



fem

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS'
MEETINGS IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

THE SEVEN STEPS OF INTERNATIONALISATION

The Guide of Internationalisation for women entrepreneurs

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FEM was a Baltic Sea Region Interreg III B project, part-financed by the EU Regional Development Fund. The aim of FEM was to strengthen the structures that support women's entrepreneurship through co-operation and the exchange of knowledge and best practices in the participating countries. FEM operated from August 2004 till August 2007. The participating countries were Finland, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

There were five (5) work-packages in FEM. They all were presented differently and also however connected and interacted with each other very closely and thus also contribute to the main goal.

The work-packages:

WP 1. Creating transnational networks of Resource Centres and Meeting Places to strengthen the role of women in society and in local and regional development

WP 2. Networks of training and exchange of experience for the advisers

WP 3. Mentorship Program for women entrepreneurs

WP 4. Networking in Network Credit Groups and other financial solutions for women entrepreneurs

WP 5. Internationalisation of women's entrepreneurship.

FOREWORD

THE SEVEN STEPS OF INTERNATIONALISATION

is the Guide of Internationalisation for micro women entrepreneurs

This Guide gathers together facts and tales about the path of internationalisation of women entrepreneurs in the FEM countries. The Guide moves on step by step to international markets from an idea to the growing international businesses. We look the process from the aspect of a single entrepreneur. The steps of internationalisation take us to different countries and to the different situations of them.

This guide is meant to both entrepreneurs and advisors. The book can be used as a handbook and in the same time the task of guide is to develop the policy structures. To an entrepreneur this guide offers information, advice and business ideas. The stories of entrepreneurs describe what kind of capacities are needed in the processes of internationalisation. The guide gives concrete examples of problems, needs and themes for advising as well as the presentation of the well functioning processes.

My pleasant duty was to gather together different kind of stories from different kind of countries.

I thank all Fem-ladies very much of the versatile stories and very good cooperation!

Let's hope that the readers will have use and joy from the guide
as well as good ideas from the inspiring stories!

In Joensuu, Finland
3.8.2007

Minna Tolonen

* The ideal process of internationalisation and structures that support that process are shown in attachment document with the Guidebook.

FIRST STEP:

An idea of internationalisation

New starters go IMMEDIATELY TO INTERNET

- During the International FEM-project we found that it is necessary to support small businesses and micro entrepreneurs, especially handicraft entrepreneurs, in marketing. We tried also merging in to different commercial chains, but after some analyzing we found, that it is better to organize administration of the marketing locally, Tuuli Paaksi, a new entrepreneur, Lilywhite Llc, Estonia tells.

E-shop Stylish started in July 2007 in co operation of two new entrepreneurs Tuuli Paaksi (Lilywhite Llc) and her friend Silva Anspal (Novalia Llc). Novalia Llc started in May 2006 and Lilywhite Llc started in the end of February 2007.

E-shop Stylish unites various products of the masters of handicraft and applied art. It sells primary exclusive and stylish single copies. Additionally to the products of Estonian masters also the products of other European masters are sold. At first E-shop Stylish has producers from Estonia and Poland. Later on there will also be products of

Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden and Norway. - We plan to broaden them even more, but it will be done in winter 2007 and spring 2007, Tuuli Paaksi brings to light the plans of new starters.

- E-shop Stylish is the first e-shop in Estonia which has specialized on handicrafts. There are several e-shops for various factory products and there is also one page which sells art, but it has only few items in it, Tuuli Paaksi tells.

The new entrepreneurs see that the main client groups are outside of Estonia and also small group in Estonia who need business gifts.

At the beginning there was 16 different producers and the aim is to get at least 60-70 different producers to sell their products in the e-shop. Some of the producers work as entrepreneurs and some of them are interested in handicraft. The age of the producers also varies. The main interest of E-shop Stylish is to get a big number of high quality products and therefore all producers who have high quality original products have been taken in.

Who helped you?

"We haven't got any help with our idea. We were on our own. But we would have liked to have received some help maybe with technical and structural information about internet-shop (making orders and payments). Also help is welcome on marketing issues."
Tuuli Paaksi, Lilywhite Llc and Silva Anspal, Novalia Llc.

Common projects make networks

"The networks built up during the FEM project are effectively used for marketing the products of E-shop Stylish as the FEM project had many women entrepreneurs and their organizations from Baltic Sea Countries as project partners."
Tuuli Paaksi



KNITTING LADIES GO ABROAD

How to establish business contacts between entrepreneurs different countries, for example entrepreneurs from Sweden and Estonia?

