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EDITORIAL:
ROLE OF MEDIA IN CONTEMPORARY
CORPORATE PRACTICE

Dear Reader,

The second issue in 2014 of Pannon Management Review you are holding in your hand is focussed on a really timely phenomenon of our environment, i.e. web-based communication and its forms used in businesses. In today's corporate practice, the Internet multiplies the channels of communication which start leading an independent life that companies can hardly control any longer.

In her collection of essays *A világhálóba keveredett ember* (The Man Who Got Involved with the Web), Ágnes Veszelszki asked 77 experts to answer the following question: How has the Internet changed the way you think? Being one of the 77 respondents, I gave the following answer.

It is difficult to answer this question mainly because it requires an extraordinary effort to recall the state when we were still living in a world without the Internet. It sneaked into our lives almost unnoticed and by the time we were able to recover, it became irrevocably a part of our day-to-day activities. Due to its abstract nature, I cannot even tell clearly what my thinking in the pre-Internet era was like. Thus, the brief description below is just mostly fictitious, i.e. an experiment into what I think of my way of thinking and its changes, in particular. I wouldn't call it development, because that would imply some positive direction – in a mathematical sense, naturally, a negative development, i.e. a regression is also a form of development. Thus all I can do is formulate the hypotheses describing this change.

Appropriately, though not in a very sophisticated manner, let us look at what the Internet can tell us about thinking. According to the Wikipedia entry for the word, *thinking* is an "action of the mind aimed at looking for a solution to various problems. The act of thinking indicates that there are one or more unsolved problems in the mind of the thinker..." There are different approaches to thinking. The behaviourist school considers it as some sort of "silent" behaviour, cognitive psychology as a *heuristic (discovery) process*, i.e. a problem-solving method that works by using previously acquired experiences, whereas according to anthroposophy, thinking is a mental activity directed at *cognition*. The evolutionary school explains it based on how language evolved and states that grammar "helps to relate things and events on the

mental map of relations". Thus, the question is how the Internet has changed, if at all, my capabilities for problem solving, discovery, cognition and use of language.

Let us look at problem solving first. It is evident that we think of the Internet – as a formerly inconceivable measure of masses of information – as a resource which has significantly increased the speed of problem solving. However, in a more subtle approach, access to information is blended with the illusion of accessing information. I am not only and not mainly thinking of the dilemma of controllability and uncontrollability but that the doubtless abundance of information suggests that this problem is "solved". I am also inclined to use the web and only the web to look for the information base of problem solving. Consequently, the problem-solving nature of my thinking has changed in that I use more information (often of uncertain quality) to indentify a problem, explore analogue solutions and acquire the method of problem solving. The risk involved in the quality of information has, of course, amplified risk management reflexes as well. We need to learn to be critical of sources, i.e. to assess such information appropriately. My experience in scientific work might be the reason, but in addition to exploiting the tempting possibilities offered by the Internet, suspicion is my first reaction to information from the web. I regard this as a significant change in my problem-solving thinking.

Thinking as a heuristic form of some silent behavioural mechanism sees the solution of problems in intuition (or to use a more appropriate term, in discovery). In case intuition based on previous experience leads to a solution, this might be indirectly related to the Internet and is unlikely to induce a change in thinking. However, the online knowledge base is gaining more and more ground in the cognitive process. We know that mental cognition is an abstract reflection of reality. With the help of thinking we are able to make generalizations and find an answer to *Why?* questions. As a rule, mental cognition is triggered by sensory cognition. I feel that the Internet functions as a catalyst in this process. It is a source of perception that stimulates the receiver in an almost unlimited manner. This environmental effect has undoubtedly changed my everyday life. Before the advent of the Internet, my relationship with reality was mostly real-time and tangible. As far as understanding the world is concerned, the virtual stimuli available via the Internet take up today a much larger share in my time balance than the tangible reality. But more importantly, real and web-based stimuli are in constant interaction with each other and lead, in my case, to some kind of total cognition. "Total" compared to pre-Internet cognition.

Finally, to the question if the world-wide web has caused a significant change in my linguistic competence guiding my thinking. It by all means has insomuch that the development of colloquial language is occurring right before our eyes on the Internet. Due to the interac-

tivity of communication, I experience my involvement as a learning process. What kind of linguistic logic guided my thinking in the time before the web, I can no longer tell. In my surroundings there is always at least one person who is online. I must almost force myself to get into some kind of retro mood. Or I need a small nook where there is no service...

