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# MIKROFON

COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE

INFORMATIONAL BROADCAST  
OF MIKRO+POLO COMPANY



**mikro+polo**  
YOUR PARTNER IN THE LABORATORY

# MORE ABOUT THE MIKROFON



MIKROFON is the internal magazine of Mikro+Polo d.o.o. Authors of articles in sections such as »BARE ON AIR,« »FIELD MIC,« »YOU ASKED, WE ANSWER,« and »THE MICROWAVE« are nominated to write. The nomination system means that the current article's author selects a colleague for the next issue of MIKROFON. So, read each article carefully –you might be the next nominee!

Do you have a question for an expert, are facing a dilemma, or need advice? Our company employs numerous specialists across various fields who may be able to help. We have at least one architect, biochemist, biologist, biotechnologist, economist, electrical engineer, pharmacist, geographer, civil engineer, IT specialist, chemical technologist, chemist, woodworker, media communicator, microbiologist, lawyer, mechanical engineer, and food technologist—covering everything from A to Z.

You can submit your ideas, articles, suggestions, opinions, praises, comments, or questions at any time in one of the MIKROFON mailboxes. The first is located at the employee entrance in the administrative building (above the mailboxes), and the second is at the warehouse entrance.

Alternatively, you can reach us via email at [marketing@mikro-polo.si](mailto:marketing@mikro-polo.si). We appreciate every message!

## MIKROFON

Internal magazine of Mikro+Polo d.o.o.

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Branka Kadić, Breda Kodba, Dejan Hojnik, Marko Hanc, Savina Premzel and Tina Hohnjec with the help of article authors.

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# IMPORTANT DATES

## APRIL

### 1 April

Emanuela Pavalec 21 years at M+P  
Boštjan Perko 8 years at M+P  
Boris Sevšek 1 year at M+P  
Birthday of Tomaž Kristanič

### 2 April

Birthday of Mario Križanič

### 3 April

Slavko Kulundžić 2 years at M+P

### 4 April

Birthday of Amila Muminović Memic

### 5 April

Birthday of Rene Nežmah

### 9 April

Birthday of Valerija Šlamberger

### 10 April

Birthday of Tadeja Mihev

### 11 April

Birthday of Milan Drobnak

### 12 April

Birthday of Vojko Kunstl

### 14 April

Birthday of Mojca Jarc Sojič

### 15 April

Mirela Vučić 10 years at M+P  
Darja Kozar 1 year at M+P

### 17 April

Snack from Microwave Event

### 18 April

Birthday of Leonida Mušič

### 22 April

Birthday of Zerina Bešić  
Matjaž Bezjak 1 year at M+P

### 24 April

Birthday of Rajko Vučenovič

### 28 April

Mojca Vek 16 years at M+P

### 30 April

Birthday of Špela Grubelnik ...  
NEVER AGAIN 29

## MAY

### 1 May

Valerija Šlamberger 33 years at M+P  
Peter Jamšek 18 years at M+P  
Anja Vajnhandl 7 years at M+P  
Marko Gril 3 years at v M+P  
Aleš Obrulj 2 years at M+P  
Andrej Bogdan 2 years at M+P

### 3 May

Birthday of Daniel William Beckler  
Zdravko Kmetec 25 years at M+P

### 4 May

Arijana Suljagić 8 years at M+P

### 6 May

Jan Ekart 1 year at M+P

### 8 May

Birthday of Marko Gril  
Monika Banfi 2 years at M+P  
Branka Trajkovski 2 years at M+P

### 9 May

Birthday of Zoran Vejič

### 10 May

Birthday of Amina Karić

### 15 May

Lara Hudej 2 years at M+P

### 16 May

Rene Gole 3 years at v M+P

### 22 May

Zerina Bešić 8 years at M+P

### 26 May

Birthday of Emanuela Pavalec  
Birthday of Jaka Oset

### 27 May

Birthday of Petra Murn

### 28 May

Birthday of Tanja Nakov

## JUNE

### 1 June

Andreja Žimič 33 years at M+P  
Domen Šmigoc 17 years at M+P  
Mitja Ketiš 4 years at v M+P  
Gorazd Kmetič 2 years at M+P  
Katja Kampuš 1 year at M+P

### 3 June

Birthday of Leo Lukman

### 4 June

Birthday of Luka Dobaj

### 5 June

Birthday of Iva Kovačič

### 7. June

Brthday of Tilen Podgornik  
Birthday of Gorazd Kmetič

### 9 June

Birthday of Anja Vajnhandl  
Birthday of Damjan Zupanič

### 12 June

Birthday of Matjaž Holc

### 13 June

Birthday of Matic Košir

### 16 June

Tina Hohnjec 7 years at M+P

### 17 June

Birthday of Gregor Leutgeb

### 18 June

Birthday of David Pignar

### 20 June

Birthday of Sabina Kmetec

### 21 June

Birthday of Jani Roškar

### 23 June

Birthday of Boris Grobelnik

### 28 June

Birthday of Maja Lavrenčič






 A large, dark, semi-transparent portrait of Marko Podgornik Verdev, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a suit and tie, serves as the background for the entire page.
 

 ■ **MARKO PODGORNIK VERDEV** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# START WITHOUT DETOURS

**We concluded 2024 with remarkable achievements, the result of our shared dedication, innovation, and commitment. But 2025 did not wait. There was no quiet introduction or gradual ramp-up – in the very first week of January, we found ourselves at the heart of the largest project in our company's history: equipping laboratories in Vienna, valued at 3 million euros. This is not just a number but a symbol of our maturity, our reputation, and the trust we have earned in the international market.**

At home, we are equally active. Several significant projects in Slovenia confirm that we have become an indispensable partner in science and industry. We are operating according to plan and successfully achieving all set goals. This is not a given – it is the result of dedicated work, thoughtful leadership, and the commitment of every individual.

With growth comes complexity, which is why we began the year with a strategic reorganization. A key role was assumed by Judita Rigler, the new Head of the Lab Interior department. Taking over during a crisis is not a task for just anyone. Crisis leadership means guiding in times when processes are scattered, goals are unclear, and energy is diluted. It is leadership where there is no room for uncertainty. It requires rapid analysis, clear direction, and – most challenging of all – decisiveness that sometimes takes precedence over likability. Crisis leadership means that structure comes to the forefront, the pace is set by the leader, and focus is sharply narrowed: first, establishing order, then developing potential. Judita is tackling this with great determination, transparency, and a strong results-oriented approach. The first results are already visible.

However, every solid structure needs a connecting link – someone who keeps the threads together, coordinates, supports, and thinks holistically. This role now belongs to Breda Kodba, who has taken over key operational areas: marketing,

public procurement, quality, logistics, and complaints. These are no longer separate departments but a unified support unit serving the company's two main programs: the Laboratory, led by Sanela German, and Lab Interior, under Judita's leadership. Breda, with her comprehensive oversight and sense of synergy, is building a bridge between vision and daily operations, which is invaluable.

In the Laboratory program, Sanela will integrate order processing, service, and sales departments into a comprehensive and unified unit in the coming months, committed to a common goal: excellent customer service. This move will improve communication, increase efficiency, and better align our services with market needs.

Matjaž leads finance, IT, maintenance – and yes, even our kitchen. While it may sound mundane, we know that without a good meal and a well-organized environment, strategic thinking is impossible.

As for me, I am currently focused on the company's strategic leadership, vision development, and HR policy. To me, the role of a CEO is primarily about creating the conditions for people to grow. And when necessary, stepping beyond the familiar, the safe, and the ordinary – in search of something better.

Within the company, we are also preparing for departmental relocations to further optimize our space utilization and strengthen team collaboration.

These moves are not just a physical reorganization but also a symbol of our dynamism and readiness for change.

Beyond business, we are also developing something with heart. This year, for the first time, we are organizing the business-charity event MEN-TAL, which openly addresses topics often left unspoken – burnout, anxiety, pressure, and vulnerability in the business world. The event is being organized in collaboration with Kreativna baza, the Slovenian HR Association, the Diversity Charter, ŠENT, UP-ornik, and other partners. MEN-TAL is part of the official program for the European Diversity Month, and all proceeds will go toward supporting those who cannot help themselves.

Finally, with great pride, I share that I have received an official invitation from the European Commission to speak at the opening event of European Diversity Month and the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Awards ceremony. The event will take place on April 29 in Brussels. I see this invitation as recognition not just for me but for the entire company – all of you – because we are creating an environment where diversity is not a trend but a fundamental value.

Dear colleagues – thank you. We are building more than business results. We are building a culture. And that is what truly counts.





■ JAKA OSET LOGISTICS

# SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMIZATION

## How did we solve the logistics challenges in Lyon?

In early December, I visited BioMérieux in Lyon with Peter and Marko, where we attended the Supply Chain Distribution Meeting. During the meeting, we, along with colleagues from Serbia, Romania, and Israel, focused on improvements in distribution and supply chain processes.

The meeting started with a presentation on global trends in logistics, led by the **Vice President of Supply Chain EMEA**. This was followed by presentations from individual countries, where we shared the challenges we face in our respective markets. One of the main topics of discussion was **pallet packaging optimization**—how to prepare them in the best possible way to ensure goods safely reach customers, while minimizing damage and simplifying handling during receiving and shipping.

We also toured the **entire logistics process at BioMérieux** – from receiving and storage to packaging and shipping, as well as how their refrigeration systems and automated processes work. A particularly interesting part of the visit was the tour of the **International Distribution Center** in Saint Vulbas, where we saw firsthand how transport can be better organized and how re-

turns are managed more efficiently.

In addition to logistics topics, we had the opportunity to test BioFire, one of BioMérieux's key diagnostic systems. We gained first-hand insight into how customer support is provided and how the system operates in practice.

Such meetings are an excellent opportunity to see how things are done at other companies, gain new ideas, and find ways to further improve our own supply system.

Of course, we didn't just work. Lyon also provided us with enjoyable socializing and a fantastic evening at the famous Brasserie Bocuse. As for how good the food was, you should ask Peter.

Continuous improvement of logistics processes remains a key goal for Mikro+Polo, and this was the main focus of our meeting in Lyon.



■ MATIC KOŠIR LAB INTERIOR

# FULL STEAM AHEAD INTO THE NEW YEAR

## Production department 2025

The year 2025 has barely started, and we're already busy! Our production department is running at full steam, with the production plan fully booked, which fills us with satisfaction and energy for the new challenges ahead. With this pace, we will certainly take a step forward this year—and even further!

## SUCCESSFUL AUDITS AND PRAISES

January was busy also due to the conducted standard assessments. On January 20th, we had an **external audit based on the ISO 45001 standard**, which focuses on occupational health and safety. The audit confirmed that our management system in this area works excellently – we were praised for our organization and efforts to provide employees with a safe working environment.

Just two days later, on January 22nd, we had **an audit based on the ISO 14001 standard**, which covers environmental protection. Not only did we successfully pass the audit, but our production de-







**The year 2025 has started with an energetic pace, successful ISO standard assessments, and ambitious goals for growth and improvements in production.**

partment also received special praise for maintaining a clean and organized working environment. Such praise is proof that maintaining order and caring for the environment is not just a responsibility, but a way of how we operate!

## **BIG PLANS FOR THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR**

We have **ambitious goals** ahead of us. In the first quarter of the year, we aim to **sell two larger machines**, which will free up space for expanding furniture assembly. At the same time, this will provide additional maneuvering space for in-process inventory, which will undoubtedly make our work easier.

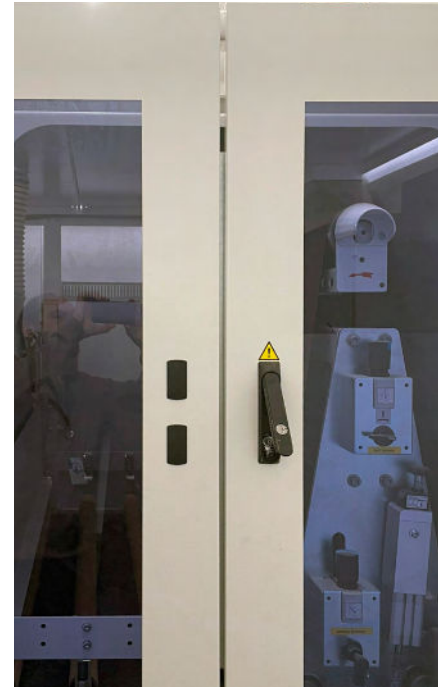
In the second quarter, **new changes are expected in the workshops** – we will refurbish the floors, improve workstations, and acquire a new panel press. This

addition will significantly increase our furniture assembly capacity and further elevate our efficiency to the next level.

## **STEADY PROGRESS AHEAD**

The year 2025 is just beginning, but it already shows signs of being full of success, growth, and improvements. A big thank you to the entire team for all the effort you put into our common goals. With your dedication and hard work, we can be optimistic about the achievements ahead. We can't wait to write new success stories together with you

Let's move forward – stronger together! Greetings from the production department!





 ■ TANJA NAKOV LAB PROGRAMME

# TRAINING, NETWORKING, AND ANECDOTES

## Distributor meeting bioMérieux

Every business trip abroad brings interesting stories, and this time was no different when four of us – Sanela, Monika, Mojca, and I – headed to the distributor meeting of bioMérieux in Istanbul. Our journey began in Zagreb, where we were immediately greeted with the notice: flight delayed.

With a two-hour delay, we were thrown into the vibrant pace of the Turkish metropolis, amidst a snowy backdrop. The journey to the hotel was **a test of patience** – the traffic jam, which is almost a constant in **Istanbul**, accompanied us on the long drive to our destination. When we finally arrived, we had just enough time to change and head to **welcome by the host**. We were treated to a cocktail party with snacks, which was a perfect opportunity to relax and network. At the top of the hotel, with a magnificent view of Istanbul, we exchanged first impressions with people we usually only communicate with via email.



The next day, we focused on **education**. The program was split into **clinical diagnostic and industrial parts**. Monika, Mojca, and Sanela attended the clinical sessions, which included a special section for Spotfire in a smaller group of around 20 participants. Representatives from five countries in the Adriatic region, where the device is already available, and key **bioMérieux** representatives were present. They discussed how to approach selling the Spotfire device without jeopardizing the existing FilmArray business and how to balance both products. They focused on identifying customers that require special attention and on market segmentation strategies to best meet the specific needs of different users and increase Spotfire sales success. Additionally, they discussed the POCT (point-of-care testing) approach, which enables quick diagnostic tests at the point of care. This approach is crucial for successful sales of such solutions, as it shortens the time to results and improves patient care.