During the FEM-project it was realized that there were some big problems to establish business contacts between entrepreneurs in Estonia and Sweden. There was a big interest among small entrepreneurs in Sweden to establish business contacts with Estonian colleagues because many of them are connected with handicraft. Many of the Swedish entrepreneurs want to buy handicrafts and homemade yarn of wool and linen from Estonian entrepreneurs.

Discussions between Swedish entrepreneurs and representatives of Estonia gave an idea how to connect these entrepreneurs. Off course! We are going to arrange travels for Swedish entrepreneurs who are interested in knitting, yarn of wool and linen and handicrafts to Estonia to visit to the fairs in Estonia during May and August every year.

Lisbeth Holmquist-Arbrandt, entrepreneur, Sweden
the leader of Work Package 1: Resource Centres of FEM

Are there any special means to support
the internationalisation of the traditional
women's business branches

- in your region?

- in your country?

- How could you develop the means further?

What is your first step with your idea of business?

What special there is in your idea?

Do you know what kind of the competition situation is on your field?

Have your searched the demand and markets of your idea?

Have you analysed who is your customer? And where she/he is?

Is there any project you could involve? Or education or development program?

SECOND STEP:

Support and consultation

TO JAPAN ON WINGS OF SILK

Most women's enterprises are micro enterprises. Statistics indicate that the most common motive for women to become entrepreneurs is the desire to turn a personal interest into a way to make a living. This was also the case for Finn Auli Partio and her business Silkkipartio, which was established in 1992 when farmer Partio cleared out the cattle from her barn and decided to convert it into a silk scarf atelier. The opening of the atelier was celebrated in 2001.

Access to Japan à la Auli

In the manner of most micro and handicraft enterprises, Silkkipartio made its way to the international market along a path of small and original steps. - We had some lucky breaks, and especially at the outset our success came despite the advice of business advisors! Auli laughs. Silkkipartio drew a blank with its first two forays into the international arena, to Germany in 1996 and Italy in 1998. - Our business advisor recommended that we adapt our products to conform more closely to the local style, Partio reminisces. As an independent and headstrong craftswoman, Partio preferred to stay true to her personal style and refused any adaptation. Sticking to her guns paid off with the subsequent discovery of the Japanese market, where the products were a much better fit.

Training and financial advice

Partio has developed her business since the 1990s by taking part in various development measures, including projects implemented by the University of Joensuu Centre for Continuing Education and the Employment and Economic Development Centre for North Karelia. A focus on business development gradually opened up the Japanese market for Silkkipartio scarves, mainly through exhibitions.



Partio attended exhibitions in Tokio in 1999 and 2002, after which she was extended invitations to exhibit at Ojiya in 2003 and at three galleries simultaneously in 2004, plus a further exhibit in Ueda the same year. The next exhibition tour is already being organised for spring 2009.

The most recent training completed by Auli is her degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts taken in spring 2007. "The most inspiration and ideas during my studies definitely came from all the discussions I had with my instructors and fellow students," Auli notes. New plans for activities for Japanese tourists to Finland in the form of courses in ceramics, silk painting and photography are already mulling in Auli's mind.

Do you know where to find information and help that is special to your target market?

ADVICES OF AULI: NETWORK!

Search help always at first nets by near:

• from entrepreneur colleagues • artists, artisans and others colleagues • associations of entrepreneurs

“On the ground level somebody always knows somebody who knows somebody again etc...”

Auli Partio, Silkkipartio

JETRO provides market information

Auli found that the best insights into the Japanese market came from JETRO, a Japanese government-related organization that promotes trade and investment. The JETRO agent provided Auli with access to statistical data on topics such as the market shares of different types of scarves, their buyers and prices in the Japanese market.

JETRO Helsinki helps Finnish companies looking for business opportunities in Japan as well as Japanese companies aiming to do business or invest in Finland. JETRO's global network comprises 36 offices in Japan and 74 offices abroad. Annually thousands of foreign and Japanese SMEs use JETRO's internationalisation services when accessing foreign markets.

Services provided by Jetro: market information, potential partners for sales and R&D, establishment of a company, branch or representative office, laws and regulations concerning doing business, costs of doing business and trade fairs.