In the same volume of essays, the co-author of this issue, Katalin Fehér writes the following:

The new logic that develops the social and open systems and exceeding classical company models in terms of profits in the business world has grown out of the Internet, the world-wide web and the online and virtual world. A tool developed for military purposes has become a democratic medium, then an online marketplace and many other functions have built up layer by layer. Our reality is being continuously digitised or virtualised and this has repercussions on reality... Our perception, reception, processing and response constantly interpret the technological environment that we create, but the basis of this is provided by earlier routines and mechanisms.

The Internet and thinking can be linked to the notion of *network*. We are surrounded by friends, acquaintances, reference networks, communities, and even business networks and other complex networks. Self-organising networks using algorithms determine the current appearance of the web which continuously rearranges itself. New nodes are linked to older ones and others are detached. The network is thus a resistant, scale-free complex network both in thinking and on the web.

The above thoughts are reflected in the selection contained in this issue. Attila Bátor and his co-author Zoltán Lengyel in *Performance based online marketing in theory and in practice* put across that in the last decade online has become one of the most important communication and acquisition channel in several industries. That's why business decision makers want it to be optimized and tailored made to the needs of the company. So performance driven online channel optimization has become a key success factor in marketing field these days. Communication and acquisition performance needs to be measured through sophisticated measurement systems. As theses measurement systems are very complex and produce tremendous amount of data, finding the right conclusion is not easy. Based on this set of information right indicators have to be found, right trends have to be identified and continuous optimization is needed continuously. The above mentioned criteria require complex business vision and courage in decision making. In practice there are numerous techniques that help us finding the best solution which results the best possible online performance. Performance

based online marketing theory is about to describe the details of the mentioned problems and the potential solutions.

Katalin Fehér and Zoltán Veres introduce the Reader to the world of business networking in their article of *Business network competences after the digital turn*. As compared to the traditional network studies this article can successfully combine the different viewpoints of networking, info-communication technology, business marketing and management. Their research is a proof on the assumption that – despite of many "trendy" stereotypes – nowadays the corporate investment into online networks is fairly limited. It is limited but well-focussed according to its expected (or more "presumed"?) utility.

Following the PMR traditions – publishing portraits of companies and individuals whose performance is illustrative of management achievement – in this issue, we feature an interview with the manager of a world famous multinational company. He is Laurent Kornfeld, General Manager of Luxury Products Division at L'Oréal Hungary. In the interview titled *"Media is very important because luxury is about storytelling..."* we can have an insight into the culture of the company and into the story of an exciting international career. Looking back at his last twenty years working for L'Oréal, he discusses the issues of international business development and the intercultural philosophy and practice of a human dimensioned giant. In the interview Laurent Kornfeld presents a deep analysis of the media management of the different divisions with different business models at l'Oréal Hungary.

And we offered a publication opportunity to a young researcher in this issue as well. This time we have chosen Zsófia Márta Papp's article *Tourism destination management for competitive Hungarian tourism destinations*. This young researcher deals with a topic and its theoretical and methodological issues that might be of interest. On the one hand, development policy places special emphasis on tourism, it is enough to mention health tourism and the support for spas or rural tourism. On the other, few findings from such a complex and multidisciplinary approach exist in Hungarian literature in connection with the competitive strength of tourist destinations. In this paper, she needed to process in addition to tourism literature the related findings of regional economics as well as Porter's management theory. Zsófia analyses the models applicable to the competitiveness of tourist destinations and takes the pyramid model a little further. After determining and defining tourist destinations, she turns to coordinating destinations and the need for TDM organizations and then she presents the issues and models of competition and competitiveness.

In the hope of your future contribution to Pannon Management Review we are convinced, that in this renewed issue, you can find, Dear Reader, a lot interesting of a special dimension and an undoubtedly hot topic of management science.

References

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He worked as project manager of numerous international industrial projects in the Mediterranean region (e.g. Greece, Middle East, North Africa) between 1977 and '90. Since 1990, he actively participates in the higher education. In 2011 he was appointed professor of Marketing at the Budapest Business School (BBS), Hungary and between 2010 and 2014 he was also Head of Research Centre at BBS. Since 2014 he is Head of Department of Marketing, at the Faculty of Business & Economics of the University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary. From the beginning of this year he is the editor of the Pannon Management Review.

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He has more than 200 scientific publications, including the books of *Introduction to Market Research, Foundations of Services Marketing* and *Nonbusiness Marketing*. He has been editor of series to Academy Publishing House (Wolters Kluwer Group), Budapest. Besides Zoltán Veres has been editor of the journals Revista Internacional de Marketing Público y No Lucrativo, Spain, Tér-Gazdaság-Ember and Marketing & Menedzsment, Hungary; member of Journal of Global Strategic Management, Advisory Board and Review Committee; member of Asian Journal of Business Research, Editorial Review Board. He is a member of the Committee of Marketing Sciences at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.