**During the breaks** between lectures, delicious snacks awaited us, and the hotel staff carefully brewed coffee for us. The lunches were a true culinary delight, and, of course, there was no shortage of Turkish desserts. From various cream cakes to at least ten types of baklava, which made us face sweet dilemmas every day. If anything, we certainly weren't hungry. Two consecutive evenings, we had organized dinners. Well, if you could call it organized, given that they served us the same food on both nights. On Tuesday, we visited the Madera restaurant and admired the illuminated skyscrapers along the way, which reminded us of Las Vegas and New York. On the third evening, we had a **gala dinner and the BioStar award ceremony**



I attended the industrial part of the meeting. The main focus of this year's event was on marketing strategies and achieving the goals set for 2028 – G028. The presentations were dynamic, full of useful information and practical advice.

RESULTS OF THE QUIZ «How much do you know about science, laboratories, and chemistry?»  
1C, 2B, 3C, 4B, 5B, 6D, 7C, 8B, 9B, 10B, 11B, 12A, 13C

at the Sait Halim Pasha Mansion. Although we had been recipients of this prestigious award for several years, this time the award went to others. I'm confident we also deserved it. The menu again featured pasta with ricotta and walnuts, and beef with sautéed vegetables, which turned the dinner into a true chef competition.

On Thursday, we **continued with the workshops**, where we discussed strategies and ways to improve collaboration in groups. Since our flight was only the next day, we used the remaining time to quickly visit some of the major sights. The Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Grand Bazaar, and Taksim Square were truly impressive. The biggest challenge, however, was the journey back to the hotel – it took us an hour and 40 minutes to cover just 5 kilometers with Uber! I really don't envy them their traffic.

And then the time came to leave. However, as we know, traveling with Sanela is always full of interesting twists and turns, and this time was no exception. You can read more about the adventure in the »MikroAnecdote« section.

Istanbul offered us an **excellent business experience**, a touch of oriental hospitality, and, of course, some priceless adventures that the team will reminisce about over coffee for a long time.





 ■ MOJCA VEK LAB PROGRAMME

# NEW YEAR, NEW CHALLENGES ...

... and opportunities for learning!

The year has come full circle, and with it, the time for training and distributor meetings. The first few months have been filled with exciting events – I attended the distributor meeting of New England Biolabs (NEB) and Cell Signaling Technology (CST) in the vibrant city of Barcelona, as well as a specialized training on NEB NGS at the scientific hub of Heidelberg.

## CELL SIGNALING TECHNOLOGY & NEW ENGLAND BIOLABS CONNECTED IN SCIENCE

NEB and CST are actually »sister« companies, as they share common roots. CST began its research in the cell laboratories of NEB, after which their paths diverged, leading to the creation of two strong but separate companies. Since most distributors work with both companies, it makes sense for their meetings to be held together.

Such events are **invaluable opportunities to gain insights into innovations**, as the product portfolios of both companies are constantly evolving. These meetings are also a great chance to exchange experiences and learn about research trends across Europe. We always return full of fresh ideas, which we then try to adapt and implement in our own market. This time, I attended the event together with Amina, and we can't wait to put into practice the strategies we developed in the workshops!



## NEB NGS TRAINING THEORY & PRACTICE IN HEIDELBERG

In addition to the regular meetings, NEB also organizes **specialized training** every year **for the reagent segment** for NGS library preparation. This year, the program was particularly interesting, as the theoretical part was complemented by hands-on training in the EMBL laboratories in Heidelberg.

We had the opportunity to **test the latest library preparation kit** – NEBNext UltraExpress – and see for ourselves how fast and simple the process is. Although most of the participants have been more familiar with sales than laboratory work for a while, with a bit of rusty pipetting skills, we still managed to create excellent libraries!

Such training sessions enable us to gain a better understanding of the products we present to our clients. We can firsthand assess their advantages and then pass on this knowledge with expertise and personal experience.

I look forward to the upcoming training sessions and the knowledge I will gain.





 ■ BREDA KODBA COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

# FULL SPEED AHEAD

## Connection and support are the keys to success

New beginnings and a new year (even though the first quarter is almost behind us) bring fresh energy, a renewed professional start, and new opportunities. All departments face challenges and goals that will shape the course of our work and business in the months ahead.

With this always comes the time to step into a new era of fresh opportunities—regardless of the past and current challenges. I firmly stand by the belief that the key to any success lies in mutual support, collaboration, and transparency. At the same time, we must remain focused on the new opportunities that our shared future brings.

No matter how turbulent our waters were in the past months or what challenges we faced, now is the time to move **FORWARD**. Every trial shapes us and ultimately makes us **STRONGER**. With optimism and determination, we can always make a conscious choice to use every experience for **GROWTH** and **LEARNING**.

It is essential that we stay connected and support one another. Teamwork and collaboration are key elements of success. I believe that with our knowledge and dedication,

we can effectively tackle any challenge together. This spirit of cooperation and unity must be nurtured and encouraged. Together, we are stronger!

Honesty is a key value that will guide us into the future. Let's be open with ourselves and each other. Embracing new ideas, constructive feedback, and knowledge sharing contribute to creating an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered.

This year, we will execute several marketing campaigns and strategies, with an international trade fair abroad also on our agenda. In public procurement, we have already prepared and submitted several tenders, and in April, our Tanja will attend the first public procurement congress. The ICT department is »drowning« in all the large-scale projects that we are steadily, but

surely, pushing toward completion. The integration of new programs, technologies, security, and development—there will be no shortage of work. In complaints management, we have successfully implemented cause analysis, which will further improve our processes this year. We have also enhanced our environmental management, workplace safety, and fire safety systems. We are acquiring new knowledge in the field of human resources and are working hard to re-establish the employee development mechanism as soon as possible. Last but not least, the kitchen team has been revamped, and with new energy, we will continue to do our utmost to satisfy as many hungry stomachs as possible.

All of this awakens a new drive within us, essential for success. With great expectations and full sails, we will navigate through challenges and achieve new, higher goals. This will equip us to face everything the future brings our way.



**NOW is the time to come together and step optimistically into the world of opportunities ahead.**



# MARKETING MINDS NEVER REST

 ■ DEJAN HOJNIK MARKETING

Marketing minds never rest. We're always thinking of new ideas, creative approaches, and fresh solutions that bring us closer to our customers. This includes email marketing, which remains one of the most powerful sales channels. However, success is not only dependent on design or perfected automation – the message itself is key. The right word in the right place makes the difference between a message left unopened and one that delivers results.

## HOW TO WRITE AN E-MAIL, THAT CONVINCES?

**Subject** – The first filter! If it doesn't grab attention, the e-mail won't be opened. The subject should be short and clear, prompting the recipient to take the next step. Testing different subject lines is key – sometimes a small change makes a big difference.

**Preview** – A mini summary that sparks interest and hints at the value of the content. People always skim the preview before opening the e-mail, so it should be engaging and attention-grabbing.

**Message body** – Less is more! Clear, structured, and focused on one key objective. A short sentence that gets straight to the point is more effective than long paragraphs. Always think about how to address the reader personally and directly.

**CTA (Call to Action)** – Without this, there is no response. Direct and clear value («Download the guide», «Sign up», «Schedule a meeting»). The CTA should be visually prominent and easy to understand – no long explanations.

## WHAT MAKESE-MAIL MARKETING SUCCESSFUL?

**Personalization** – People are more likely to open an e-mail that is tailored to them. Using the recipient's name and segmenting the audience based on interests or past interactions greatly improves responsiveness.

**Right frequency** – If we send too many e-mails, we risk being seen as annoying. If we send too few, we miss the opportunity to connect with customers. Finding the right balance is key.

**Clear value** – Every e-mail should offer something useful – whether it's information, a benefit, a special offer, or a solution to a specific problem. If e-mails don't provide value, recipients will quickly lose interest.

**Testing and optimization** – We should not assume what works – we need to test! A/B tests for subject lines, different CTAs, text length, and visual elements help determine what resonates most with your audience.

Responses		
<a href="#">Opened</a>	190	43.2%
Privacy Opens	13	3.0%
<a href="#">Didn't open</a>	250	56.8%
<a href="#">Clicked</a>	116	26.4%
Total clicks	405	
<a href="#">Didn't click</a>	324	73.6%
Click-to-open rate	-	61.1%



### And the most important rule of e-mail marketing?

We're not selling a product – we're selling a click! A click that leads to content, an opportunity, a solution. From this, a good lead is generated, which is crucial for continuing the sales process.

And alongside experienced personnel, Emarsys comes to the forefront. A tool that enables us to elevate e-mail marketing to the next level and achieve better results. Campaign automation (delivering the right message at the right time), advanced segmentation (differentiating customers and tailoring content), AI prediction and analytics (when and how customers prefer to open messages), omnichannel integration (e-mail, SMS, social media, and websites), A/B testing (optimizing open rates).

With the system in place, we ensure that our e-mail campaigns are not just mass sending of messages, but thoughtful and targeted communication that truly delivers results.

We still have a long way to go to master the system and fully utilize its 100% potential, but the first results are already visible. Step by step, we are climbing toward the top, and we're all eagerly waiting for the moment when we can fully integrate it with all systems.

Currently showing: 📅 Ad hoc campaign launched on 11.03.2025

Total sent  
Revenue  
Purchased

469  
€0.00  
0



Opened  
43.2% (190)  
Opened on mobile  
1.6% (7)



Clicked  
26.4% (116)  
Clicked on mobile  
0.7% (3)

Delivered  
93.8% (440)  
Unsubscribed  
0.5% (2)

Bounced  
6.2% (29)  
Complained  
0.0% (0)



 ■ TINA HOHNJEC ORDER PROCESSING

# THE DIARY OF A CERTAIN CLERK

## Order processing department

I'm cool. I think I'm cool. Although my thoughts are racing. A hundred thoughts. Have I done enough? Could I do more? How could I do more? Can I do more? What am I even doing? I feel like I'm doing nothing, even though I'm constantly working. Do I need help? Well, I'm managing... No, it's not that bad. I've got everything under control. I'm fine. It's not as exhausting as I thought it would be yesterday. Maybe I just need more sleep. Or maybe I really am stressed... and don't even realize it? Wait... how does my day even go?

I walk through the door, greet my colleagues, and head to my desk. I log in, grab a coffee, chat with a few coworkers, and then it's go time. This is the part of the day when my mind is still clear and my thoughts are sharp. The perfect moment to tackle tasks that require the most focus. I check my emails from yesterday, set priorities, open the CRM, join the team, and we go through all the new tickets.

The phone rings. Before I can take my first sip of coffee, I hear on the other end: **»Good morning. When will you deliver my order, which has been open since November?«** I check the order. The supplier has postponed the date again. For the third time. I don't have a real delivery date. I connect with sales, check for

alternatives, and promise to inform as soon as I get any info. Searching for alternatives and collaborating with sales has become much easier and faster since we created the **»Chemical Alternatives«** group on MS Teams.

The phone rings. Sales needs a **reverse order**. Urgently. Because one machine has to go to the customer today. Of course. In the meantime, I get an email: **»Quote, please, by today.«** OK, but first, the tickets. The number one priority in the morning is to divide everything up, only then can I "calmly" focus on my tasks. I write to the supplier for a new date. Meanwhile, I'm waiting for an alternative suggestion from the Teams group. Back to the tickets. I assign a few tasks and rush for

a 15-minute breakfast. When I return – boom! A bunch of new emails.

Where was I? Ah, **purchase orders**. I have half an hour for them because then I'm on call for B2B orders. Our golden rules: **B2B offers must be processed within 30 minutes**. I go through them in order. Third purchase order – the price doesn't match the customer's order. Contracts, price lists, I check everything. No prices anywhere. I call **Public Orders**. Tanja will check.

The phone rings: **»Hey, the address on the delivery note is incorrect. Shall we check?«** Boštjan Klemenčič, of course. Meanwhile, I already have an alternative suggestion for the first morning call. That can wait. Tanja is already at my desk with the price info, and I have Boštjan on the phone. Now the question is: Boštjan or Tanja? Boštjan is in the van and on his way. He needs the info NOW. Tanja turns around and heads to her office. OK, I'm searching for the address. The order has the same address as the delivery note. But Boštjan's experience tells





**Don't forget: what you do matters. You matter. Without you, it wouldn't be possible. And I'm grateful for a team that knows how to stay professional, focused, and magical, even in the greatest chaos – because magic happens with us every day.**

him otherwise. OK, I'll send an email to the customer to check the data since clearly, the mistake is on their side. I take a quiet moment and send the email to the customer for the alternative (first call of the day). I thank the Chemical team for their suggestion.

The phone rings. Tanja is calling with the price info. Great. Now I can finalize the purchase order. I check the time. **My B2B on-call duty started exactly 15 minutes ago.** No choice, focus now goes to the B2B offers. Wait... reverse order? Ok, I can take care of that in between. I know what I need to do. But – the information is missing. I call the sales representative: **»Who is the machine going to, and where is the machine right now?«** While we're on the line, he mentions that he got an urgent order and we need to place the order with the supplier today. **Delivery**

**by express mail.** OK, let's sort it out. He'll send me an email. After the call, I get back to the reverse order. When I finish, I check – 10 more B2B offers have come into the system, and I'm still on call. Ok, did I complete the reverse order properly? Did I sort everything out correctly? Wait, I still need to notify the warehouse of the delivery note number.

Hm... there's no time for deep thinking because the phone rings again. Another call for a coworker – this time, I just transfer the call and finally get to the B2B offers. Linda is already emailing me with friendly greetings, telling me I didn't enter the correct price in the order I submitted to the supplier last week. Ok, I'll take care of that later. I can't wait too long, though, because tomorrow is a new month, and I need to fix it today. Now, I need to handle the urgent order.

The phone rings again. Warehouse: **»You're blocking us, we can't post it!«** Well, can I please just **sort one thing out in peace?!**

I check the time. **Lunch.** And I haven't even gone to the bathroom yet. I'm leaving, but I'll take just this last call: **»We've received the machine, but we can't accept it because the catalog number is wrong.«** Now I'm going to eat, even if the whole world falls apart. The warehouse will have to wait until I can eat in peace. After lunch, my plan is to sort out all the other orders to the suppliers, and then I have interviews at room 16 – which means I'll have to meet with candidates when they ring at the door. Yes, that's also my task. Linda's friendly greetings are waiting for me – the price in the order is incorrect. I need to fix that today.

I return. The phone rings: **»You corrected my offer yesterday, but now I have to pay processing fees? The finance guy is going to kill me if I call him again!«**

I take a deep breath, investigate, and respond politely. The situation takes more time than I had planned.

**Plan? What's that? Should I continue?** The point is clear.

Those who have never worked in the **Order Processing Department** won't understand this. **Bombarded from all sides.** When everything is urgent, what's most urgent? Yet still – **like magicians, we surprise ourselves every day.**

So, dear OON team, I know it's not always easy. There are days when everything seems urgent, when it feels like we can't solve everything, when we're caught in a whirlwind of calls, emails, and expectations. But **look at what we accomplish in a single day!** Each one of you is a crucial part of this department. With your persistence and organizational skills behind the scenes, you resolve situations that sometimes seem impossible. And you know what the best part is? We always succeed! **We always find a solution. We always move forward.**

**Thank you, team!**

 ■ ROK PURG LAB PROGRAMME

# COMPANY TRIP TO PECA

## Winter sports day

We, the employees of Mikro+polo, embarked on a one-day business trip, or »Winter Sports Day,« to Mount Peca, located on the Austrian side of the border. The main motivation for this trip was winter sports – most participants chose skiing, while a few of us who don't ski were marked for a snowshoe hike in the table.