Business advisory wish list

Most woman entrepreneurs are active in what might be termed traditional women's sectors such as services, care, tourism, culture and handicrafts. A woman entrepreneur operating a small-scale business may easily slip through the cracks of business advisory services focusing on volume, growth and technology.

“It is absolutely possible for small business entrepreneurs to gain a foothold in the international market through steps of a size they feel comfortable with,” Auli Partio says. “What I would like to see in business advisors is open-mindedness and respect for small businesses as well.”

***Are the traditional
womens businesses
and micro businesses
offered possibilities to
internationalise?***

**In Finland services
of internationalisation are
offered by for example:**

Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce

(also in Russian)

www.finruscc.fi

Finpro

(also in English)

www.finpro.fi

Employment and Economic Development Centre

(also in English)

www.te-keskus.fi

TEKES (also in English)

www.tekes.fi/eng

THE THIRD STEP:

Financing

MICROCREDIT HELPS A SMALL ENTREPRENEUR

The system of microcredit is based on the idea of The Grameen Bank. The Grameen Bank is a network credit system developed in Bangladesh. It has helped to create entrepreneurship to the rural regions. The concept has spread throughout the world both to the developed and less developed countries. The starting point in the development of this system was the idea that "access to credit is a human right". The founder of the Grameen Bank -system is Professor of Economics, Dr. Muhammad Yunus and it brought him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. In Fem-project the microcredit system was tested and developed by partner country Norway.

The aim of the network credit system is to develop individuals or groups in entrepreneurial skills, to create a personal identity for the entrepreneur and a new kind of entrepreneurial culture. The concept is based on three ground factors that are: 1) to develop a business idea of one's own and to establish a company 2) constant learning which takes place in an interactive group and 3) a personal business loan.

In the network credit system, a person is active and capable of contributing to her own work and livelihood. She has a constant desire and need to learn and develop herself. The structure and principles of the system are built in a way which offers the participants good conditions to become successful entrepreneurs, to develop one's own personality and independent thinking as well as social skills to take other people into account and to work with them. Competence and professional identity as an entrepreneur improve as a result of personal development work as a group member, sharing of experiences in a group and learning by experience.

Appraising feedback from the group members helps the entrepreneur in decision-making and in putting new ideas

into practise in her own business. Social skills improve in a dialogical relationship between the group members when following the rules that are well adapted to the purpose and which the members have defined themselves as well as through constant self-evaluation.

Results of a successful Grameen - network credit process can be seen years afterwards both in the number of new established businesses and networks. The participating persons have developed as entrepreneurs at the same time as they have become encouraged, active and competent when taking part in the decision-making of their own community.

In order to function, the Grameen Bank -system requires of all the participants commitment to people, hard work, honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, self-respect, sense of responsibility, discipline and creativity. When developing the line of action, an operational environment should be created for this work in which the group members wholly understand the meaning of the attitudes and norms mentioned above and a person has a genuine opportunity to act accordingly.

The Grameen network credit has broken the model of ordinary banking by eliminating the requirements binding the borrower and by creating a banking system that is based on mutual and interactive trust, accurate actions, responsibility, participation and creativity. Credit is the central factor of the system. It acts as a catalyst in a comprehensive development process. In the Grameen network credit system, credit means empowerment in social and economic circumstances.

Sirpa Polo, Finland

***Do you know where to apply for investment grants in your region?
Is your sector covered by general international funding opportunities?***

Loans for women entrepreneurs of Finnvera Plc

Loans for women entrepreneurs are intended for enterprises in which women are majority shareholders and which are managed by a woman. An enterprise may be just starting up or one already operating and employing a maximum of five persons.

Loans for women entrepreneurs are used for investments in machinery and equipment relating to the enterprise's business, for working capital requirements, other business start-up and expansion projects or company development. We can provide financing for enterprise activities in almost every sector; only farming, forestry and building developer's remain outside our range of financing.

A loan for women entrepreneurs can be supplemented by the start-up money granted by the Ministry of Labour. Other Finnvera loans are also available. A loan for women entrepreneurs is available in one or several instalments subject to a maximum of 35,000 euro.

Finnvera Plc is specialised financing company offering financing services to promote the domestic operations of Finnish businesses, and further exports and internationalisation of enterprises. www.finnvera.fi

WORK UP A PLAN, ENTREPRENEUR:

- attend several presentations and trade fairs
 - do proper advance planning
- draw on the expertise of specialists

Funding is granted to goal-oriented internationalisation activities planned in a sustained manner.

