

Report on Communications Training held as part of the BIZimpact Project

**BIZimpact**

Improving information to the Croatian business community

*EU CARDS project implemented by a consortium led by
Pohl Consulting & Associates*

Zagreb, 10 July 2008

1. Background

The BIZimpact Project aims to improve information to the Croatian business community and is financed by the European Union as part of the CARDS programme. The Project is being implemented by a consortium led by Pohl Consulting & Associates, EIR Development Partners and Altair Asesores. The partners to the Project are relevant economic institutions: MINGORP, HAMAG, HGK, HOK and HUP.

Coris Educa was contracted by the consortium to undertake a series of training courses in communication skills for partner organisations.

2. Training Courses

In the period between 14 May and 20 June, six 1.5 day training courses were held as part of the Project. The courses were held in Osijek (14-15 May), Split (19-20 May), Varaždin (27-28 May), Rijeka (4-5 June) and Zagreb (16-17 and 19-20 June).

Participants in the first five training courses mainly comprised of HGK, HOK and HUP representatives from county chambers / regional offices. The last training was held with the participation of representatives of partner organisations from the national level.

A total of 52 participants took part in the training: **Osijek - 8 participants** (HGK 6, HOK 1, and HUP 1); **Split - 10 participants** (HGK 8 and HOK 2); **Varaždin - 10 participants** (HGK 6 and HOK 4); **Rijeka - 9 participants** (HGK 3, HOK 1, HAH 4 and HUP 1); **Zagreb I - 5 participants** (HGK 3, HOK 1 and BIZimpact 1); **Zagreb II - 10 participants** (MINGORP 2, HAMAG 1, HGK 2, HUP 3 and BIZimpact 2).

The lecturers were: Igor Kanižaj MA, Božo Skoko MA and Ivan Tanta MA. The cameraman was Danijel Crnak. Organisation and evaluation of the training was conducted by Franjo Skoko.

The training courses comprised presentations and practical workshops. The presentations served to acquaint the participants with the topics, acquiring new knowledge and quality preparation for the workshops. The presentations were highly interactive, namely participants were at any time able to ask questions and receive concrete answers from the lecturers. The questions mostly related to their earlier experiences and/or potential situations (how does one handle a specific situation?).

With the aim of building further on the knowledge acquired, Coris Educa presented all participants with the "Handbook for Understanding Public Relations" by Božo Skoko MA.

3. Training schedules in Regional Venues:

Day 1

- 13.15 - 13.30: Arrival of attendees and technical preparation for the training
- 13.30 - 13.45: **Introduction to training, the BIZimpact Project** (Chris McLean)
- 13.45 - 14.15: **The role of a PR expert, the importance of PR and practical experience of a PR expert** (Božo Skoko)
Who can be involved in public relations?; What do PR managers do?; What are the characteristics of a good PR person?; Why is PR important for the success of an institution, organisation or firm?; Practical experiences...
- 14.15 - 14.45: **Specifics of media in Croatia** - national and regional media (Igor Kanižaj)
How do media function in Croatia?; What are the main differences between national and regional media?; What are the specifics of print, radio and television?; How do the media produce stories?; How to customise to the media world?; What are media manipulations and how do you defend yourself from them?;
- 14.45 - 15.00: Coffee break
- 15.00 - 15.30: **How to effectively communicate with the media?** (Ivan Tanta)
How do you develop friendships with the media? How do you maintain quality contact with journalists and media houses? Communication tools for working with media. Press conferences, Interviews, Press Releases...
- 15.30 - 15.40: **Preparation for workshop I** - Foundations of producing press releases
- 15.30 - 15.40: **Preparation for workshop II** - How to successfully organise a press conference
- 15.40 - 17.00: **Practical workshop in groups** - Production of press releases and organising a press conference + analysis and discussion

Day 2

- 08.45 - 09.00: Arrival of attendees and technical preparation for the training
- 09.00 - 09.30: **Internal and external communication between partner organisations MINGORP, HAMAG, HGK, HOK, and HUP** (Ivan Tanta)
The role of internal communication within organisations; How to improve partners' communications with each other, with their county/local networks and with their members (SMEs and crafts); Tools for internal communication; How to respond effectively to enquiries?; How to target information effectively?
- 09.30 - 10.00: **Presentations skills** - successful conferences and seminars (Božo Skoko)
How to prepare presentations?; Techniques of giving speeches and presentations; What are the most common errors in presentations?; The use of visuals in the presentation; How to prepare materials for attendees?; The influence of non-verbal communication and clothing on the presentation.
- 10.00 - 10.15: Coffee break
- 10.15 - 10.45: **Dealing with a crisis** (Igor Kanižaj)
How to recognise a potential crisis? What to do if a crisis occurs? How to prepare for a crisis so as to neutralise its negative effects?