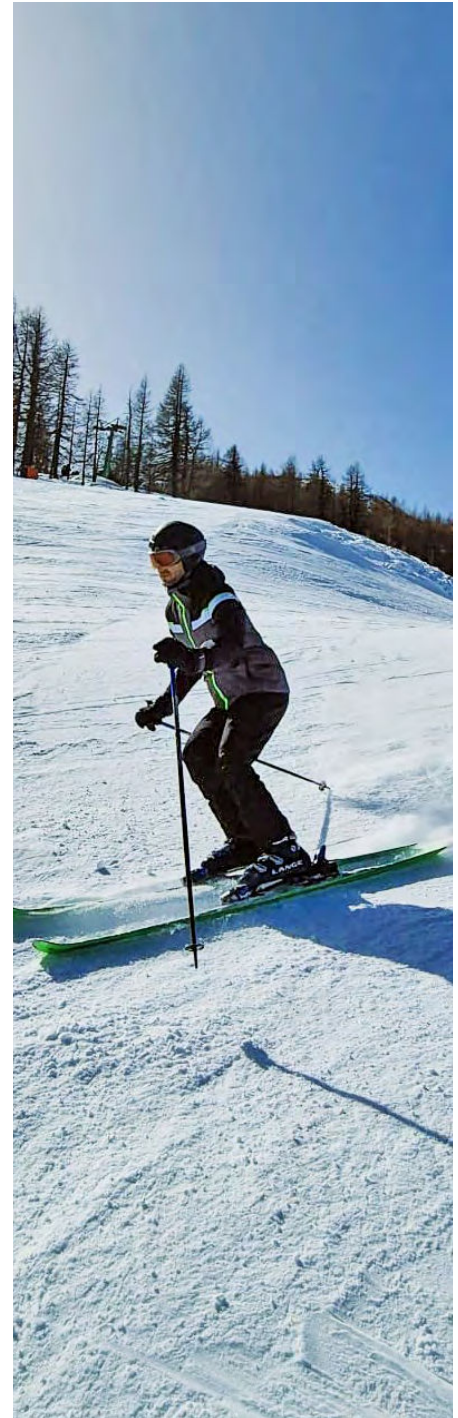
Before departure, we were greeted with a delicious breakfast, and then the bus took us towards our destination. The atmosphere on the way was cheerful, as we all looked forward to a day full of activity, relaxation, and carefree socializing. Upon arrival at Mount Peca, we were met with a snow-covered slope – a blanket of snow covered the forests and hills, and the sun shone pleasantly.

Once there, the skiers quickly headed for the slopes, while the hikers put on their snowshoes and set off to explore the snowy landscape. Snowshoeing was a new experience for many, and it turned out to be both fascinating and fun. The trails led us through picturesque forests and across gentle slopes, where we could peacefully enjoy the quiet of nature. The weather was on our side – sunny, just the right amount of cold,

with a light breeze creating ideal conditions. While the »snowshoers« were sweating and panting their way to the top of Peca, the skiers tested every meter of the slope, checked out all the huts along the way, and made sure the terrain was suitable for Ilka, who was preparing for a Downhill run.

At noon, we treated ourselves to a well-deserved break and lunch at the Oben restaurant, where we enjoyed excellent food and drinks. The pleasant ambiance and warm meal recharged us with energy for the rest of the day. Some of us sat in the sun to build up a base tan for the summer, others took a short walk, while the most »dedicated« made the most of the last few turns on the already somewhat soft slope.

As evening approached, we returned to Maribor, filled with wonderful memories, successfully concluding our first Winter Sports Day



of 2025. The business trip to Peca was more than just a day spent in the snow – it was an opportunity for bonding, laughter, and new experiences that will remain in our memories for a long time.





■ STEFAN SCHÄFER LAB INTERIOR

# SUCCESSFUL EXPANSION INTO THE GERMAN MARKET

## Trust, quality, and growth

After more than 20 years of experience in distributing laboratory equipment for German manufacturers, I joined Lab Interior in 2022. What motivated me most was the quality of the furniture, the corporate culture, and the strong sense of cohesion within our company.

One of the things I truly enjoy in my daily work is a statement I often hear from customers when they ask where our company is located. When I reply: »In Slovenia.«

I frequently receive the response: »We have only had positive experiences with our Slovenian suppliers and consider Lab Interior an equal partner in the German market.«

Over the past few years, we have significantly expanded our network in Germany through **targeted strategies, high-quality products, and strong partnerships**. We are particularly proud of the new trading and installation partners we have gained along the way.

**These collaborations allow us to further accelerate our growth in Germany and strengthen our long-term presence.** This growth is also reflected in our **financial performance of distributors** in German market. In 2023, we saw an impressive **477% increase** compared to 2022, followed by another **241% growth in 2024** compared to the previous year. Our total distributor order intake continued to rise as well, increasing by 57% in 2024 compared to 2023.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the **great cooperation** and the **warm welcome** I have received since joining the company.

We look to the future with confidence and look forward to **further developments in Germany**.



“  
**Our success in this market reaffirms both the exceptional quality of our products and the trust our customers place in us.**

 ■ IVAN KODBA MIKRO+POLO SARAJEVO

# MARKET ACTIVITY IN THE BH MARKET

## Challenges and opportunities in the economy and healthcare of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is currently quite complex and full of challenges: high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth; average wages are relatively low, while living costs are rising, affecting the general standard of living of the population (the average monthly wage in the Sarajevo canton for 2024 is approximately 2,700 KM gross / 1,700 KM net = 870 EUR); political instability and corruption negatively impact economic growth and foreign investments.

Although BH faces numerous challenges, there are also opportunities to improve the economic situation if appropriate reforms are implemented and investments are encouraged. BiH is rich in natural resources, which offers opportunities for foreign investments, particularly in sectors such as agriculture (production of healthy food), the wood and manufacturing industries, energy, and tourism.

The healthcare system in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** also faces several challenges: the system is underfunded, which affects the quality of services; access to healthcare is uneven, especially in rural areas; a significant issue is the shortage of healthcare personnel, particularly specialists.

Positive changes are noticeable in the field of digitalization, where modern software solutions are being implemented to improve the management of healthcare data. The improvement of healthcare standards is also influenced by intensive cooperation with international organizations such as the WHO and the EU.

**Investments in healthcare** are crucial for improving the quality of healthcare services and accessibility to healthcare. Various initiatives and projects are currently underway to modernize the healthcare system, including:

→ **Modernization of clinical centers v** – the federal budget allocates 45 million KM (23 million EUR) for the renewal of medical equipment,

infrastructure improvement, and the introduction of new technologies.

→ **International cooperation** – projects supported by Switzerland focus on strengthening integrity in the formulation of drug lists and ensuring the financial sustainability of the healthcare system.

→ **Professional conferences and forums**, where discussions focus on new and more effective healthcare financing models, digitalization, and legislative changes aimed at improving the quality of healthcare services, increasing the efficiency of public fund usage, and ensuring better access to healthcare for all citizens of BiH.

Investments in industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are crucial for the country's economic development. Currently, larger investments are focused on electricity production (Bileća), the automotive sector (Sarajevo), dairy production (Gradačac), and the metal processing industry (Travnik).

Key objectives include increasing efficiency and productivity through digital technologies, as well as promoting green technologies and sustainable practices in industry. These investments contribute to the creation of new jobs, increased exports, and overall economic growth in BiH.

**Mikro+Polo Sarajevo** actively monitors market developments and participates in various initiatives for the development of the healthcare and industrial sectors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This year, we will be present at several **key events and conferences**, where we will showcase innovative solutions for laboratory and medical equipment and contribute to improving standards in the healthcare and industrial sectors. In the coming months, we will continue to monitor the market, seek **new growth opportunities**, and connect with relevant stakeholders for sustainable development.



■ MICHAEL STROBACH LAB INTERIOR

# STRENGTHENING OUR POSITION IN THE AUSTRIAN MARKET

Over the past two years, the Austrian market has grown steadily, positioning us as a serious competitor known for our exceptional quality and service.

The model laboratories for the large Takeda project have been successfully assembled, and the individual floors will be gradually completed starting in mid-May. This project presents both a challenge and a tremendous opportunity for us to be recognized by a global manufacturer with a world-class reputation. After 10 years of dedication and hard work, we have established ourselves as a serious contender against long-established industry leaders.

To further strengthen our position, we will also be present at the ESCMID trade fair in Vienna, where leading pharmaceutical and mid-sized companies will be in attendance. This event provides another valuable opportunity to showcase our latest product innovations, such as Pregl Digital, and engage directly with potential customers.

After a turbulent year in 2024, we move forward with confidence and pride, ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead.




 ■ JUDITA RIGLER LAB INTERIOR

# WITH A CLEAR FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

With determination, commitment, and the right team, we move forward.

My name is Judita Rigler, and I am a chemist by education, but at heart, I am a leader, mentor, and connector. My life is a blend of precision, persistence, and constant reflection, which is evident in both my professional and personal life. I am a life partner, a mother, and a passionate explorer of new paths.

I take great joy in watching the development of my children, who, with their dedication and perseverance, prove to be true fighters. Besides my family, my work also fulfills me – leading and motivating teams, where I believe that honest communication is the key

to success. My experience spans from managing laboratories and production to implementing quality systems in companies. Everywhere I have worked, I dare say I have left a mark with my passion for the job, my desire for connection, and my continuous drive to improve processes. These are the values I aim to bring to Lab Interior as well.

## MY VISION FOR LAB INTERIOR

For me, leading a company is not just about managing numbers

and projects. I want every team member to feel a sense of belonging and pride. I believe that with the right approach and a clear strategy, we will continue to grow and strengthen our position in the market.

As a manufacturer of laboratory furniture and equipment, we take pride in our ability to provide high-quality solutions and services – from production to sales and final installation at the customer's site. We are currently undergoing an extensive reorganization, which is crucial for optimizing processes and ensuring high quality in all stages of project execution. While the details are not yet fully disclosed, our goal is clear: **to improve alignment with clients and achieve set goals more effectively.** Our priority is an excellent customer experience at all levels – from sales, planning, and project implementation to final installation. To achieve this, we are developing clear goals, a thoughtful strategy, and optimized processes that will enable the timely and efficient execution of all projects. Together with department heads, we are actively preparing strategies and actions to achieve these goals. At the same time, we are establishing processes for more sustainable operations and minimizing negative impacts on the environment and society.

In the coming months, we will carefully monitor the results of the changes and ensure that our clients continue to receive top-notch services. I believe that this reorganization will be crucial for the continued success of the department and for maintaining the high quality standards that set us apart.

Lab Interior is at a pivotal point of growth, and with a team that believes in the vision, I am confident that we will achieve even greater success together.

Every day brings new challenges, but also opportunities. And if there is one thought that guides me in my work, it is this: **»It can't be done, it's impossible, I don't have time«** does not exist. There is always a solution. There is always a way.



 ■ SANELA GERMAN LAB PROGRAMME

# DO-OVER

As every year, the beginning of this year has also proven to be quite dynamic, and I'm not just referring to the fact that, during a certain period, half of the department was absent.

After the Christmas holidays, the business lull came to an end, and we turned a new page, stepping into a new quarter that brings fresh goals and opportunities. January was not just a month of re-starting, but also **a period of intense planning and discussions** about the guidelines that will guide us through 2025.

The overall goal of the **Laboratory Programme** remains ambitious – to surpass last year's exceptional sales results while dedicating even more attention to our customers. This year, our presence

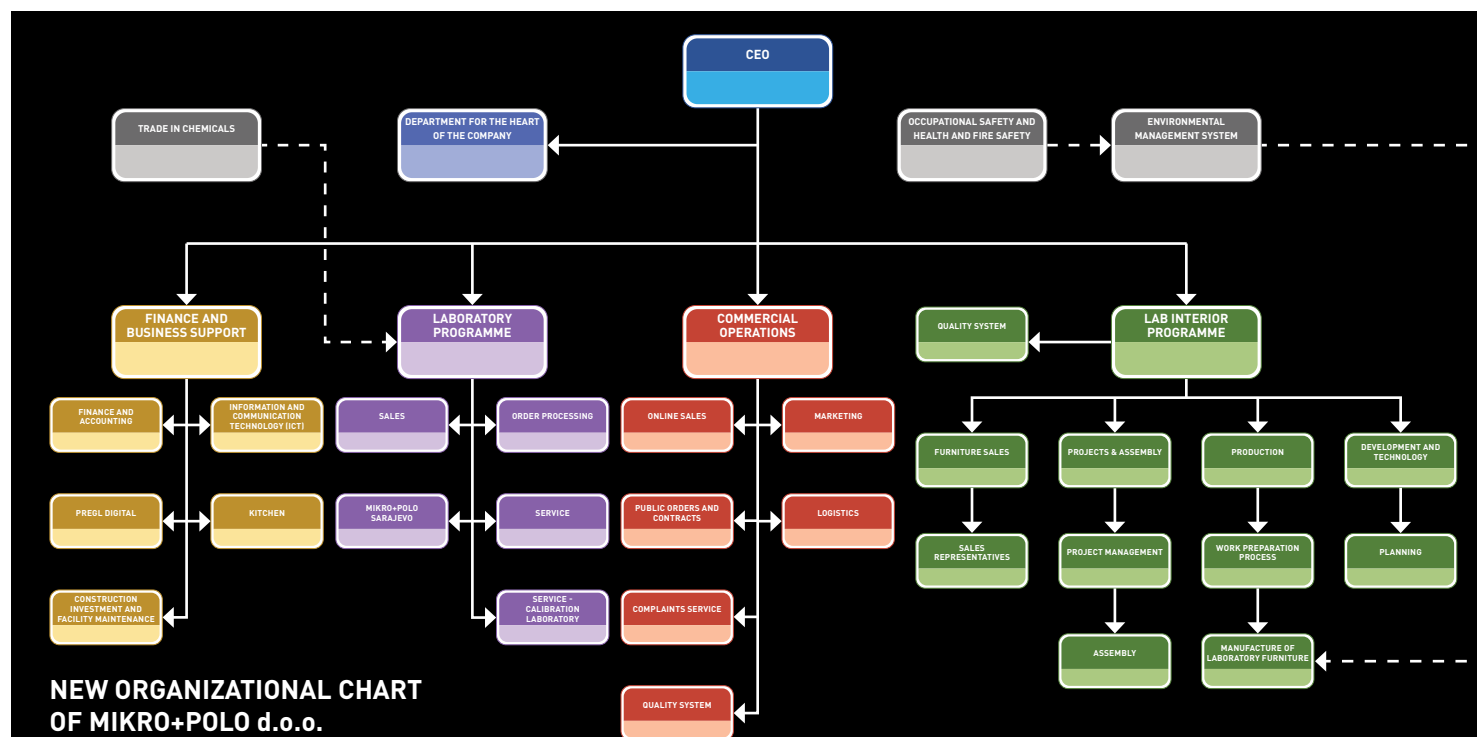
in the field will be key, as we recognize that the true understanding of customer needs is born through direct contact. As the old saying goes: **»The best salesperson is not the one who knows how to talk, but the one who knows how to listen.«** It is through direct contact with customers that we will best understand their challenges and offer solutions that they truly need.

