

Anamarija Delić (45), Faculty of  
Economics in Osijek



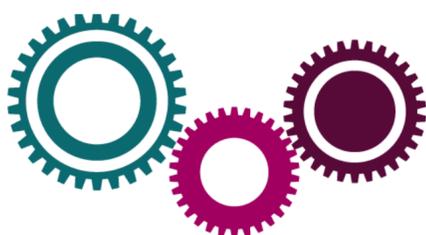
## We Need “Engines”

Higher education institutions place emphasis on the adoption of theoretical knowledge, which is necessary in order to understand and follow the processes. However, the labour market is changing rapidly and it is necessary, in addition to the adoption of theoretical foundations, to work on the development of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. At the Faculty of Economics in Osijek, especially in the field of Entrepreneurial Management and Entrepreneurship, we try our best to help students to develop entrepreneurial qualities and skills: self-confidence, perseverance, self-efficacy, calculated risk, creativity, innovation, decision making in situations where we do not have enough information, and critical thinking. We rely on experiential learning in the students' work in the Legal-Economic Clinic, in professional practices offered to all students of our Faculty, and in public debates in which we teach students public speaking, critical thinking and arguing the conclusions of their research. Owners of small and medium-sized companies from all over the Republic of Croatia are also involved in our teaching processes, as guest lecturers, share their thoughts and experiences with students, and provide insight into their business ventures (fieldwork). But despite this, in every workplace, it is necessary to re-learn, adopt procedures and processes, fit into the organizational structure and culture. I think that it is not possible to create an employee who does not need training. It is important to teach students to accept and deal with the challenges.

Owners of small and medium enterprises in the Republic of Croatia still do not have the image they deserve. There are very few journalists and media space focused on creating a better image and highlighting examples of good practice. In our society, there is no difference between an entrepreneur who has honestly and dishonourably went bankrupt. Unfortunately, an entrepreneurial career is still not seen as desirable. By creating a supportive environment for starting a business, especially among the population of young people, with mentors (experienced entrepreneurs), we would provide more growing business ventures, which are the “engines” for new employment, innovation, business internationalization and creating a better standard of living. In that sense, it is necessary to apply the laws and regulations that we have, and to protect investments.

The Republic of Croatia has the best network of entrepreneurial support institutions in the EU27 (according to the data of the Single Enterprise Infrastructure Register of 453 institutions), so access to services needed to start a business is not questionable, but the question of the quality of services offered remains. During this latest, the so-called “Corona crisis”, owners of small and medium enterprises, which make up the majority in the Croatian economy (99.7% of business entities belong to this sector) urgently need, in addition to the financial assistance offered, consulting and advisory assistance. Unfortunately, there are very few entrepreneurial support institutions that offer this type of assistance. This is certainly an area that still needs to be worked on and that needs to be further developed in order to create a better entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The crisis we are currently going through is just one in a series. Like any other, although this one is driven by completely different reasons than the previous ones, it can be an opportunity for, but also the end of business, depending on how we look at the crisis itself and changes in the environment. A good example are our family run farms (OPG), which acted very quickly and began to deliver their products (primarily fruits and vegetables) to the doorstep. On the other hand, some businesses had to change part of their business, so they focused on the production of disinfectants, while others completely changed their business model and found themselves in the production of a completely new product. All of these are good examples of adapting to changes in the environment, accepting risks and seeing new opportunities. In all these situations, the acquired knowledge and experience were extremely important, as well as entrepreneurial traits and skills.



**UPENSKILLS**