EXPENDITURE IN GOING INTERNATIONAL for example:

- study trips and other travel
- fairs and exhibitions
- communication, finding contacts
- launching operations
- surveys of the market and competition in the target country
- adaptation of products to the target market
- product-specific special regulations
- landing representatives and agents
- hiring employees
- business premises
- accounting and financial management
- information and market communication in foreign languages
- recruiting employees with language and other relevant skills
- experts, key employees
- legal services
- costs of ensuring payment traffic

THE FOURTH STEP:

Going abroad

THE APPLE DOES NOT FALL FAR FROM THE TREE – DOES IT?

If the apple was grown at the Dembavos Madelynas orchard, chances are it does. Nearly half of the orchard's annual output, i.e. 50 tonnes of apples, finds its way to dinner tables in Germany, Latvia and Poland.

The orchard, with its 150 ha of apple trees and 10-ha nursery, is located in the small village of Dembava near the city of Panevežys. Two hundred different varieties of plant are grown at the nursery, which sells 100,000 seedlings each autumn. The round-the-year workforce of 25 grows to 200 employees in season. The orchard has a warehousing capacity of one thousand tonnes.

GARDENER'S PATH TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET

The tale of gardener Vitalija Kuliešiene encapsulates a chapter in the nation's recent history. Currently an independent entrepreneur, Kuliešiene was once employed by a State-owned collective orchard. When the events of 1992 sparked a wave of privatization, she convinced more than 100 of her former coworkers to join her in buying out the business. - Our prime motive at the outset was to save our jobs and continue living in these familiar surroundings, Kuliešiene recounts.

In general meeting other workers unanimously appointed the agriculturalist Vitalija, who had already worked with them for seven years, as a director. She had now been enriched by seventeen years of experience as an agriculturalist and the most importantly she had a real bond to the village and their confidence in her choices.

Most of her comrades gave up after a few years of free enterprise, leaving only five stalwarts besides Kuliešiene, who together with her family currently holds 80% of the orchard.

- Management has never interested or attracted me, said Vitalija Sadauskaite Kuliesiene, the director of Dembavos Medelynas UAB (Dembava Nursery joint stock Company).
-But when all my co-workers, with whom I had worked for



over ten years, showed unanimous trust, I did not have the strength to refuse. Since then though, I have sat for a long time on more than one evening my head in my hands: marketing, finance, economics, planning, worries about everything.

But solutions appeared unexpectedly. A management school opened in Panevežys in accordance with a program proposed by Lyon University (USA). Vitalija became one of the first students of the new school, without reducing production, or the work on the farm. One after another, all the question marks on the art of management began to disappear from the director's head.

International sales of the apples started almost immediately. The extensive international contacts Kuliešiene gained through her participation in seminars and other training continue to bear fruit. - I invited loads of people to visit my orchard. Once they had tasted its apples, they couldn't not buy and order them, Kuliešiene chuckles. Visitors spread the word of Kuliešiene's delicious, ecologically grown apples, leading to even more customers and growing trade.

The press began to write, radio and television to talk about Vitalija as a constantly improving farmer. The nursery managed by Vitalija has become one of the biggest farms in Lithuania according to volume and results.

REGINA MANIKOWSKA AND A BOAT FACTORY

Jakol Yacht started year 1989. At first it sold yacht boats made from artificial materials only to domestic market. But Regina Manikowski, the director of company had more ambition, and willingness to develop the company.

The markets in Poland were in bad financial condition and Jakol Yacht couldn't sell enough there. - It was completely necessary to search international markets. After analysis made by our self, we chose some country to co operate: Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Nederland, Regina Manikowska tells. The reason was geography; not too big distances from Szczecin and good transport.

Jakol Yacht was in these days a small company with 50 employees in production. The financial possibilities in that moment wasn't big. - We had to do everything our self like: prepare strategy, marketing plans and participation in fairs and others promotional activities, Manikowska remembers.

In the beginning the company chose cheapest offers, smallest and local sector trades where prices were cheap. The year was 1993. The cooperation with chambers of commerce started with attaché of commerce from each embassy. Jakol Yacht put also offers in every kind of catalogs and informatory. Most effective was advertisement in sector informatory.

Jakol Yacht wanted also to fit their products to foreign markets. They made a decision of using the best quality of materials to production. Second step was to have certificate of quality like Germanische Lloyd. Further on Jakol Yacht could participate in biggest promotional performance.