An important milestone in this quarter is also the official merger of **the order processing and service departments with the sales department**, which took effect on **February 1st**. This step will enable better information flow, faster problem resolution, and, most importantly, greater customer satisfaction, as we are now even more connected in our shared mission – **to be as close as possible to our customers and provide them with the best possible support**.

Why is this so important? Because we know that **sales do not end with closing a deal – the speed and quality of after-sales support** are also crucial. With better connectivity between all key departments, we will ensure **faster order processing, improved communication with the service department, more efficient handling of complaints, and better responsiveness to specific customer requests**. All of this will allow us to be even closer to our customers and offer them a **comprehensive experience that goes beyond just purchasing a product**.

And what's next? Of course, that eternal question – **when will the famous »migration of nations« happen?** Once everything is in place, we will be able to set new guidelines and **move forward with full force**.

Until then, **the Laboratory team remains in a low start position, energy is at its peak, and we are ready for all the challenges that 2025 will bring**. In the field, in the offices, and everywhere in between – this year, we're playing to win!





■ SAVINA PREMZEL MARKETING

# MEN-TAL 2025

## The First Slovenian-tal Conference – On Mental Health in the Business World

At Mikro+Polo, we recognize that mental health is the foundation of successful business practices and long-term corporate sustainability. That is why, together with Kreativna baza, we have created MEN-TAL 2025 – the first Slovenian conference that comprehensively addresses mental health in the business environment.



**MEN-TAL is more than just a conference – it is a movement for better mental health in the business world.**

The event, taking place **on May 21, 2025, at Cankarjev dom**, will bring together recognized experts and entrepreneurs who will openly discuss burnout, depression, mental resilience, and how we, as leaders and colleagues, can create a more supportive and healthy work environment.

Speakers will include **Aleš Vičič**, a renowned sports psychologist, **Dr. Željko Čurić**, a psychiatrist and psychotherapist who advises special police units, crisis negotiators, and top managers, **Aljoša Bagola**, a former creative director who now openly talks about his experience with burnout, and **Dr. Vita Poštuvan**, a leading Slovenian researcher in the field of suicide prevention.

The conference is organized in collaboration with the **Diversity Charter**, with support from the **European Union** and **Mikro+Polo**. All funds raised from ticket sales will be donated to **ŠENT** and **UP-ornik**, organizations that support individuals in severe mental distress.

## DON'T MISS OUT!



**28th - 30th April**  
**COLLECTIVE LEAVE**

**28th July - 8th August**  
**COLLECTIVE LEAVE KITCHEN  
AND FURNITURE PRODUCTION**

**14th - 15th November**  
**INVENTORY**

**19th December**  
**YEAR-END PARTY**

**29th - 31st December**  
**COLLECTIVE LEAVE**



Wednesday, May 21, 2025 | Cankarjev Dom | Štith Hall | Ljubljana

# 1st SLOVENIAN MEN-TAL CONFERENCE

CHARITY EVENT

Mental Health in the Business World



## Who is the conference intended for?

**TO ENTREPRENEURS AND LEADERS**, as responsibility brings immense pressure that must be managed.

**TO HR PROFESSIONALS**, as they play a crucial role in recognizing and managing employees' mental health.

**TO EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO UNDERSTAND**, how mental health impacts success, relationships, and business outcomes.

FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE SEEN DEATH TO THOSE WHO HAVE PREVENTED IT:  
**We have chosen the speakers for a reason.**



**Blažka Müller**  
Event Host



**Gregor Kirsch**  
Body & Mind Coach



**Mag. Aleš Vičič**  
Business and Sports Psychologist



**Dr. Dan Podjed**  
Anthropologist



**Dr. Vita Poštuvan**  
Psychologist



**Mag. Monishankar Singha**  
Psychologist



**Dr. Eva Boštjančič**  
Organizational Psychologist



**Dr. Željko Čurič**  
Psychiatrist and Communication Specialist



**Julija Peklar**  
EAP Coordinator



**Aljoša Bagola**  
Book Author and Lecturer



**Boris Kobal**  
Actor and Comedian



**Marko Podgornik Verdev**  
Entrepreneur and book author



**Maja Monrue**  
Event moderator



**Nejc Jaka Sekula**  
Event moderator

All funds raised from sponsorship contributions will be fully donated to ŠENT – the Slovenian Association for Mental Health and the Up-ornik Association.



ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP?

**Get your ticket now!**



[www.men-tal.si](http://www.men-tal.si)

Main Conference Partners





UNCOVERING  
**BRANKA & NEJC**



## PERSONAL IDENTITY CARD

### Branka Trajkovski

LAB INTERIOR



Current Position  
**FURNITURE PRODUCTION**

Previous Employment  
**PROTECTED WORK CENTER POLŽ MARIBOR**

Employment Date at Mikro+Polo  
**8. 5. 2023**

First Position at Mikro+Polo  
**FURNITURE PRODUCTION**

Birthday  
**16. FEBRUAR**

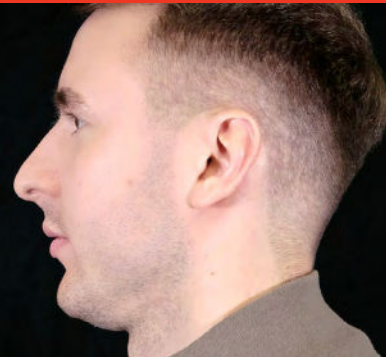
Hometown  
**MARIBOR**

Number of Children  
**2 (TWINS)**

Number of Grandchildren  
**1**

### Nejc Jager

LAB INTERIOR



Current Position  
**LABORATORY PLANNER**

Previous Employment  
**STUDENT**

Employment Date at Mikro+Polo  
**1. 10. 2024**

First Position at Mikro+Poloo  
**-**

Birthday  
**18. SEPTEMBER**

Hometown  
**SLADKI VRH**

Number of Children  
**0**

Number of Grandchildren  
**0**

### WHAT ARE YOUR THREE MAIN »SINS« IN MIKRO+POLO?

Don't worry, the director has issued an immediate »pardon« for your answers, meaning no consequences will follow!)

- Sometimes, I play a game on my phone while on a bathroom break
- I occasionally extend my lunch break
- I usually arrive at work just in time—though I never miss the start of my shift, as I hate being late.

- Since I worked here as a student, I occasionally printed some documents for my studies—in color.
- I enjoy a good chat.
- I often forget to clock back in after lunch... so my break sometimes lasts a few hours.





# BRANKA

■ **WHO ARE YOU, AND WHAT DO YOU DO AT MIKRO+POLO?**

I'm Branka, and I work in production.

■ **DO YOU REMEMBER ANY FUNNY ANECDOTES FROM YOUR TIME AT MIKRO+POLO?**

The most memorable one is definitely the morning I came in and found all the handles on my drawers covered in grease. Also, my colleague loves to scare me from time to time.

■ **WHAT ARE YOUR KEY STRENGTHS OR SPECIAL SKILLS THAT YOU BRING TO YOUR WORK AT MIKRO+POLO?**

I would say diligence, readiness to work, precision, and consistency.

■ **HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE IN THE COMPANY'S FUTURE, AND WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS OR VISIONS?**

My main goal is to remain a good worker, no matter what challenges or changes the future brings. I'm very happy with my job and colleagues, and I hope to stay at Mikro+Polo until retirement.

■ **DO YOU HAVE ANY TRAITS THAT YOUR COWORKERS EITHER LOVE OR FIND ANNOYING?**

My biggest strengths are my experience and dedication, as I have many years of work behind me. I work in a younger team, but so far, I haven't noticed that I annoy anyone. If I do, they hide it well!

■ **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITY?**

I love social gatherings and activities in Vodice, as well as our company's Olympic Games. I also really enjoy our production team's outings, like go-karting and chestnut picnics.

■ **WHAT DID YOU DREAM OF BECOMING AS A CHILD?**

I dreamed of being a preschool teacher because I often looked after my younger sister and enjoyed it. That didn't work out, but instead, I got twins!

■ **IF YOU WERE APPOINTED AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF MIKRO+POLO TOMORROW, WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOU'D CHANGE OR PROPOSE?**

This role isn't really my thing. I wouldn't change anything, but I would suggest even more team gatherings because they strengthen our bond, which is essential for a positive work environment.



# NEJC

■ **WHO ARE YOU, AND WHAT DO YOU DO AT MIKRO+POLO?**

I'm Nejc, and I work at Mikro+Polo as a laboratory furniture planner.

■ **DO YOU REMEMBER ANY FUNNY ANECDOTES FROM YOUR TIME AT MIKRO+POLO?**

No.

■ **WHAT ARE YOUR KEY STRENGTHS OR SPECIAL SKILLS THAT YOU BRING TO YOUR WORK AT MIKRO+POLO?**

My biggest strength is that I'm always smiling and full of energy. I can easily make my colleagues laugh and lift their spirits. I quickly adapt to new situations at work, enjoy teamwork, and strive to be as precise as possible.

■ **HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE IN THE COMPANY'S FUTURE, AND WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS OR VISIONS?**

I'm still at the beginning of my career, so my vision is to gain as much experience as possible and contribute to the company's growth, particularly in the field of design.

■ **DO YOU HAVE ANY TRAITS THAT YOUR COWORKERS EITHER LOVE OR FIND ANNOYING?**

Some people enjoy my chatter, while others find it annoying.

■ **WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITY?**

Skiing with colleagues.

■ **WHAT DID YOU DREAM OF BECOMING AS A CHILD?**

I dreamed of becoming a professional football player, but after several knee surgeries, that dream remained just a dream.

■ **IF YOU WERE APPOINTED AS THE NEW DIRECTOR OF MIKRO+POLO TOMORROW, WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOU'D CHANGE OR PROPOSE?**

Since I know that won't happen, I don't bother thinking about it...

# BRANKA

## ■ HOW DO YOU USUALLY START YOUR DAY?

With a morning coffee with my husband and a walk with my two dogs, Luna and Lola.

## ■ WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK?

I take care of my dogs first, then watch a good series or a movie.

## ■ WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES?

Walking my dogs, cycling, working out at the gym, and relaxing in thermal spas.

## ■ WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE, AND WHICH SONG ALWAYS MAKES YOU SING ALONG?

I listen to local and Balkan music. I always sing along to Dražen Zečić's hits.

## ■ WHEN I DANCE, I LOOK LIKE ...

I look just as I should! But I'll let others be the judge of that.

## ■ WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE VACATION SPOT, AND WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM DESTINATION?

My husband and I love vacationing on the Croatian island of Brač. My dream destination, however, would be Japan—I love their culture.

## ■ WHAT SPORT DO YOU LOVE, AND WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ATHLETE?

Definitely football! My two sons are football players, so I follow the sport with great enthusiasm. They are my pride and joy, and our whole family is sports-oriented.

## ■ IF YOU INVITED YOUR COWORKERS OVER FOR DINNER, WHAT WOULD YOU COOK FOR THEM? AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?

A barbecue, for sure! That's always a hit.

## ■ WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE DRINK DURING THE DAY AND AT A PARTY?

During the day, I love a cold beer; at a party, I go for a shot of Jägermeister.

## ■ WHAT'S THE STRANGEST THING YOU HAVE IN YOUR FRIDGE?

Face cream.

## ■ ANY FINAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES?

Enjoy your work! I wish you all mutual respect, understanding, and lots of positive energy!

## ■ WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

**Bernard Jerot.**



## NEJC uncover BRANKA

## ■ IF YOU HAD TO DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONALITY AS A MOVIE TITLE?

Lionhearted.





# NEJC

## ■ HOW DO YOU USUALLY START YOUR DAY?

With a shower to wake me up.

## ■ WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO WHEN YOU GET HOME FROM WORK?

I have another coffee.

## ■ WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE HOBBIES?

Skiing, football, and padel.

## ■ WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE, AND WHICH SONG ALWAYS MAKES YOU SING ALONG?

I listen to almost everything—it depends on the situation and company. But blasting Balkan music on the way from the gym to work? No way, right, Matic?

## ■ WHEN I DANCE, I LOOK LIKE...

Better not to know.

## ■ WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE VACATION SPOT, AND WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM DESTINATION?

I prefer heading north for vacations. My dream destination is Japan—both in winter for skiing and in spring for cherry blossom season, to explore the culture and architecture.

## ■ WHAT SPORT DO YOU LOVE, AND WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE ATHLETE?

As a kid, I loved football. Over the years, my interests expanded to skiing, and more recently, to padel.

Still, my all-time favorite athlete remains Fernando Torres—the Spanish striker who made me fall in love with football.

## ■ IF YOU INVITED YOUR COWORKERS OVER FOR DINNER, WHAT WOULD YOU COOK FOR THEM? AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?

I love sushi! If it weren't so much work to prepare, I'd gladly make it for my colleagues.

## ■ WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE DRINK DURING THE DAY AND AT A PARTY?

Homemade raspberry juice, or if that's not available, just water. At a party, a spritzer or an ice-cold beer always hits the spot.

## ■ WHAT'S THE STRANGEST THING YOU HAVE IN YOUR FRIDGE?

An old sweet-and-sour sauce from McDonald's, forgotten on the top shelf of the door.

## ■ ANY FINAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES?

We are a team, and we are only as strong as our weakest link. That's why it's important to support each other and work together. Only then can we succeed and reach our goals!

## ■ WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

**Darja Kozar.**



### BRANKA uncover NEJC

## ■ WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE YOUR BOSS CHECK YOUR PHONE (EVERYTHING ON IT) OR YOUR PARENTS?

I'd rather have my parents check my phone—they're already used to all kinds of things.



## ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS RESPONSIBILITY

At Mikro+Polo, we have been investing in the development of young talents for many years—especially in science, where our reach is the greatest. We believe that opportunity should not be a privilege but something earned through effort and dedication.

However, sometimes life presents us with moments when we simply cannot look away. When our CEO, Marko Verdev, heard the reasons why some entrepreneurs refused to support young female athletes, he knew that something had to be done. That's why we took a step forward—not because we support sports, but because we do not support prejudice.

- We do not make decisions based on social expectations.
- We do not make decisions based on prejudice.
- We make decisions based on values.

