

INSPIRING STORIES BY LOCAL HEROES

AmCham
SLOVAKIA



LINDNER
★★★★ HOTEL GALLERY CENTRAL
Bratislava

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AT OUTLOOK BAR, LINDNER HOTEL GALLERY CENTRAL

Success has many forms but it doesn't automatically make you a hero. Personalities featured in AmCham's Inspiring Stories by Local Heroes series have turned their success into responsibility to share their knowledge and inspire future leaders and innovators. Because that is what real heroes do...

On October 8, AmCham members and other guests had the opportunity enjoy a pleasant evening and listen to people who have achieved a lot and are willing to share what they have learned along the way. This lineup of speakers was originally scheduled to meet in June, but heavy rain complicated the traffic situation in Bratislava so much, that most of the guests and some speakers were not able to attend.

However, after a four month delay, everything was set for the third installment of the Inspiring Stories by Local Heroes series. As a part of the LINDNER HOTEL GALLERY CENTRAL "Local Hero Concept", the Inspiring Stories by Local Heroes brings together

three business personalities, representing three different industries, who have successfully created and run businesses and have inspiring insights to share. The program also included a special musical performance by AmCham's Office and Personal Assistant Borbála Agócssová, who entertained the audience with songs prepared specifically for this occasion.

The role of the moderator belonged to Gabriel Galgóczi, Managing Director at AT&T Global Network Services Slovakia, Member of the AmCham Board, who already had experience with the format, as he had been one of the three speakers at the previous event. The debate itself is informal and the speakers

are encouraged to share their personal business story with all the doubts, setbacks, failures and lucky breaks that inevitably happen along the way. All three speakers were there to talk openly about the moments and decisions which formed who they are today in order to inspire others and maybe help them find their own path.

This time the lineup of speakers included a representative of a global corporation, a successful and well-established SME, as well as a hopeful startup with global ambitions. The only woman among the three, Michaela Benedigová of Seesame Communication Experts, leads one of the most successful PR and



Michaela Benedigová, SEESAME



Branislav Budke, PFIZER



Ákos Haramia, Syker Engineering





communication companies in Slovakia. Even after two decades in this business it was obvious that she is still very passionate about her work and her company. Her role in the company has changed over the years but she still provides the leadership and vision. How to maintain a high level of energy and motivation necessary to succeed in this tough business? Her recipe is simple — always strive to learn from the best, keep working on your education and looking for new inspiration.

Branislav Budke, Country Manager at the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, is the first Slovak to hold this leadership position. His career clearly shows that a consistent

and dedicated approach pays off, as it enabled him to climb the corporate ladder and experience various positions and levels of responsibility. The pharmaceutical industry demands long-term planning and strategizing skills, the ability to look ahead and select the right path. It was very interesting to hear Mr. Budke talk about leadership as a form of communication. Good leaders realize that no matter how brilliant their vision is, if they don't have the skill to communicate it clearly to the rest of the organization and get others on board, it is doomed to fail. This means being open to discussion and even to criticism and to lead by example and inevitably leads to a higher level of dedication to the company

goals and mission among the management as well as the employees.

Despite his young age, Ākos Haramia, CEO of Syker Engineering, has a lot of business experience under his belt. His example demonstrates the possibilities of today's open globalized economy. On one hand, it is an extremely competitive environment and the vast majority of startups simply cannot survive. On the other hand, a technological startup from Slovakia can achieve recognition and enjoy success at the global stage. Of course, as he also stressed, you have to believe in your vision and be prepared to make some sacrifices. It is also very important to test your business

model on the market — your conviction is not enough, there has to be real demand for the product or service you aim to develop.

Although each of the stories was unique in its own way there were several key messages which linked them together — the ability to perceive limits as challenges, to always aim higher and to inspire others to share their vision and goals. None of them was chasing success. Instead, they followed their passion and success came along the way.



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Michaela Benedigová

SEESAME



Branislav Budke

PFIZER



Ākos Haramia

Syker Engineering

We live in a reputation economy. Reputation matters. Reputation is based on moral, ethical, and entrepreneurial values. Reputation must be earned! I want to make this world a better place to live.

I agree with Confucius who said 'The art of leadership is the art of communication'. A successful leader is consistent in his or her values, transparent and authentic. I've always strived to work for the company as if I were its owner.

Staying in Slovakia and trying to make things better is a challenge. Going abroad and making big money is easy. In my case, I had the determination, the time, and I did not need money for day to day life.