Now all the boats of Jakol Yacht have certificates and is sell's motor boats to all country they decided on start. -We are very proud of that, tells Regina Manikowska. -For finding new clients we use the same ways like on the beginning and also internet.

www.jakol.com.pl

STAGES OF INTERNATIONALISATION:

(Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce)

1. INITIAL SURVEY

abilities and motives to enter international market • selection and study of target markets

2. SURVEY OF PERSONAL RESOURCES

language skills, cultural skills • financing • sales and marketing • contracts • logistics

3. PRODUCT SURVEY

market survey in target country • adaptation • customer acquisition • distribution • production capacity • customer service

4. SURVEY OF RISKS

5. BUSINESS OPTIONS IN TARGET MARKET

export franchising • licensing • subcontracting • business establishment

INTERNATIONALISATION CALLS FOR

- commitment and stamina
- ability to take risks
- daring
- consistency
- networking

THE FIFTH STEP:

Partnership and acceptance

RESOURCE CENTERS ARE THE GATEWAYS TO EXPORT

The jewellery of Mirella Palmi exported from Poland to Sweden by WRC'S

One of the biggest problems when you start up business relations between entrepreneurs in different countries in the Baltic Sea region is to explain why customers in different countries want so different kind of design of clothes, jewels etc. Many attempts have been made to solve this problem, but there are no simple solutions.

How jewellery made by the Polish designer Mirella Palmi found markets in Sweden is a success story and it shows many of the obstacles that occurred.

- In the first year of the FEM-project we talked many times about visiting women's fairs in our countries, tells Lisbeth Holmquist-Arbrandt from Sweden, the leader of Work Package 1, Resource Centres of FEM-project. In October 2004 FEM-participants in the Sweden got an invitation to participate in a women's fair in Szczecin in Poland. Many attempts were made from the responsible persons in Sweden to fill a big bus with Swedish entrepreneurs' to visit this big fair.

Many things happened and at last only four Swedish women participated. - For example we had found that it was not a big international fair as we had thought. It was a rather small very local fair in Szczecin. Among the few stands at this fair there was a stand with linen fabrics, represented an entrepreneur in Szczecin, Lisbeth Holmquist-Arbrandt remembers. The Swedish women were very fond of these linen. They visited the big shop of the entrepreneur and bought very much.

At next fair, in Malmö in May 2005 next step in cooperation took place. From this event it was the Mirella Palmi jewellery that were the most important product in the Polish-Swedish cooperation. And still in year 2007 the Swedish small shop in Norrköping sells linen fabrics and table clothes from the Polish entrepreneur.

The jewellery of Mirella Palmi Design are now sold in the shop "Eastern Quality House". This is a shop in connection with a resource center in Norrköping. Also another entrepreneurs related to resource centers in other parts of Sweden are selling the Mirella Palmi jewellery in their regions, and this process will be extended to more resource centres.

The conclusion is that the jewellery will be a much bigger success at the Swedish market, than the linen products. The jewellery have an unique and very simple design that suits Swedish women.

Through the FEM-project we have had possibilities to learn the differences in culture in doing business among different countries. The very positive experience from this business relation is that there has been no discussions or fights about prices or other conditions. Both the Swedish and Polish entrepreneurs understand that if the relation shall continue, both of them must earn money on the selling, tells Lisbeth Holmquist-Arbrandt.



THE TASKS OF WOMEN RECOURSE CENTER:

- development of female entrepreneurship
- promotion of a female view in the regional and social development
- sensibilisation for gender stereotypes and a gender view in politics
- to overcome the social isolation
- cooperation and networking of business women and female entrepreneurs to protect the existing businesses and to develop new products, new offers and services

RESOURCE CENTER OFFERS:

partnership
network
information
common projects
visits
advising
mentoring
training
seminars



The Resource Centers started in Fem-project:

| Country | Name | Place | Leader |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| POLAND | Leba | Leba | Katarzyna Dickert |
| | Lebork | Lebork | Krystyna Andrzejczak |
| | Szczecin | Szczecin | Joanna Kolesnik |
| | Debno | Debno | Anna Difort-Dura |
| ESTONIA | Marianowo | Marianowo | Joanna Standzik |
| | Tartu | Tartu | Magda Salata |
| | Rapla | Rapla | Joanna Dedek |
| | Voru | Voru | Lille Reissar |
| | Pärnu | Pärnu | Anneli Bauvald |
| LATVIA | Johvi | Johvi | Õlle Puustusmaa |
| | Jelgava (national) | Jelgava | Maie Paas |
| | Valmiera | Valmiera | |
| | Bauska | Bauska | |
| | Preili | Preili | |
| LITHUANIA | Ventpils (meeting-place) | Ventpils | |
| | Anyksciai | Anyksciai | Maiga Krusmetra |
| | Panevezys | Panevezys | Elvyra Lasskaja |
| | | | Dovile Kuliesiene |

