

Stefan Kozák: "There is nothing older than the success of yesterday"

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Photo credits: Creative PRO

*VENUES ARE THE KEY AND CO-CREATORS OF THE WHOLE EVENT;
'SYNERGY' IS THE RIGHT NAME, BETWEEN THE CONCEPT AND THE VENUE.
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BEST MARMALADE, BUTTER OR HAM, BUT IT WILL NEVER TASTE GREAT
WITH POOR QUALITY BREAD.*

Stefan Kozák obtained a degree in theatre & film production management at the **Academy of Performing Arts** in Bratislava, Slovakia and has widened the scope of his studies by attending an MBA course at Brno **International Business School** in the Czech Republic.

In 2003, he founded a company focused on live & event marketing, **CREATIVE PRO**, and subsequently built a diversified group of companies called the **CREATIVE PRO group**, with its business base mainly on the Slovak, Czech, Hungarian and Polish markets.

Aside from managing the group and its organisations he is also in charge of business development, strategic acquisition of new business as well as specific "live marketing" projects in Slovakia, the Czech republic, Hungary and Poland.

Q: Could you tell us something surprising about the city of Bratislava that might amaze meeting planners?

There are two different views: firstly, Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia, is a growing and very dynamic city, I would say a pro-event and pro-congresses oriented small/big city. A few weeks ago our partners from the biggest European event agencies connected through 27NAMES

visited the city and its surroundings and they were amazed with the level of our event locations (eg. X-BIONICS event centre or Red Stone castle) and hospitality.

Secondly, from the event planners point of view, Bratislava is on the Danube River and in the middle of the "Vienna – Prague – Budapest crossroad", so it has the ideal location and position in connection with international airports – it's 50km from Vienna, Austria, 280km from Prague, the Czech Republic and 180km from Budapest, Hungary.

Q: What are the current trends in the Slovak events market?

I think the below mentioned trends are the ones spreading all over central & Eastern Europe.

Creativity in location and innovation (Analyst Relations, digital...) search, concept uniqueness in the whole event process (pre-event, event, post-event)... These approaches and effectiveness rule almost everywhere, I guess. The focus is becoming more on the long term results – not just on event management, but more on the whole live marketing strategy, content usage and fulfilled KPIs.



Photo credits: Creative PRO, Adidas Cee all employee meeting 2016

Q: Recently your own Creative PRO agency joined the 27 Names association. Do you already have some projects that will bring new and interesting events to the city of Bratislava?

Our agency headquarters joined 27NAMES two years ago and as our agency is currently the only Central European live marketing agency with offices in Slovakia (Bratislava, Kosice), the Czech Republic (Prague), Poland (Warsaw) and Hungary (Budapest) we have already brought many excellent projects to all of our markets – thanks to the cooperation with 27NAMES. J

Q: What is your recipe for a creative and successful event?

We have it in the name of our agency CREATIVE PRO:

1. Be **CREATIVE** (inspirational, innovative), become a trendsetter and share your ideas and thoughts with the market, educate.
2. Be **PRO-active** and manage the client expectations.
3. Be **PRO-cess** oriented, focus on a high level of project management (project plans, meeting minutes, production plans etc.).
4. Be "**PRO-sitive**" and always look and offer solutions on how to execute and deliver, not on finding reasons why something not possible.
5. Be **PRO-fessional** in the completely executive phase (lead and let the client rely on your expertise) by a systematic approach and followed by a PDCA (plan – do – check – act) event model.

Q: How can venues contribute even more to the success of an event?

Venues are the key and co-creators of the whole event; 'synergy' is the right name, between the concept and the venue. A good venue is like a good or great bread – you can have the best marmalade, butter or ham, but it will never taste great with poor quality bread.

Q: In terms of live marketing, event management and production services what, if anything, keeps you up at night?

The combination of trying to act as the trendsetter and market influencer and the daily commitment to the best solutions delivery for our best clients. And on time.



Photo credits: Creative PRO, BMW GROUP SLOVAKIA, The Art of 7 Best product launch Eventex 2017

Q: Tell us about the toughest event you have organised.

Well, many, many have been super hard and difficult, but we have always managed well, no less so because of our principles of being "humble" and a "learning by doing" approach.

Q: How would you describe your job in five words?

CREATIVE PRO. PASSION FOR MOMENTS.

Q: What has been your star moment to date and your favourite project with which you would praise yourself most strongly?

I have this feeling very often, after every single project, when I see a happy client or audience, really, but on the other hand there is nothing older than the success of yesterday...

For example 2014 was a great year, when we won four categories on EUBEA (European Best Events Awards) thanks to our client Microsoft and we became the second best event agency in Europe. Also 2017, when we've already won the best launch event category at Eventex in Dublin for the BMW 7-series Launch Event for our client BMW Slovakia.

I am also very thankful for the local awards in Slovakia (Zlatý Klinec) or in the Czech Republic (CEA).

PERSONAL

Q: What did you learn last week?

Believe strongly in your intuition. It almost always reveals more than all kinds of thinking and consideration.

Q: What makes you smile?

I am a happy man. People and many other things make me smile – the smile of my two great sons, clients, colleagues, winning pitches...



Photo credits: Creative PRO, TALKS – inspirational speakres event