## AT THE CAREER FAIR

We participated in the Career Fair at Fram Primary School, where we explored the world of science and career opportunities together with young minds. With pride, we presented our work and mission, as we believe that such events play a crucial role in helping young people choose their future paths.

We were thrilled by the enthusiasm of the students and their parents and grateful for the opportunity to support young talents in their first career steps. A big thank you to the organizers for an excellent event—we are already looking forward to the next one!







## DO YOU RECOGNIZE PHISHING?

Do you really know how protected you are online? At Mikro+Polo, we understand that knowledge is the key to security—not only for the growth of our employees and company but also for safeguarding the data we manage.

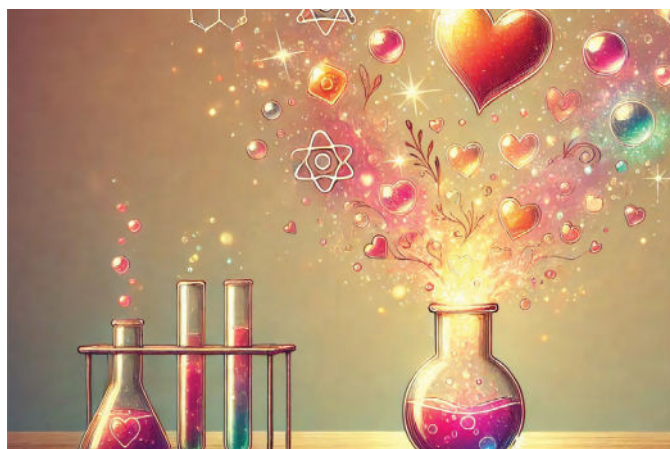
With the help of A1 Slovenia, we hosted a training session on recognizing phishing attacks and discovered that even the most basic tricks can catch us off guard.

Did you know that one of the most common security breaches is linked to using the same password across multiple platforms? When was the last time you changed your password? Do you truly have all your usernames and passwords under control?

## STRENGTHENING TEAM SPIRIT

A small team from Lab Interior (quality manager, laboratory planner, and production manager) embarked on a foggy February day to the snowy slopes of Weinebene in the Austrian Koralpe mountains.

Through smooth turns on the slopes and a well-deserved snack with beer at the mountain hut, we strengthened our team spirit.



## A SMALL GESTURE

On Valentine's Day, instead of flowers, we surprised our loyal customers with a chemically inspired gift—test tubes containing a special message: »Love and chemistry have something in common – the right combination always sparks a reaction. Thank you, dear partners, friends, and followers, for being part of our formula!«





## BACTERIOPHAGES – NATURAL BACTERIA DESTROYERS

Did you know that bacteriophages are viruses that infect and destroy bacteria? And with incredible precision—each type of bacteriophage targets only specific bacteria, making them nature's ultra-specific antibiotics of the future. While bacteria can develop resistance to conventional antibiotics, phages evolve alongside them, always staying one step ahead. What does this mean? The potential to treat bacterial infections without antibiotics!

Our sales representatives, Tanja and Rok, attended the 2nd Bacteriophage Meeting at the Biotechnical Faculty, where they exchanged ideas on innovations and solutions in microbiology with like-minded experts!



### GERMAN ECONOMY AWARD FINALISTS

We are proud to announce that we were among the finalists for the German Economy Award 2024/25! Alongside outstanding companies such as Bayer, BSH Home Appliances, and Medis, we have been recognized as one of the leading businesses pushing boundaries with our work. From a small workshop, we have grown into a company that makes an impact on the laboratory industry. This recognition is shared with everyone at Mikropolo and our valued partners!

## A NEW HOME FOR UP-ORNIK

At Mikropolo, we believe that entrepreneurship is more than just business—it's also a responsibility to the community. That's why we have provided the UP-ornik association, which has been selflessly helping those in need for nine years, with new, larger spaces in our building. In the spirit of sustainability, we furnished them with recycled furniture and brought a housewarming gift to support their mission—helping those who need it most.



## CHICKEN MASALA À LA DARIN

Darin decided to prepare an oriental dish for us as part of the Mikrovalovka series—one he himself makes at home at least once a month. The masala was absolutely delicious!



## WINNER OF THE PRIZE CROSSWORD

In the last issue of Microphone, we once again challenged you with a prize crossword that gave many a proper brain workout. Among all the correct answers, we drew a lucky winner—this time, the prize, a Decathlon gift card, went to Peter. If luck wasn't on your side this time, don't worry—a new opportunity awaits you on the last page!



## CARNIVAL AT MIKRO+POLO

A ladybug flew in and landed on Miško Polo for good luck! Our boundary-pushing team brought a touch of freshness, laughter, and playful spring energy. Because we don't believe only in chemistry in test tubes—we believe in the chemistry between people. And it's exactly this energy, connection, and a dash of carnival madness that make us so special!

## BIRTHDAY IN INNSBRUCK

No worries—the team made sure the decorations were on point, with a festively adorned cypress branch right in the middle of the room! Creativity at its peak, tradition tailored to our installers! Happy birthday, dear Samo! #NeverAgain39 #Installer-Creativity





 ■ SAVINA PREMZEL MARKETING

# NEW TEAM MEMBERS

## Decision-Makers of the future

With growth comes fresh energy, new knowledge, and boundless curiosity. In this edition of Amplifier, we introduce the individuals who have joined our story. They bring more than just an extra pair of hands—they bring ideas, inquisitiveness, and the drive that propels us into the future. Get to know them below!



**Judita Rigler**

(JUDR)

Judita, with her passion for innovation and excellence, will steer Lab Interior toward even bolder goals. Her vision? To introduce trends that will elevate the laboratories of the future to a whole new level.



**Alja Ribič**

(ALJR)

Alja, the new force in microscope sales, combines her love for biology and microscopy with the dynamic world of sales. She says it's the invisible world that fascinates her the most—now, she'll make sure it becomes visible to the right users.



**Živa Žanet  
Kramberger**

(ZIVK)

Živa Žanet, an intern in the Accounting and Finance department, will be with us until the end of June 2025. She brings an analytical mind, a fresh perspective, and a strong desire to learn.



**Leo Lukman**

(LEOL)

Leo, an apprentice in production, will be with us for three academic years. He has already rolled up his sleeves and is diving into the world of laboratory equipment, learning from the very best.

## JUDITA RIGLER

→ **Your career path is diverse—from quality and excellence to leadership. What attracted you to Lab Interior, and how do you see its future?**

*My career journey has indeed been rich and diverse, allowing me to continuously learn from different experiences, perspectives, and situations. A key factor in my transition to Lab Interior was the passion for innovation (PreglDigital) and progress across all areas. And, of course, the leadership*

*team—our directors Sanela, Matjaž, Breda, and Marko, as well as my leaders at LBI—represents a beacon of company culture that shines in all directions.*

*Marko introduced Lab Interior and Mikro+Polo to me as a company that has set high standards from the very beginning, both in laboratory equipment and in employer-employee relationships. When I experienced firsthand how Lab Interior combines an advanced approach to technology, a commitment to quality, and a focus on sustainable solutions, I immediately recognized myself in this vision.*



*I am confident that the future of Lab Interior holds even more global opportunities, as we continue to develop solutions that not only meet market needs but also lead the way in innovation, design, and sustainability. By embracing new technologies, adaptability, and collaboration with experts across industries, we will keep setting trends in laboratory equipment worldwide.*

*I firmly believe that the future of Lab Interior will be even brighter, as we work together to develop solutions that exceed market expectations and shape the future of this field.*

→ **At our company, we value team spirit and dedication. How would your previous colleagues describe you in three words?**

*My previous colleagues would likely say that I am passionate, communicative, dedicated, adaptable, and supportive—always willing to go the extra mile to get things done and consistently focused on results. My passion for my work drives me to seek the best solutions, while strong communication helps me build solid and open relationships within the team. At the same time, I am highly goal-oriented, believing that a company's success stems from strong collaboration and teamwork. Adaptability allows me to respond quickly to changes and new challenges, and I am always ready to push through to support my colleagues. Everyone knows that the phrase »It can't be done« simply doesn't exist in my vocabulary.*

→ **Quality and excellence are close to your heart. In your opinion, what defines an outstanding work environment?**

*An outstanding work environment is built on respect and trust in the company's leadership, open communication, and strong support among colleagues. When mutual respect and professionalism come together, they create a culture that fosters growth and company success. It is essential that each individual performs their tasks with quality and responsibility and, as a result, feels that their ideas and contributions are valued. This, in turn, provides opportunities for both personal and professional development.*

→ **How do you recharge after a demanding day?**

*Dedication is what drives me every morning—to push through my physical limitations and commit to exercise, walking, or physiotherapy. The same dedication carries me through professional challenges. When you're truly dedicated, it's no longer just about completing a task; it's about embracing it with heart, persevering, and growing. And when you can share that with a team, it lifts you up—so much so that your batteries never really run out. That said, sometimes they do need replacing... and for me, that happens on travels with my family or partner.*

→ **If you could give your Lab Interior colleagues one piece of advice for a successful 2025, what would it be?**

*My advice for 2025 is to stay courageous in embracing change, focus on continuous learning, and build strong, resilient teams. Only this way will we successfully adapt to the challenges the future will bring.*

## ALJA RIBIČ

→ **What attracted you to working at our company and in the field of microscopy?**

*What drew me in the most was the fascination with a world that we cannot see with the naked eye. During my studies, I discovered just how fascinating and essential this invisible world is, which further fueled my motivation. Additionally, the role of a sales representative appeals to me because of its diversity—it combines office work with direct customer interaction in the field, creating a dynamic and engaging work environment.*

→ **How will you combine your scientific background in biology with the new challenges of microscope sales?**

*My scientific background allows me to better understand the needs of users, as I can more easily grasp their research fields and the reasons behind their use of microscopes. This enables me to provide expert and tailored advice when selecting the right equipment. At the same time, my knowledge of biology helps me comprehend the various applications of microscopes, contributing to more effective sales and improved customer support.*

→ **Which sports inspire you the most, and how do they help you overcome daily challenges?**


*Skiing and cycling are my biggest passions. Both sports allow me to completely disconnect from everyday worries, as I focus solely on movement and enjoying the moment. Additionally, sports have a positive impact on my well-being, provide me with energy, and help me handle daily situations more effectively.*

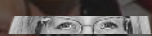
→ **What was the last destination you visited, and what left the biggest impression on you?**

*My last big trip was to Indonesia, where I visited Bali, Lombok, and the Gili Islands. What impressed me the most was the stunning nature—especially the tropical forests, waterfalls, and volcanoes. On the Gili Islands, I was particularly fascinated by the vibrant coral reefs.*

→ **What are your expectations for the mentorship with Milan Drobnak, and how are you preparing for your new role?**

*I expect to gain as much knowledge and practical experience as possible in the shortest time. My goal is to learn all the key skills Milan has applied in his work so that I can continue his legacy at the same high level. To prepare for my new role, I am actively learning and closely following Milan's guidance.*



 VALERIJA ŠLAMBERGER QUALITY SYSTEM

# HOW WE CARE FOR EMPLOYEES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Being a socially responsible employer is more than just obtaining a certificate – it means a commitment to creating a better working environment, caring for employees, and fostering sustainable development. At Mikro+Polo, we are proud to have obtained the basic Socially Responsible Employer (SRE) certificate in 2021, which we have since upgraded to the advanced SRE certificate (Level 2). This certification confirms our dedication to responsible conduct, transparent business practices, and improving the quality of life for our employees.

## THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS COVERS FOUR KEY AREAS

→ **Organizational management** – responsible corporate governance, employee involvement in decision-making, and ensuring transparency.

→ **Work-life balance** – flexible working hours, adaptable working conditions, and additional benefits to help employees balance work and family commitments.

→ **Intergenerational cooperation** – knowledge transfer between generations, mentorship programs, and support for older employees.

→ **Health and workplace safety** – a safe working environment, promotion of physical and mental well-being, and preventive measures.

At the beginning of 2025, we also updated our **Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy**, which sets guidelines and goals for the coming years and integrates socially responsible practices into our business strategy.

## HOW DO WE ENSURE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

At Mikro+Polo, we have introduced 12 key measures to ensure that social responsibility is not just a phrase on paper but an integral part of our company culture.

### Our key activities include:

→ **Social Responsibility Team** – responsible for coordinating initiatives across all four areas, monitoring the implementation of measures, and proposing improvements.

→ **Management commitment** – social responsibility is embedded in our business strategy, and we communicate it regularly with employees through meetings, internal reports, and events.

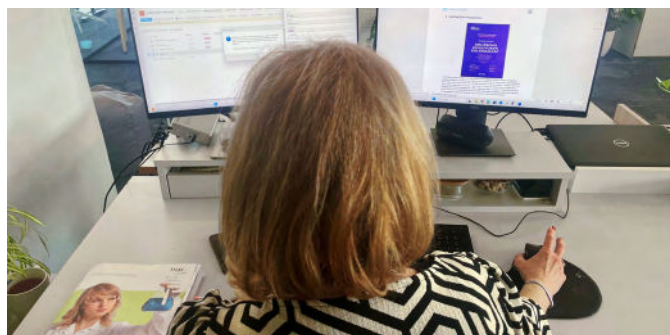
→ **Reporting and monitoring activities** – we prepare an annual sustainability report to evaluate the effectiveness of our measures and their impact on employees.

→ **Stakeholder collaboration** – partnerships with humanitarian organizations (UP-ornik Association, Mirno Morje Institute, Zavod 13), cooperation with schools, and support for young talents.

→ **Sustainable business practices** – optimizing energy consumption, reducing paper usage, responsible waste management, and promoting recycling.

### How Do We Engage Employees?

Our employees play a crucial role in implementing these initiatives. To support them, we have established several communication and support activities:



→ **Internal communication** – the Micro Social Responsibility column in our Microphone magazine, a dedicated Social Responsibility channel in MS Teams, and the organization of internal events.

→ **External communication** – regular updates on our website, social media, and at events with key partners.

→ **Employee feedback** – regular satisfaction surveys, feedback on leadership, and analysis of mentorship programs and knowledge transfer.

→ **Training and education** – workshops on sustainable development, lectures on healthy living, stress management, and mentorship programs for younger colleagues.

### Our Key Areas of Achievement:

→ **Organizational management** – introduction of ethical guidelines, transparent career opportunities, and active employee involvement in company development.

→ **Environmental sustainability** – reducing environmental impact, using renewable energy sources, promoting eco-friendly transportation, and increasing recycling efforts.

→ **Work-life balance** – flexible working hours, a children's time bonus, remote work options, and additional leave days for the birth of a child or grandchild.

→ **Intergenerational cooperation** – mentorship programs, recognition of informal knowledge, and employment opportunities after retirement.

→ **Health and workplace safety** – ergonomic workplace solutions, healthy nutrition, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for psychological support, and preventive health activities.