Other Resource Centers active in Fem-project:

| | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| GERMANY | Mecklenburg-Vorpommern | Rostock | Christianne Bannuscher |
| SWEDEN | Baltic-Russian-Swedish rc | Norrköping | Lisbeth H-A |
| | Sala Q | Sala | Solweig Eriksson |
| | Regionalt rc Region Skåne | Malmö | Bodil Nilsson |
| | NRC (national) | Sandviken | Britt-Marie Torstensson |
| | Östgöta rc | Linköping | Helena Balthammar |
| LITHUANIA | Amalia | | |
| | Skuodas | Skuodas | Grazina Joksiene |
| | Silute | Silute | Birute Gustiene |
| | Taurage | Taurage | Nijole Meilutiene |

THE SIXTH STEP:

On to the steady progress of internationalisation

Textile designer Satu Montanari:

**YOU NEED TO SEE OTHERS FOR WHO THEY ARE
– regardless of where they are from**

Satu Montanari blends dyes for a test printing at the Marimekko plant.



Success in international trade hinges on the ability to work with all kinds of people. Language and communication skills are vital, yet the most important skill of all is a genuine desire to understand people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- You've got to be able to take a little distance from yourself, is how Satu Montanari describes the step necessary when encountering others in the arena of international business.

Satu Montanari has over 20 years of experience in international textile design. She is a one-woman powerhouse in textile design and technology as well as international marketing.

Although she currently devotes most of her time to caring for her ailing mother in the Finnish town of Heinola, she keeps a steady hand on the pulse of the international market. Preparations for the exhibition that will open in Washington in early 2008 are well under way. Another exhibition just closed in Slovakia. An exchange exhibition

between Finnish and Slovakian artists will open in Heinola in autumn 2007. - And amidst all this, demand is clearly rising in the textile design business as well, Satu catalogues her to-do list for the near future.

It all started right away

After graduating the University of Art and Design Helsinki in 1981, Satu had plans to take the year off and relax in Italy. The future had different plans for her. - Right off, I landed a major client and started working as a freelancer immediately, Satu recalls. A major international textile export company took a liking to Satu's design style. - As did consumers – if they hadn't, exports would not have taken off so well, Satu emphasizes. Her career began with bed linens and prints, but her focus in recent years has been on textile design.

All-rounder

Designing for a major client enabled extensive international exposure right off the bat for Satu.

THE FORMULA OF SATU MONTANARI:

- **Your pragmatics have to be wide and versatile**
- **Be good and prompt**
- **Be flexible and able to do variations**
- **Have your eyes open - understand the present world**
- **Face up to different kind of people**

More design commissions followed, with one job always leading to the next. Patterns designed by Satu attracted widespread interest. Photos and articles of her work appeared in magazines around the world.

- My designs were always a little ahead of their times. My strong skills in textile technology furthermore made it easy for me to supervise the employees at the mills, Satu describes the concept underlying her success.

The pattern holds, whether large or small

- The same pattern applies to business on the large and small scale, Satu says. She has spoken at several Finnish universities on the international marketing of design. The high standard of the work is the key to success in international trade. - The work must never falter. There is no room for failure, Satu stresses. Delivering uncompromising quality in tough international competition demands much stamina, but is also very rewarding.

One must constantly build on skills in one's own sector. - Entrepreneurs and freelancers need to have a broad skills base. They shouldn't focus on just individual job performance, emphasizes Satu, who practices what she preaches through ongoing study and accumulation of information in her particular field.

The successful entrepreneur needs to be flexible and capable of providing customers with variations. - You need to be good at what you do, and able to do it quickly, Satu continues her list of requirements. - The successful entrepreneur stays up to date with the markets and the world, is conversant with the status quo and always keeps her eyes peeled for new job opportunities.

The art of the encounter

All business starts with working together with others. Basic language skills and communication skills through a variety of media are absolute musts. - The current lingua franca of business is English, says Satu, who is also fluent in German and Italian. - Communication over the internet, by email and telephone are essential skills in international business today.

