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The Value Creator

The owner of Proactive Management Consulting Ltd. is a successful strategy consultant and also a responsible civil.

Probably there were not too many businessmen in Hungary in the 80's followed by the secret services of both the former Soviet Union and the United States of America. This is exactly what happened to Tibor Héjj. As an employee of Műszertechnika they were preparing for an exhibition at Moscow together with an American company. The overseas partner would have liked to sell the computers – with components purchased from abroad and assembled in Hungary – in the Soviet Union. But the Russians believed that they were just an imperialist private company: the secret service observed Tibor Héjj for a couple of days and then the Hungarian embassy suggested him to leave the country within 24 hours. After this incident he was banned from the Soviet Union for 10 years.

Later they tried to sell their devices in California but at that time the unsuspecting team was taken for vocational spies of the Soviet Block. The colleagues of Tibor Héjj were stopped by nine FBI agents on the airplane way home, they were interrogated and the business cards they had received on their meetings were taken away. He personally could avoid this procedure because he didn't leave immediately, he went to see some relatives before leaving. The American business partners were also visited by commando troops.

Having cleared the case the next time after landing they went to the centre of FBI. They showed what they brought and explained the reason of their journey. Moreover they offered the agents to join them on their meetings, but finally it did not happen.

Hardware for raspberry

The barriers of entering the international arena came down after the regime-change. Today it is just a memory when companies could assure access to foreign currencies typically by cooperating with state owned agricultural corporations (as almost the only exporters

of this era). Thus thanks to these kind of „transactions” Műszertechnika became the third largest raspberry exporter of Hungary. They cornered the fruit - at least on paper - , transported it abroad, they converted the foreign currency to computer equipments and finally they repayed the service of the real exporter with a high premium who paid the growers.

Despite the adventurous first steps on the global market, Tibor Héjj still believes that the international competition and trade can be a possibility to break out and a chance to grow for domestic enterprises. His credo is to be present internationally in as many places as you can and by creating added value. The businessman's advice is as follows: those who have the talent and possibility shouldn't stay in the role of a commanded implementing employee but try to be integrated into the world economy with their knowledge and creativity.

The 30 % of the revenue of his own company, Proactive Management Consulting Ltd. – founded at the end of 2002 – originates from exporting their services: besides the Hungarian market they provide strategic consultancy for German, Austrian and Swiss companies and organizations. Among others there is an economist, a lawyer, an IT professional and a specialized person for grant applications in the staff of 6. During their advisory work they set milestones along which the advice is implemented according to strict schedules. They accept to be remunerated based on this. Practically it means joint risk-taking with the client however the economic crisis could press down the company because of this strategy only in the year 2009.

In his foreign market engagement acquisitions the manager could rely on his former, existing business relationships. Since after working with Műszertechnika he had a one-year American detour with his family: he received an MBA degree and found strategy consulting for himself. Then he worked at the German office of The Boston Consulting Group for six years. Although, he dreamed about learning everything about business within an international consulting company, his unusual attitude broke into surface even then when he was offered the job of his dreams, because Tibor Héjj insisted to work for the company only in reduced hours. He didn't want to ask for a too big favour from his family again after the year spent in America, thus they moved back home. He also had to spend time on his newly established foundation. Finally – first in its history – BCG agreed to it, this way he worked three days in Germany and spent time with his family and non-profit activities from Thursday until Sunday evening in Hungary.

It was a really tough commitment. Of course it is funny when the boss reaches the family-head at the Zoo on a Friday morning and the conversation is accompanied by lion bellow. Tibor Héjj also admits: It was really hard to cope with the fact that he could exceed in the hierarchy only with half speed and the colleagues who joined the company later could sometimes overtake him.

As a compensation he had his four children and the involvement in the civil sector. The latter is related to his remedial teacher friend who helped him to recognize that the families with disabled children were almost unable to have vacation.

So they created an inn for 30 people where families with handicapped members could spend their one-week vacations. Later it became clear that only a job opportunity could significantly change the life of the handicapped and this is how the idea of Napra Forgó (Sunflower) Non-profit Ltd. was born. The organization which supports disabled people in getting jobs, celebrated its tenth anniversary last year.

Winning solutions

Tibor Héjj believes that if you give you should give multi-dimensionally: time, money and knowledge at the same time. Donating is a joy in itself but it also helped him to show his value system authentically to his children. He never liked to separate his family, for- and non-profit activities – as he acts according to the same attitude in every aspect of his life. He would find it fortunate if the non-profit organizations learnt the professional attitude of the for-profit sector and the win-win approach based common good approach of the civil organizations affected the culture of the for-profit world.

The entrepreneur is convinced that the value-driven aspects can be applied in management consulting, too. Once, for example a gas supplier engaged them to downsize headcount to reduce costs. At that time the employees of this company offered quite a few related services tasks (repairing household devices, cars) for the company's customers, but they did it mainly for their own pocket. The plan consisted of stopping these activities and the dismissal of the related employees. Tibor Héjj had a different idea: a separate company was created for these employees and everyone gained ownership according to their severance pay. So they received a share and not money and they also became the contractual partners of their former employer. They had to take over the spare part stock – so the gas supplier didn't have to care for the disposal – and even a business plan had been prepared for them to assure sustainable operation. It

was a real win-win solution: it cost less for the supplier than the dismissal and no one lost his job while the company could focus on its core activity.

This kind of creative way of thinking was acknowledged by the British Chamber of Commerce in Hungary with the recently founded St. George Award. The Chamber searched for an entrepreneur who was not only successful in business but also active in the non-profit field. They highlighted that he also spent time and money for civil matters even in the time of recession when his own company faced some difficulties.

Text of the box, next to the picture:

Tibor Héjj

- **54-year old, earned his M.Sc.E.E. at the Technical University, his MBA degree at Vanderbilt University**
- **Owner and managing director of Proactive Management Consulting Ltd., and majority owner of Sunflower Non-profit Ltd.**
- **Married with three sons and a daughter. His hobby is to play tennis with his old friends.**

Ágnes Lilla KOVÁCS