**The Socially Responsible Employer Certificate** is not just a formality—it reflects our commitment to a better work environment, higher quality of life for our employees, and sustainable development. Every employee has the opportunity to contribute to shaping initiatives, sharing suggestions, and improving workplace conditions.

Thank you for helping us build a workplace where every individual matters!





BOŠTJAN PERKO ORDER PROCESSING

## HANDLING ORDERS

Let me give you a brief overview of what I do as an order processing specialist at Mikro+Polo.

My job is to ensure that orders run smoothly and without complications. **I manage online offers and orders coming through our Market online shop.** Additionally, I handle the entry of new customers and connect them in the background so that the system correctly communicates between Market and SAP. This ensures that the system accurately identifies the customer's origin and their agreed terms. Currently, I am also involved in the development of the new Market platform, where I am actively learning and testing new functionalities.

I also process **orders from integrated systems**, such as Lek, Novartis, Krka, the Clinical Institute Ljubljana, and the Golnik Hospital. Additionally, **I support the consumables segment by preparing offers and processing orders.** Sometimes, I encounter **system errors**—these usually involve price discrepancies, missing catalog numbers, incorrect packaging, or system failures preventing the creation of a sales order in SAP. In such cases, I manually correct and re-import the order.

One of the more interesting aspects of my role is ensuring that **our colleagues** in production, assembly, service, and the kitchen are **properly equipped and protected.** I am **responsible for personal protective equipment (PPE)**, which must comply with the ISO 45001 standard. I also assist with **entering new customers and suppliers** and ensure that **advance payments** are processed smoothly. Every day, I also work with the **CRM Ticketing System**, where I receive and respond to customer emails.

My work is varied and dynamic—I connect different systems, ensure seamless order processing, and guarantee compliance with standards. In short, there's never a dull moment!

For the next edition, I nominate **Teja Pihlar.**

 SAVINA PREMSEL MARKETING

# SPRING, LANGUAGE, AND MENTAL GROWTH

## MicroLingo Corner

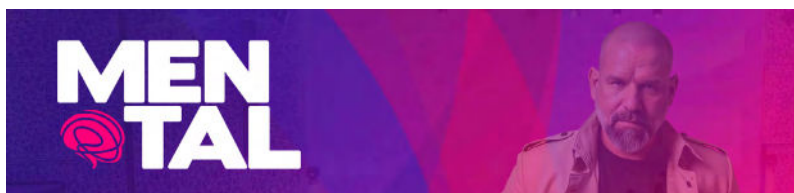
Each issue will bring a short glossary of interesting and useful expressions in six languages spoken by our colleagues. This way, we will expand our language knowledge together, understand each other even better, and—who knows—perhaps even help our brains stay in shape. Learning foreign languages strengthens cognitive abilities and is one of the best preventions against dementia. Caring for mutual understanding and mental well-being—all in one corner!

### SPRING AND MENTAL GROWTH

Spring is a time of awakening—of nature, people, and thoughts. In this edition, we bring you words that remind us that taking care of our mental health is an important part of daily life. May they inspire you to take small steps toward inner peace and growth.



**In March, the MEN-TAL event dedicated to mental health is coming. Follow our channels for more information and join the initiative for better well-being for all of us.**



→ **Ravnovesje** (Slovenian) | **Balance** (English) | **Balance** (German) | **Ravnoteža** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Équilibre** (French). *Spring reminds us not to forget the balance between work and rest in our busy lives.*

→ **Dih** (Slovenian) | **Breath** (English) | **Atem** (German) | **Dah** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Souffle** (French). *Take a moment for a deep breath. Often, it is the breath that calms us in the chaos.*

→ **Upanje** (Slovenian) | **Hope** (English) | **Hoffnung** (German) | **Nada** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Espoir** (French). *Every spring brings a new beginning and hope for a better tomorrow.*

→ **Svežina** (Slovenian) | **Freshness** (English) | **Frische** (German) | **Svježina** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Fraîcheur** (French). *Take a spring walk and allow the fresh air to clear your mind.*

→ **Hvaležnost** (Slovenian) | **Gratitude** (English) | **Dankbarkeit** (German) | **Zahvalnost** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Gratitude** (French). *Take a moment each day to express gratitude for the small joys in life.*

→ **Rast** (Slovenian) | **Growth** (English) | **Wachstum** (German) | **Rast** (Bosnian/Croatian) | **Croissance** (French). *Just as spring brings new growth in nature, we too grow each day through challenges and experiences.*



■ BRANKA KADIĆ SERVICE

# THE CLUELESS MARIBOR GIRL

## My Hometown

A few years ago, when I moved to Studenci, I experienced a true enlightenment regarding our beautiful Maribor. The view from the balcony of my then apartment was something completely new to me. This newness was the view of the Drava River and the city center.

»Wooooooooow!« I said to myself.

Although my husband and I often have coffee in the very center, I hadn't really paid much attention until then. Just Maribor, as Maribor. But after my revelation, I began to observe the old houses, full of beautiful ornaments, **Slomšek's and the Franciscan church**. The latter is especially beautiful. By the way, I learned that Slomšek's post office was once a hospital. Yes, if anyone didn't know – it says so on the post office.

I also learned the story, or legend, about the shoemaker who saved Maribor from the Turks. But one big, stone, mysterious figure wouldn't leave me alone. Even though it is right in the center, visible to everyone, bordering three large squares, I knew nothing about it. NOTHING! Absolutely NOTHING!

Yes, this mysterious figure is **Maribor Castle**.

How is it possible that after 37 years of living here, I know nothing about it? Not who lived there, not who built it, when they left? Did something »juicy« happen there? Didn't we learn anything about it in school? I don't think so.

Because I know a lot about the castles in Ptuj, Ljubljana,

na, and Celje, and I'm not really a historian by nature. And if I think deeply – I don't really know much about Maribor either!

I started asking friends if they knew more than I did. Same result – nothing. A SHAME for me, and probably for most of you, my fellow Maribor citizens. And we're so proud to be from Maribor! I am one of them. Just ask my husband from Gorenjska how big my Maribor heart is.

It's a good thing he never asked me about the castle, because my answers would have been short and to the point:

- Football – Maribor is the champion!
- »Kojak« (for those who don't know – the monument was named after a player who had a shaved head, but it's a monument to fallen partisans).
- The Water and the Court Tower (the beginning and end of the Lent festival).
- The Plague Monument – the plague, many dead.
- Pohorje – The golden fox.
- And some small nonsense.

So, after two years of wondering why I know nothing about the castle and my beautiful Maribor, I finally made a decision: I'm going to the castle! I called Klavdija to see if she would join me. Before we meet, I take Blisk (my fat dog) for a walk and realize that it's closed on Mondays. How could it be today, darn it?!

I decided to go to the museum, and you're closed?! I was so mad at the whole castle! I took three deep breaths, told Klavdija we'd go on Thursday, and set off with Blisk on a circular walk around the castle. Maybe there are





some signs with descriptions somewhere?

Except for 17 signs that say »Beware, snow is falling!« there is one sign in front of the museum that tells me in four sentences who built the castle and who expanded it... For me, just a big bla, bla, bla and disappointment. And then came the eagerly awaited Thursday, when Klavdija and I set off for the castle.

I expected nothing, or frankly speaking, I expected disappointment. If the city (by which I mean the school and the municipality) hadn't taught me anything about it until now, why would this one hour in the castle or the Provincial Museum teach me anything?



**Dear my Maribor, I apologize for having thought of myself as a fake townswoman. From today onward, I am truly a proud Mariborian!**



But what followed was a treat I truly deserved, by my own fault! First pleasant surprise – the entrance fee: 3 EUR for adults. Congratulations to the Provincial Museum for this super affordable price! After about 20 minutes, Mr. Boris, the guide, joined us, and he voluntarily took us through the castle and Maribor's history, spending two whole hours with us. Believe it or not – he even locked the castle with us in it, because they were closing! (The restaurants have never locked me in anywhere!)

I went home as excited as I haven't been in a long time! I immediately explained everything I had learned to my sister and husband. I would tell you too, but I'd rather say – go and see for yourself! Pay that extra euro for the guide, it's worth it!

I nominate **Monika Banfi**.



Sources of photos: [www.maribor.com](http://www.maribor.com), [www.mariborinfo.com](http://www.mariborinfo.com), [www.outsider.si](http://www.outsider.si)



■ PETER JAMŠEK ORDER PROCESSING

# KLAGENFURT

## The city of the dragon and beautiful Slovenian women

A nomination is a nomination. And since these are not the Oscars and I am not Paul Newman, let alone Marlon Brando, much less Roman Polanski, who can ignore nominations without consequences, I must first thank you for the suggestion and the nomination.

I assure every reader of this column that only the best letters and graphic symbols have been used for word division. For a sense of constant dynamics and the essential sensualization of mediocrity, excessive use of conjunctions combined with the passive voice in verbal expression takes care of it.

Before we crowd into this **tram of desire** and indulge in light reading, I must reveal that, in principle, I am a **terrestrial being** who unfortunately does not fly and is only **semi-submerged** in all kinds of liquids or fluids. This places me in the group of non-flyers and vomiters, and primarily in the elite group of passengers who still **cheerfully applaud and accompany every landing with a paper bag**. I am not an aeronaut, and I only use turbine propulsion when absolutely necessary, and even then, exclusively under the influence of substances that calm the mind and body – and of course, those are prescription-based. (Dramamine is the queen, and homeopathy doesn't even come close – speaking from my experience.) If Icarus was the first aviator, then Petrus is the first mythological skydiver, and this is evident in my frequent flyer miles of loyalty. There, I have achieved the Wood Medallion status, unlike Silver and Gold, and even Platinum and Diamond Medallion, which are overrated and represent ostentation, with overly emphasized positive traits. **Through the air and also through water, Peter vomits**, if we need a slogan.

### ON THE WAY TO KLAGENFURT

With this light sketch of the background, the atmosphere should be set, the ambiance switched on, and the last moment before transitioning to the main topic, where I'll begin my field travelogue. **The**

**goal is the journey, and the journey is the goal.** Since I've already exceeded my annual **safe flying limit this year**, we're **heading to Austria**. Well, if I'm being a bit playful – we're heading to **our town**, which, by some measure, ended up on the Austrian side. Yes, **es geht um Klagenfurt am Wörthersee**, or as we say in Slovene, **Celovec**, or in my words – **the city of the dragon and beautiful Slovenian women**.

Some of you may know Celovec only by its accessible airport with reasonably good connections, the miniature world of **Minimundus**, and **Lake Wörth**, where luxury steel steeds are gathered, and the Austrian and global crème de la crème indulge.

Če ste antiletalec in antiplovec, kot sem sam, zna Celovec presenetiti zelo in je pravi **dragulj**, ki ga imamo praktično pred nosom, vsi pa vemo kako je s stvarmi kadar so pred nosom...



**And that's far from everything I have experienced firsthand and simply must share.**





where our, well, Balkan character emerges from the depth of our souls. We can't stand being overtaken, or worse, having someone honk at us... While traffic safety is a priority for our neighbors, for us it's more about the cleanliness of the car and its model that defines us as exemplary drivers. We view speed limits more as suggestions than as rules, so we prefer to pay fines and collect points. We manage to get to Klagenfurt in just two hours, and after a few attempts and some colorful expletives, we finally make it into our rented (and already paid for) apartment in the strict city center. The modern keyless check-in is very convenient if it works, but

if it doesn't, every door becomes a challenge, and the key still beats the code. The apartment is otherwise great – to not write it in German, it's **Phenomenal and delightful with everything you could wish for, truly lovely.** We're satisfied and no longer worry about whether the door will open or not. »If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right« is our motto, and nothing can spoil our extended weekend – that's our mantra.

## MINIMUNDUS – MINIATURE WORLD

As befits a true tourist, on the first day we go full throttle, taking advantage of every ray of sunshine.

## THE JOURNEY TO KLAGENFURT

Brum, brum, and we're on our way. The air conditioning blows through our hair, with the background music playing moderately loud, and we're winding left and right through the Drava Valley. At Fala, the convoy slows down slightly as a loaded truck disrupts the travel tempo. Our Drava Valley is beautiful, and it certainly deserves a road – double-layered asphalt, with neat curbs and clean white lines. After a conversation or two about this and that, we arrive at Dravograd, where we fill up the tank and our cigarette box and get ready for crossing the national border. We breeze through the Vič border crossing without inspection and without a »**Schöne Grüße**« from the Austrian border guard. As is fitting for modern Europe, the road here widens and gets a new layer of asphalt, with nice white lines, not to mention all the other road markings. I must point out our driving culture at this point,





We pass the football stadium and Ikea, heading straight to the “world in miniature” or Minimundus. Around the world in one day, not 80... Minimundus is a park that spans 26,000 m<sup>2</sup>. It features approximately 160 of the most beautiful world landmarks from all over the globe in miniature form. In a 1:25 scale, the most beautiful buildings are created according to original blueprints. Visit the Sydney Opera House, take a walk under the Eiffel Tower, take a photo in front of the Taj Mahal, enjoy ice cream in front of St. Peter’s Basilica, admire the Statue of Liberty, and finally shed a tear of pride over our Lake Bled. Along with satisfying your wanderlust, you’ll fill your soul as your visit supports children and young people from Carinthia. Minimundus is owned by the organization Rettet das Kind Kärnten. So, it’s a win-win: pleasant and worthwhile, and in less than three hours, we saw everything.

## THE PRINCE’S STONE – HEART OF SLOVENIAN HISTORY

Influenced by the wonders of the world, like true cosmopolitans, we continue our journey along the path of our ancestors, heading towards the roots of the throne at the Prince’s Stone. Between the 7th and 11th centuries, the state formation of Carantania connected almost all Alpine and Pannonian Slavs within its borders. The Prince’s Stone represents the center of the Slovenian democratic



ritual, which is unparalleled on a global scale. The Slovenians not only knew the theory of the transfer of power from the people to the ruler, but we also consistently practiced it. And always in the Slovenian language! A failed lawyer within me feels pride. Apparently, we were too advanced for our time, and for this reason, we were subjected to severe pressure from significantly less socially developed, but militarily more aggressive peoples. The Prince’s Stone, originally the capital of the Roman pillar from the ruins of the Norican city of Virunum, which was located a few kilometers beyond the Carantanian center – Krn Castle. The remnants of the excavation of Virunum are poorly marked, but they can be seen on the left side of the main road leading from Klagenfurt to St. Veit. A little patriotism and national pride certainly can be found here, if we’re already here...