10.45 - 12.15:	Workshop - TV interview - recording (Igor Kanižaj, Božo Skoko and cameraman)
12.15 - 13.15:	Lunch break
13.15 - 14.30:	Workshop - analysis of recordings and discussion (Igor Kanižaj and Božo Skoko)
14.30 - 14.45:	Coffee break
14.45 - 15.45:	Practical workshops in groups - potential and real situations (press conference + recording, analysis and discussion) Workshop I - How to impose a theme on the media that is related to small entrepreneurs (implementation of HACCP system) Workshop II - How to impose a theme on the media that is related to small entrepreneurs (public procurement law)
15.45 - 16.00:	Training brief, evaluation and distribution of certificates

4. Training schedules in Zagreb:

Day 1

08.45 - 09.00:	Arrival of attendees and technical preparation for the training
09.00 - 09.15:	Introduction to training, the BIZimpact Project (Chris McLean)
09.15 - 09.45:	The role of a PR expert, the importance of PR and practical experience of a PR expert (Božo Skoko) Who can be involved in public relations?; What do PR managers do?; What are the characteristics of a good PR person?; Why is PR important for the success of an institution, organisation or firm?; Practical experiences...
09.45 - 10.15:	Specifics of media in Croatia - national and regional media (Igor Kanižaj) How do media function in Croatia?; What are the main differences between national and regional media?; What are the specifics of print, radio and television?; How do the media produce stories?; How to customize to the media world?; What are the media manipulations and how do you defend yourself from them?;
10.15 - 10.30:	Coffee break
10.30 - 11.00:	How to effectively communicate with the media? (Ivan Tanta) How do you develop friendships with the media? How do you maintain quality contact with journalists and media houses? Communication tools for working with media. Press conferences, Interviews, Press Releases...
11.00 - 11.15:	Preparation for workshop - Foundations of producing press releases
11.15 - 12.30:	Practical workshop in groups - Production of press releases (analysis and discussion)
12.30 - 13.15:	Lunch break
13.15 - 13.45:	Internal and external communication between partner organisations MINGORP, HAMAG, HGK, HOK, and HUP (Ivan Tanta) The role of internal communication within organisations; How to improve partners' communications with each other, with their county/local networks and with their members (SMEs and crafts); Tools for internal communication; How to respond effectively to enquiries?; How to target information effectively?
13.45 - 14.15:	Dealing with a crisis (Igor Kanižaj)

- How to recognise a potential crisis? What to do if a crisis occurs? How to prepare for a crisis so as to neutralise its negative effects?
- 14.15 - 14.30: Coffee break
- 14.30 - 15.00: **Presentations skills** - successful conferences and seminars (Božo Skoko)
How to prepare presentations?; Techniques of giving speeches and presentations; What are the most common errors in presentations?; The use of visuals in the presentation; How to prepare materials for attendees?; The influence of non-verbal communication and clothing on the presentation.
- 15.00 - 16.00: **Practical workshops in groups** - potential and real situations (press conference + recording, analysis and discussion)
Workshop I - How to impose a theme on the media that is related to small entrepreneurs (implementation of HACCP system)
Workshop II - How to impose a theme on the media that is related to small entrepreneurs (public procurement law)
- 16.00 - 16.10: **Summary of day 1**

Day 2

- 08.45 - 09.00: Arrival of attendees and technical preparation for the training
- 09.00 - 10.30: **Workshop - TV interview** - recording (Igor Kanižaj, Božo Skoko and cameraman)
- 10.30 - 10.45: Coffee break
- 10.45 - 12.15: **Workshop** - analysis of recordings and discussion (Igor Kanižaj and Božo Skoko)
- 12.15 - 12.30: **Training brief, evaluation and distribution of certificates**

5. Evaluation of the Training

At the end of each training, an evaluation was conducted so as to gain feedback from the participants. The evaluation was conducted with the help of a questionnaire agreed with the client. In the first part of the questionnaire participants, numerically valued the following categories: training content, presentation method, training materials, lecturers and general impression of the training. The valuations ranged from 1 to 5: 1 represented the poorest assessment and 5 the best. In the second part of the questionnaire, participants descriptively answered the following questions: What part of the training was the most useful and why? Specify the benefits that you gained from this training. At the end of the questionnaire, participants gave their proposals and suggestions on what they would change or add to the training.

6. Overview of the Evaluation Results

No.	Category	Osijek	Split	Varaždin	Rijeka	Zagreb I	Zagreb II	Average:
1.	Training content	4.86	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.94
2.	Presentation method	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
3.	Training materials	4.86	4.90	4.86	5.00	5.00	4.86	4.91
4.	Lecturers	Igor Kanižaj	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
5.		Božo Skoko	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
6.		Ivan Tanta	5.00	4.90	5.00	4.63	5.00	4.86
7.	General impression of the training	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.96
Average:		4.96	4.97	4.98	4.95	5.00	4.89	4.96

7. Conclusion

The Coris Educa lecturers were fully satisfied with the interest, engagement and co-operation expressed by the training participants. The majority of the participants successfully participated in the training. For most of the participants a minimum of improvement of communication skills was necessary, although for persons that it is assumed that in the near future will intensively communicate with the media, additional education is needed on an advanced training level.

Participants expressed exceptional interest in the organisation of these kinds of trainings for each of their organisations on the county level particularly so that their colleagues, particularly superiors, gain the same knowledge and skills and improve internal and external communications (inside the organisation and between the organisations).