"The FEM project has given me an insider's view of the markets and cultures in the Baltic region, and also increased my understanding of new European business."

"The most important job of the civil service is to ensure the flexible and safe passage of people and goods, as well as the consistency of laws and rights. Society must also engage in information technology development to safeguard information security."

Satu Montanari,
NDO Nordic Design Office

THE SEVENTH STEP:

The growth of international business

HOW GOES THE CO OPERATION BETWEEN THE SWEDISH ENTREPRENEUR AND THE ESTONIAN COMPANY

Lipfish started as a company at year 2004. Jenny Boije, the owner, designs colourful and joyful baby toys and clothes, most of them in velour. Before she started the company Lipfish, she sewed the toys and gave or sold them to her friends. Today Lipfish has a huge market demand of the market of Sweden, Belgian and United Kingdom.

Jenny Boije has shown her products at several fairs. Especially parents and grand parents want to buy these toys to their babies and they are also popular among other clients. The toys of babies have very high level demands of security and that is also important for the toys of Lipfish.

Jenny Boije wished to have business co operation with women entrepreneurs in some of Baltic countries. In September 2005 Jenny Boije made first contacts by transnational Fem-project. In the networks of Fem she found the company MTü Maadaam from Ida-Virumaa, Estonia. MTü Maadaam is the network of 12 women in co operating together in the same company. In January 2006 Jenny visited together with her mother in the company in eastern Estonia at the first time. The cooperation started immediately after the visit and it still continues.

Jenny Boije has also introduced MTü Maadaam to two other Swedish companies and these companies have also started to the co operation of sewing.

There has been some problems in the cooperation which has been solved on one way or othet. One problem is that MTü Maadam was not able to raise the amount of production to the same volymes with extend on the market of Lipfish. That is why some companies in China and Turkey are making the biggest part of Jenny's



products today. Another problem has been that MTü Maadam have not had possibility to buy fabrics by their own for the production. Also some differences of bisnes culture have shown up. It is difficult to understand for the western partner that the women of Estonian want to stop production during three months in the summertime. But Jenny Boije has been satisfied with the quality of work and the co operation continues.

www.lipfish.com

THE SEVEN-LEAGUE BOOTS OF A GROWING SERVICE ENTERPRISE

Pirjo Karhu has put in determined and bold effort to grow her company. Based in both Finland and Russia, Rödl & Partner Konsu Oy is the very model of a successful and financially sound business that also provides employment to a large number of people.

Konsu Oy, established by Pirjo Karhu in 1982 in Lappeenranta, is currently seeing much growth especially in the Russian market under the name Rödl & Partner Konsu Oy. - We are the leading Finnish expert in Russian trade. Our goal for the near future is to continue on our track of controlled growth, Pirjo Karhu describes her enterprise. Rödl & Partner Konsu Oy provides business establishment services, financial management services and tax and legal consultation. Its clientele currently comprises more than 500 Western companies from 15 nations.

Konsu Oy was originally an accounting firm. As the company grew and prospered, Pirjo Karhu established offices in Imatra, Parikkala and Helsinki. In 1992, Konsu Oy was the first Western-held financial management and legal services company to enter the Russian market. At present, Rödl & Partner Konsu Oy has 100 employees in Finland and in Russia, with offices in St Petersburg and Moscow in addition to the head office in Lappeenranta.

Intense networking

Networking with Germany's largest auditing and consultancy firm Rödl & Partner in 2001 widened the firm's field of operations. When required, Rödl & Partner Konsu Oy can now provide services in 36 countries on all continents.

Pirjo Karhu lists the success strategies in taking her enterprise international as clear-cut business concept, the full range of services provided and proximity to clients, ongoing personnel training, leadership and teamwork, development of a quality management system and international networking.

SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR A SERVICE ENTERPRISE

Pirjo Karhu, Rödl & Partner Konsu Oy

- clear-cut business concept
- full-service agency
- proximity to clients
- training of personnel
- leadership, teamwork
- local knowledge
- development of quality management system
- international network

GROUND RULES FOR SUCCESS

Pirjo Karhu, Rödl & Partner Konsu Oy

- Respond immediately
- Be professional
- Be convenient and make the service readily accessible for the client
- Always offer the client a little more than they are asking for
- Always upsell
- Be dependable and honest

www.konsu.com

Can you see similarities between these businesses in their path of internationalisation?

Production

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