## HOCHOSTERWITZ CASTLE – WALT DISNEY IN AUSTRIA

In touch with our ancestors, we proudly continue the journey that leads us to a fairy-tale castle – at least if you ask Walt Disney. One of the most beautiful castles is certainly **Burg Hoch Osterwitz**, or **Hochosterwitz Castle** in Slovenian. Majestic, grand, and fairy-tale-like! Just twenty kilometers north of Klagenfurt, in the middle of the valley, a nearly two-hundred-meter-high peak rises. At its summit, a magnificent structure stands like an eagle’s nest. There are only two ways to reach it. The first is a paved path that circles the mountain and is secured by 14 fortifications, each designed so skillfully that they deter any enemy from even considering an assault on the mighty fortress





## OLD TOWN – 800 YEARS OF HISTORY

Good morning and greetings, of course, good morning, echoing through the old town center (**die Altstadt**), where you can uncover 800 years of history. A historical richness without that boring museum feel, where memories of the past are locked away only in glass display cases. On the contrary, it's refreshing—history here means life. The seamless connection between the old and the modern is visible at every step, which I really appreciate. We start the day with coffee and local pastries in one of the cafes, where our hosts—naturally, locals—prepare, or rather, excite us for what Klagenfurt has to offer. They take a direct approach, so we first seemingly get lost in the streets of the city, discovering the heart of the city

from the very beginning. The second path is the so-called »**Path of the Madmen**,« which leads directly to the castle over steep cliffs. With its architectural form, dating back to the 16th century, the castle has never been conquered by its enemies. Even connoisseurs and food enthusiasts will find satisfaction here. In the spectacular medieval section of the castle restaurant, you can sample local specialties of Carinthian cuisine. Enthusiastic fans of the castle and culture lovers can enjoy the food in an exceptional atmosphere. Personally, I would hardly consider myself a fan, but I am on my way to becoming one. It's definitely worth it.

We end the day in excellent company with dinner at an Italian restaurant in the old town, where we'll devise a plan for the coming day. We'll leave ourselves in the hands of the locals and see what they have in store for us.



center. Inner courtyards (**die Innenhöfe**)—we can get lost in more than 50 restored inner courtyards, surrounded by arcades and offering passageways between the streets. Until you sit in one of the local inns and enjoy a glass of wine while having a pleasant chat, you won't feel the rhythm of this city. Next, we visit the Landhaus, the town hall (**das Rathaus**), and take a stroll through one of the parks, covering all the must-see sights (**Sehenswürdigkeiten**). It might sound tiring, and there is quite a bit of walking between the lines, but I assure you otherwise—it's all charming and conveniently close, so you can walk everywhere and no public transport is needed.

## KLAGENFURT AND ITS SYMBOL – THE DRAGON FOUNTAIN

The symbol of the city is the Dragon Fountain, located at **Neuer Platz**. The dragon, or der Lindwurm, is carved from a single piece of stone and has an open mouth from which water continuously flows. Unlike the one in Ljubljana, I actually quite like this one. Perhaps I can't help it, and the viola within me is too strong, leaving me somewhat limited. The old town center is very charming and full of historic buildings. It is a multicultural city, located in close proximity to both the Slovenian and Italian borders, which fosters openness and a blend of different cultures. This is evident in the language, cuisine, and everyday life. It's a mix that could be called »Carinthian Fusion.« In its multiculturalism, green spaces, cultural events, and friendly atmosphere, Klagenfurt has left a strong impression. It might even be worth flying there for this...

## PYRAMIDENKOGEL – A VIEW FROM A 100-METER-HIGH WOODEN TOWER

From the hustle and bustle of the city, we move to the outskirts. The first attraction that follows is a visit to the highest wooden tower on Earth – Pyramidenkogel. This unique destination, with its breathtaking views of Wörthersee, Klagenfurt, and the surrounding mountains, is a perfect spot for nature lovers and those seeking adrenaline-filled experiences. Whether you're a hiking enthusiast, a seeker of panoramic views, or simply a

tourist, Pyramidenkogel offers an unforgettable experience. Standing at 100 meters, it is the tallest wooden observation tower in the world, offering: a 360-degree view of the surroundings, an ascent via 441 steps or by elevator, and a descent from the observation tower via a slide or simply by cable for the more adventurous among us. Perhaps bright pants aren't the winning choice, and earth-toned colors are recommended, especially for those who are less tolerant of heights and a rapid descent from them...

## ADLER ARENA – A BREATHTAKING BIRDS OF PREY SHOW

To lower the adrenaline levels and further connect with nature, flora, and fauna, I highly recommend a

visit to the Adler Arena (**Adler Arena Burg Landskron**) and a viewing of the eagle show. In this presentation, which lasts about 45 minutes, you will experience birds of prey flying freely. All of this takes place at the spectacular setting of Landskron Castle. The show features various species of eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls. These majestic animals, after breathtaking flights and maneuvers that would make even Top Gun pilots envious, return to the falconer's hand, all just meters in front of your eyes. Fascinating, thrilling, and educational. Although dogs are welcome, I might suggest avoiding the front rows, especially if you have a small breed dog. After all, these are birds of prey, and it would be a shame if you actively participated in the show. I doubt they offer a refund for a dog's ticket... Anyway, thumbs up, a like, a keychain for good measure, and a tweet, or should I say, a counter tweet!







## WÖRTHERSEE AND THE ELITE VELDEN – THE AUSTRIAN MONTE CARLO

Staying true to the motto »Wenn schon, denn schon,« there's no choice but to dress in white and, with bold style, blend in as elegantly as possible among the Austrian crème de la crème. It would be irresponsible not to visit the epicenter of the rich, successful, and beautiful – the Austrian Monte Carlo. **Lake Wörthersee**, with the world-renowned **Schloss am Wörthersee**, is undoubtedly one of the closest destinations to us where nature and luxury intertwine. The castle by the lake is the ideal place for visitors who wish to enjoy an incredibly rich, peaceful environment with fine dining and exceptional panoramic views of the sleek »steel horses.« If your knees don't shake at the sight of luxury cars with their passengers, motorcyclists on highly polished bikes with companions, or outrageously long yachts for the Casino, there's still the bust of Roy Black at the end of the day. Whether you're seeking a romantic getaway, a relaxing day by the water, or a cultural shock experience, Wörthersee with the elite Velden will undoubtedly meet your expectations and perhaps slightly empty your wallet.

### SUMMARY AND BOTTOM LINE

A long weekend is a short holiday, and Klagenfurt seems like an overlooked destination right at our doorstep, offering a world-

class experience without the need for a flight. Questions like »Where to go now?«, »What should I see?«, »Where will we park?«, »What should we eat?«, and »What's worth it?« are a small joke here. Bilingualism at every step – it's almost too easy. The city combines rich history, natural beauty, and a unique cultural identity resulting from a mix of nations and traditions. Though it's not huge or particularly noisy, it has certain very distinctive traits that make it recognizable and charming. You don't have to spend your night in a fireworks show or dancing until dawn, but the city will offer you the chance to enjoy life in your own way—whether over coffee, beer, a concert, or simply while strolling and enjoying pleasant shopping. There's still much more to discover, but it's best not to reveal everything, as every eye has its own painter. So, hop on over for a visit and check it out for yourself—you won't regret it, and I certainly didn't...

Servus, grüss Gott, and Auf Wiedersehen—yes, it was beautiful again today!

**The nomination** and baton handover go to **Tina Hohnjec**, who has returned from the Philippines.



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 **SAMO** PODGORNIK LOGISTICS

# THE RIGHT TIME

## Live now – like Ljubo Mahogany

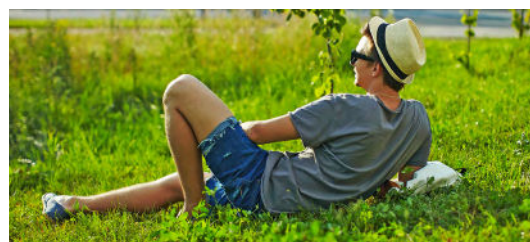
Ljubo Mahagonij is an average man. He doesn't have taut skin or thick hair, nor does he have strong arms, and he's not tall. He has a medium-pitched voice and blends in with the crowd even more so. But he loves life, movement, and music. He loves people, especially those who are less average than he is. Animals are close to his heart, as is nature. He adores nature.

Ljubo Mahagonij is a **pleasant person**. People like him, they enjoy listening to his stories and life wisdom. He has a cheerful nature and a sharp mind. He knows how to listen and possesses a special kind of patience – let's call it **resilient patience**. He doesn't judge others, accepts differences, and enriches himself with them. He likes to say that this makes him wealthier than all the billionaires in the world. Over the years, as he gained experience, he also developed **thick skin** – so thick that last September, it was measured to be almost a centimeter thick.

Ljubo Mahagonij loves to learn. Every new day is an opportunity for new knowledge – whether it's imitating bird songs, listing the geopolitical characteristics of Argentina, or using a new app on his phone. He never refuses to learn something new. But when he encounters interesting information, he remains critical of its content and uses **common sense** to assess it.

Ljubo Mahagonij knows how to read people. He can see right through them. Their hollow pretensions. He feels a particular disdain for social climbers and **bootlickers**. At the same time, he almost instantly recognizes pure souls, good-hearted individuals, and original characters. Ljubo is a **living detector of authentic people and tight-lipped know-it-alls**.

Mahagonij's Ljubo is an optimist. He always looks at things with a positive approach and a laid-back smile. He knows everything will work out as it should. And if it doesn't – that's fine too.



Ljubo takes care of his body. **His life machine**. Most of the time, he manages to give his body what it needs. He listens to it, even though it's very sparing with words. Sometimes, though, he gives it something it doesn't particularly like. Then his body makes it loud and clear.

**Love slowly but surely seeps** into Ljubo's life. It's getting louder, with stronger steps and faster pace. It has reached all his pores, climbed into all the folds and creases, into his eye's iris, and all the way to his nasal septum. Now, in these years, everything is crystal clear to him. He wonders what had clouded his once sharp vision in his youth. Ljubo has **realized**.

Unlike many others, Ljubo **doesn't need** a breaking moment, a serious illness, or other life-altering wake-up calls to start living life **to the fullest**. With full lungs, **he goes to work with a smile**. And he laughs at those who take their work too seriously.

Ljubo Mahagonij lives for the moment. **For now**. Because he doesn't know when the **right time** will come. He doesn't look too far into the future. He sees as far as the next weekend, and even that is a bit foggy. He doesn't save for old age because, by then, it might be too late.

**Too late for life. Start living. Be like Ljubo.**




 ■ STATISTICALLY MARIJA HEAD OF THE CUTE BOYS

# EVERYTHING HAS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN – AGAIN!

**Yo, I can't deal with all these changes and switches anymore. And the whole signature swapping thing. Dejan, did Špela magically get better or what? Now we don't need that new video for signatures anymore. But these tests really seem to work. Too bad we apparently can't talk about it.**

I'd tell my cute IT guys to change this for me, but they're always so busy – or so they say. But now I don't need to bug Breda anymore, I can just bother Podgornik instead. I'm gonna wrap him around my little finger, just like Marija knows how to handle the boys. I get some benefit from them every now and then (you know what I mean), I'll just leave it at that. Thanks, Breda, for serving everything on a silver platter for my Matjaž. Gotta give you some credit for how you fixed up the departments. My Matjaž won't need to stretch too much now, and he'll have more time for me. We still need to fix a lot of stats. You agree, my dear? So yeah, you can see, it's worth being a Podgornik – especially for me. And no matter who it is, even those from the service! He's a bit of a pain... but he's a Podgornik. Because if anyone can handle things, it's the Podgorniks.

Last week I was walking around the office, and Ružica walks by. I say hi, she says nothing. Then I bump into her again. I say hi, she says nothing. So, I went up to her to give her a little telling-off, like a little dog, to see if maybe she forgot to greet me. But while I'm trying to give her my speech, out comes another Ružica from the office. I'm staring at Ružica, then I look at this other Ružica, and then back to our original Ružica... Rose, who is this? And that's when I met the new head of furniture department. People, what if these two are the same? I thought Ružica was ignoring me on purpose, not wanting to say hi.

I've kinda stopped paying attention to these new signatures for a bit, since they're giving me a headache. But I really like to check them out in detail, 'cause if you haven't noticed, there's always something new popping up.

And guys, have you seen our new departments? The Human Resources department... I almost crapped my pants when I read that. Thank god they changed it to the heart of the company department.

So, I head up to the 5th floor to check out this heart of the company – I knew it wasn't gonna be my new department, 'cause I'm more like the hole-in-the-company department... oh, Marija, behave. Anyway, I get to the 5th floor and it's all quiet. There was no table in the middle... did she go yapping around the office again? She definitely didn't bring the table with her, right? 'Cause there was no table! And where's Breda? I thought maybe she got sick, I look in the office and it's all messed up. People! They stole Teja and Breda!!! I rush to IT to let them know those two hackers hacked us, and I walk in and there's more women than men in there. Am I dreaming or what... So now, like this, boss! This used to be my favorite office. Marija + 5 little helpers. Now tell me, what am I supposed to do here?? I'd rather just move on.

So, I was heading to Darja's office to gossip a bit about what happened in the next office, and then some hairy dude looks at me through the window. Darjaa, what the heck happened, I thought. So, I finally figure out it's Hači. I was already totally confused. I didn't even say anything, just got in the elevator and went to the warehouse to hang with my guys, so they could calm me down, and then I hear... »HAHAHAHAHAHAHA«. I look behind me and see Breda tossing boxes around in the warehouse... Now, picture Breda with her long strides, jumping around in her heels. She's gonna knock everything over. And if that wasn't enough, I hear they're now sending my service guys to be bossed around by Sanela. I wasn't too worried about Kadić, 'cause she's like an half a man lady now. But Sanela? And Breda? Oh, come on. All my guys are gonna get stolen. Just saying... HANDS OFF!!!

And since you all know I'm Statistician Marija, every now and then I like to run some stats. So I was thinking about what kind of stats I haven't done yet, and then it hits me... we only have 12 managers in this company. Statistically speaking, that's exactly one too few. Sooo, I'm officially volunteering to be the Head of the Cute Boys. You know how many will be »under me« then????? Uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu...

And no worries, boss, just like you said... adjustments. And Marija can adapt to that with no problem.

Marija OUT!



 ■ **BRANKA KADIĆ** SERVICE

# THE ACCORDION DUO

The accordion – in a way, the pride of Slovenians. We all know what it meant to the world, especially in Europe, thanks to the unforgettable Slavko Avsenik. If you still remember our outstanding corporate Olympic Games, you surely recall the surprise from our production when two quiet young men picked up the accordion and created a true home-style celebration. That's why I believe they truly deserve to be recognized, and we should get to know them and their musical journey a little better.

