut.

Any words of advice/wisdom would you impart to others thinking of setting up their own business.

I think it is great to seek out experiences in similar fields that you want to start your own business in. For example, if you are going to create an IT start-up, try to work in some similar start-up or company before you start your own. You will learn so much. But realize that it might also "wake you up" to the realization of how hard it is!

You might never start your own business based on that foresight. However, any way you look at it you have to be a bit foolish and optimistic to go for what you really want, because big things happen only outside of our comfort zones!