**Tell me, where did your musical journey begin? When did you first pick up the accordion and why?**

**LEON** → *My beginnings go back to my teenage years. If I remember correctly, I first picked up the accordion when I was 13. In elementary school, several students were already playing the accordion, and as I watched them, I felt a strong desire to learn this instrument myself.*

**MITJA** → *I started playing the accordion at the age of 13. My father inspired me—at first, he attended lessons, and then I tried playing at home. I was so captivated by the instrument that I started taking accordion lessons myself. Today, I can't imagine a day without it.*

**How difficult is it to learn to play the accordion? Do you think it is one of the easier or more difficult instruments? How long did it take you to learn it?**

**LEON** → *Based on my experience, I would say that the accordion is*

*one of the more difficult instruments, probably also because I am left-handed. It took me about a year to acquire the basic knowledge and coordinate both my left and right hands while playing.*

**MITJA** → *Learning the accordion is not easy—it is one of the more challenging instruments because you need to coordinate both hands, each performing a different function. It takes about a year to master the basic skills, but of course, it all depends on the amount of practice.*

**Leon, can you explain the difference between an accordion and a diatonic button accordion? Is there even a difference?**

**LEON** → *There is definitely a difference. Piano accordions are heavier and larger. The right side (treble section) consists of narrow, elongated keys, while the left side (bass section) has smaller, round buttons, and in greater numbers than on a diatonic button accordion. When ex-*

*panding and contracting the bellows and pressing a key, the tones on the treble side remain the same.*

*The diatonic button accordion is smaller and lighter. Both the right and left sides consist of round buttons. However, when expanding and contracting the bellows, the tones of the same button change.*

**We know that music schools exist, but do they also teach accordion? I'm asking because I know most children attend music school for piano, guitar, flute... but I haven't heard of one for the accordion.**

**MITJA** → *Most people are familiar with state music schools, where lessons take place twice a week—one session for the instrument and one for solfège, where students learn theory, notes, and rhythm.*

*Most of these schools teach only the piano accordion. For the diatonic button accordion, there are private music schools run by well-known musicians such as Siniša Čeh, Matej*



The accordion was initially considered a folk instrument and did not hold much prestige. It was especially embraced by city dwellers, among whom it was particularly popular with female players.



*Banovšek, Klemen Rošar, and many others. In these schools, lessons take place once a week for 45 minutes. The first learning steps are done using tablatures designed for learning the diatonic button accordion. Once a student masters the basics, the teacher introduces them to chords, which they need to memorize. Then come the patient days of practicing at home.*

**Do either of you play in a band? If so, which one, and for how long?**

**LEON** → I have occasionally played as a substitute or for support, but mostly I perform solo.

**MITJA** → I haven't played in a band, but sometimes I meet a musician among the audience who spontaneously joins in, and we play a song together.

**What does playing the accordion mean to you?**

**LEON** → For me, playing the accordion is a form of relaxation, an escape from daily worries, and a way to recharge my energy.

The influence of the Avsenik Brothers Ensemble in our region was so strong that it gave rise to a new musical genre, which flourished both at home and abroad.

Folk-pop music completely overshadowed and displaced traditional Slovenian folk music. Over time, the accordion began to be recognized as a serious classical musical instrument. However, it is well known that in Slovenia, it took an incredibly long time before the accordion was finally accepted at the Academy of Music.

The future of the accordion is also exceptionally bright—today, it can be heard almost everywhere and has even found its place in rock bands.

**MITJA** → After so many years of playing, I simply can't imagine a day without the accordion. It gives me positive energy, relaxation, and extra motivation.

**Do you always keep an accordion in your car? Or had you planned beforehand to surprise us at our team-building event?**

**MITJA & LEON** → We don't always have our accordions in the car, but we do plan in advance and bring them along to add a little extra fun to our gatherings.

**Thank you both for taking the time. I hope you bring your accordions to another company event! It was a truly wonderful and pleasant surprise.**



Slovenians have a whole range of world-famous accordion champions. Zoran Zorko, however, set a very special record—he is known for playing the accordion for the longest time in the world, an incredible 35 hours and 32 minutes!



■ DEJAN HOJNIK MARKETING

# QUIZ



How much do you know about science, laboratories, and chemistry?

**1. Which liquid is known as the »universal solvent«?**

- A Acetone
- B Oil
- C Water
- D Alcohol

**2. What does the pH value indicate?**

- A The amount of water in a substance
- B The level of acidity or alkalinity
- C The temperature of a substance
- D The color of a solution

**3. Which organ in the body filters blood and removes waste?**

- A Lungs
- B Heart
- C Kidneys
- D Liver

**4. How does soap help remove grease?**

- A It kills bacteria
- B It allows grease to mix with water
- C It causes grease to evaporate
- D It dissolves all substances in water

**5. Which chemical reaction is responsible for the rusting of iron?**

- A Photosynthesis
- B Oxidation
- C Sublimation
- D Fermentation

**6. Which of these items is NOT made of glass?**

- A Test tube
- B Petri dish
- C Pipette
- D Pipette bulb

**7. Which laboratory glassware is most commonly used for titration?**

- A Erlenmeyer flask
- B Büchner funnel
- C Burette
- D Petri dish

**8. What happens to water when it freezes?**

- A It contracts
- B It expands
- C It turns into oxygen
- D It becomes acidic

**9. Which of the following substances is a strong oxidizer and is often used in laboratories for sterilization?**

- A Sodium chloride
- B Hydrogen peroxide
- C Ethanol
- D Distilled water

**10. Which metal was used in thermometers but has been mostly replaced due to its toxicity?**

- A Silver
- B Mercury
- C Aluminum
- D Zinc

**11. What is the primary purpose of laboratory gloves?**

- A To look like real scientists
- B To protect hands and prevent contamination
- C To hold glassware more easily
- D To prevent injuries from sharp objects

**12. What happens if you mix baking soda and vinegar?**

- A Foam and gas are produced
- B The liquid turns solid
- C The mixture becomes ice-cold
- D The mixture gains a metallic taste

**13. Which laboratory glassware is most commonly used for titration?**

- A Erlenmeyer flask
- B Büchner funnel
- C Burette
- D Petri dish

PERFORMANCE SCALE

**12-17 points: TRUE SCIENTIST!**

Your knowledge is so precise that you could mix a perfect cocktail with your eyes closed, making everyone wonder: "Is this some kind of magic?" Dyeing Easter eggs? You always get the perfect shade. Coffee? You measure milk and sugar in the ideal ratio every time. If someone handed you a lab pipette and a scale, you could bake a flawless cake—without a recipe! Your curiosity and precision don't just serve you in the lab but also in everyday life. If the world ever needs saving through chemistry, you're the one we'll call.

**7-11 points: CURIOUS MIND!**

Bravo! You're the one who always asks, "Are we even allowed to mix this?" before cautiously stepping two steps back. You have enough knowledge to convince people you're an expert but also enough doubt never to volunteer for the first test of a new experiment. When you cook at home, you measure ingredients as precisely as in a lab, but you still never quite know how it will turn out—just like your chemical reaction to Friday's after-work drinks. Keep going, and soon, you might be the one teaching others how to avoid mini-explosions!

**0-6 points: SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT!**

Well... your result is like an experiment gone wrong but still looks interesting. If we put you in a lab, you'd probably accidentally invent a new type of sparkling wine... or something that makes everyone's hair stand on end. If you ever mix the wrong ingredients, you just smile and say, "That's not a mistake, it's a new method!" If you took this quiz with a colleague, make sure they aren't the one reporting your lab results—unless you want your spouse to ask next time, "Why on earth did you bring me pH paper instead of sugar?" Don't worry, science is fun, and there's always time to learn. Just... maybe don't mix baking soda and vinegar in a sealed room... trust me.



 ■ BRANKA KADIĆ SERVICE

# TRAVELS WITH SANELA

## What if it's all true?

When it comes to business trips, something unexpected always happens to Sanela. After hearing these travel anecdotes, you might have the chance to decide whether you'd travel with her or not. If your manager doesn't approve that option, all I can do is wish you good luck – or, in other words, brace yourself for an adventure!

A business trip to Malta got complicated right from the start. She spent several hours at Munich Airport as her morning flight was postponed to the evening due to aircraft failure and **five unsuccessful reschedules**. It wouldn't have been so bad, but unfortunately, the airport **didn't have her favorite clothing store**.

When she traveled to France with the director, their luggage got lost. And just on the evening of a gala dinner! A shopping expedition began immediately. But to ensure the trip wasn't too boring, their return flight through Frankfurt involved **hours of circling** above the airport due to a **bomb scare**.

A similar story happened in Istanbul, where passengers at the airport were greeted with the dreaded message: »Flight delayed« Of course, it didn't end there—that would have been too easy. While eagerly waiting for their overstuffed suitcases in Zagreb, a voice echoed over the 150-person crowd: »No luggage! They stayed in Istanbul!« **Four girls, four suitcases, and Istanbul**—a recipe for chaos. The luggage finally caught up with them the next day.

Thank goodness it happened on the way back; otherwise, they would have had to attend the gala dinner in sneakers. But for Sanela, that would have been no big deal.

And don't think that only flights are problematic – **car trips aren't any better either**.



When Tanja and Sanela were driving to Florence, Sanela forgot to pay the toll.

The result? **The entire Italian highway was honking at them.** As for the freely roaming, moving objects on the road – let's not even go there.

Floods in Budapest. The entire team of chemists, including the director, was almost swept away. Of course, Sanela was present – otherwise, the water wouldn't have risen.



**Do you still dare to go on a business trip with her? It's not always that dangerous, but it's definitely quite entertaining.**

*P.S. None of the attendees suffered any serious consequences or traumas. All present can confirm the above-mentioned adventures. Except for the freely moving wild objects.*

 ■ TINA HOHNJEC ORDER PROCESSING

# FRAGRANT CHICKEN COCONUT SOUP – A SPOONFUL OF HEAVEN

When you need something that warms you to the bone, pampers your taste buds, and transports you to an exotic paradise—this is the perfect choice! This soup is a heavenly blend of delicious ingredients and rich flavors. It's easy to prepare, and the result? Unforgettable!

**Start with the base!** Melt the butter in a large pot, add the chopped onion, and sauté until golden and soft.

**Time for some color!** Add the chopped carrots and celery and lightly sauté to release their natural aromas.

**The magic touch of thickness!** Add a bit more butter, flour, and chopped garlic. Then throw in the chicken, all the spices, and chopped basil. Stir well and inhale the divine fragrance!

**Soup symphony!** Pour in the hot broth, add the tomato paste, and (if you're a gourmet) toss in the Parmesan rind. Stir and cover.

**Chicken moment!** After 20 minutes, remove the chicken, shred it with a fork, and return it to the pot.

**Creamy twist!** Add freshly grated Parmesan and coconut milk, stir well, and let the flavors blend beautifully.

**Final touch!** Remove the Parmesan rind (if you added it), toss in the gnocchi, and cook for 2-5 minutes (check the packaging—undercooking is better since they continue soaking in the hot soup!)

**Chef-level serving!** Garnish with extra Parmesan, oregano, and toasted bread cubes. Then sit back, relax, and savor every spoonful! Bon appétit & enjoy!

For the next Microwave, I **nominate Sanela German.**



## INGREDIENTS FOR 4 HUNGRY PEOPLE

### CREAMY SOUP

- 1 liter of hot broth (vegetable stock cube)
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 100 g freshly grated Parmesan
- 400 g canned coconut milk
- 500 g potato gnocchi
- 40 g butter
- 1 chopped onion
- 4 carrots (orange and yellow), finely chopped
- 4 celery stalks, finely chopped
- The hard rind of Parmesan (for those who love experimenting!)

### CHICKEN FILLET

- 500 g chicken fillet (I use a whole pack—sometimes more, sometimes less, depending on where I buy the meat)
- 20 g butter
- 40 g flour
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

### AROMATIC SPICES

- 1 tbsp rosemary
- 1 tbsp thyme
- 1 tbsp sweet paprika
- ½ tbsp salt
- A handful of freshly chopped basil

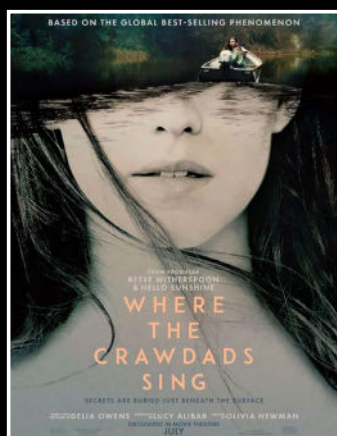
### EXTRAS FOR SERVING

- Parmesan (because there's no such thing as too much!)
- Oregano
- Toasted bread cubes (for a crispy surprise and for those who are REALLY hungry!)

 ■ ŠPELA GRUBELNIK ORDER PROCESSING

# CINEPHILE ŠPELA RECOMMENDS

## WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING / THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON



**TAM, KJER POJEJO RAKI  
(2022)**

IMD rating: 7,2  
 Director: Olivia Newman  
 Country: ZDA  
 Year: 2022  
 Genre: Mystery / Drama /  
 Romance / Thriller  
 Cast: Daisy Edgar-Jones,  
 Taylor John Smith,  
 Harris Dickinson, David  
 Strathairn

»Where the Crawdads Sing« follows the story of Kya Clark, a girl growing up in the marshlands of North Carolina after being abandoned by her entire family. She spends her childhood in complete solitude, without the support of parents or other people. Her only comfort is the nature surrounding her. As she grows up, she is accused of murdering a local man, a crime she does not regret. People judge her for her isolated way of life, keeping her in complete seclusion. The film intertwines her journey from childhood to adulthood, her search for love, and the mystery surrounding the alleged crime.

I found the film incredibly captivating because, beyond its suspense and mystery, it offers a deep insight into how nature shapes a person's life and how people often form opinions about others without knowing their true story. Kya's story moved me deeply, as she never gives up despite all the hardships but learns to embrace her fate. The most touching moment for me was when Kya, despite everything, finds love and trust in someone who accepts her as she is. That moment, when she opens herself up to the world and shows her strength, struck a deep chord within me, reminding me how crucial it is to believe in oneself.



**NENAVADEN PRIMER  
BENJAMINA BUTTONA  
(2008)**

IMD rating: 7,8  
 Director: David Fincher  
 Country: ZDA  
 Year: 2008  
 Genre: Romantic / Fantasy  
 / Drama  
 Cast: Brad Pitt, Cate  
 Blanchett, Taraji P. Henson

This film follows the extraordinary life of Benjamin Button, a man who is born as an elderly person and becomes younger as time passes. The story explores his perspective on life, love, and relationships as he experiences »reverse aging.« Benjamin falls in love with Daisy, a woman aging in a conventional manner, which presents numerous challenges in their relationship as their life cycles do not align. Additionally, the film delves into Benjamin's struggles with loss, the fleeting nature of time, and his search for a place in the world.

What drew me to this film was its originality and unique approach to time and life. Its story is not only unusual but also deeply emotional. The moment that impacted me the most was when Benjamin and Daisy spend time together while Benjamin is physically young but internally aging towards childhood. This contrast profoundly moved me, as it beautifully yet tragically illustrates the nature of their relationship. The film showcases how love can truly overcome all obstacles—even those imposed by time itself.

For the next edition of Mikrofoni, I nominate Iva Kovačič to share her two favorite films.



# ULTIMATE SUDOKU CHALLENGE

## TEST YOUR SKILLS

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