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**HOW BUSINESS SCHOOLS
COPE WITH CHALLENGES
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS -
NATIONAL-LOUIS UNIVERSITY
IN NOWY SĄCZ SUCCESS STORY**

Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu - National Louis University was established in 1992, after conversion of established a year before by Senator Krzysztof Pawłowski a post-secondary college. The founder of WSB-NLU was an especially for this purpose created foundation - Sądecko - Podhalańska - National Louis University Educational Fund. At that time it was the first in Poland case of establishing Polish - American school, which decided to follow all standards and curriculum of an American university. A specific feature of the school from the very beginning has been extremely wide programme of foreign languages: for three-year bachelor's/licencjat programme are only admitted students with good command of English; the candidates whose command of English is insufficient, are offered a preparatory year, during which they intensively study English (over 700 hours). Additionally students have, during first two years 990 hours of English, German and French. The graduates receive a licencjat/bachelor's diploma as well as an NLU certificate, which allows them to obtain American bachelor's degree after a year period spent on studying in one of the NLU's campuses. On 4 July 1998 the Minister of Education accredited the school to conduct courses at Master's Degree level and award the graduates with a Master's Degree in Marketing and Management.

WSB-NLU, as the first business college in Poland, decided to submit the Bachelor's Programme of Business Management for accreditation procedure of the Association for Management Education FORUM and, in October 1997, it was awarded with a special accreditation certificate. Since 1995 WSB-NLU has been continuously ranked first in a ranking list prepared by the magazine 'WPROST'. In the most prestigious category - *Where to study business?* in 1998 WSB-NLU was the first - ahead of Warsaw School of Economics and other state universities and schools of economics. 'WPROST' included WSB-NLU into a group of 15 Polish universities which represent an international level.

WSB-NLU is undoubtedly the best equipped university in Poland: there are 4 well-equipped buildings (together 6,000 sq. meters) with 2 luxury amphitheatre halls for 225 and 185 people, 2 lecture halls for 120 people, 3 halls for 60 people and 42 classrooms. WSB-NLU owns 3 computer laboratories with 75 computers Pentium II 266, 64 MB RAM, HDD 3,2 GB and 2 computer laboratories with 40 computers. All computers (together 220) are used in the network and have a full access to the Internet. All students and members of the staff have their own e-mail addresses.

What is also unique about the school, is the fact that WSB-NLU owns its own television studio and an electronic library UMI, in which you can find 950 titles (regularly up-dated) of American magazines, Wall Street Journal and a collection of American doctor's dissertations.

In academic year 1998/99 the number of students at WSB-NLU exceeded 3,000, including 1,700 of full-time students and 200 of post-graduate students.

WSB-NLU offers an extremely modern programme of studies, which is common for all students - wide, comprehensive bachelor's programme, where beside subjects as Management, Marketing, Economy, Finance, Accounting there are also other providing the graduates with full computer skills and social knowledge. This programme along with intensive foreign languages' courses have given an excellent effect - WSB-NLU graduates (at the moment above 1,000) are easily able to find good jobs; almost half of the full-time graduates work in the biggest and the most prestigious companies in Warsaw. It can be even said that the most important advantage of our graduates is excellent command of English, full computer skills, and (perhaps mainly) the conviction, that they are able to do everything, their courage and creativity.

Presently WSB-NLU is beginning two-year Master's Degree programme for students with Bachelor's Degree. The programme is believed to be in the future our trump card and is divided into several specialities:

- Strategic Management
- Financial Management
- Management in International Organisations and Diplomacy
- Media Management and Public Relations
- Human Resource Management

Achievement of present level of programme and financial development was not possible without the sponsors and donators' help. Unfortunately, the school does not receive any support from the state and town authorities. All investments have been accomplished on the basis of our own resources, coming from the proper usage of students' fees, and money received from our outside educational activities. Especially in the first period the help received from our sponsors was extremely important. Let me list the biggest ones: Polish - German Co-operation Fund, Bank Przemysłowo - Handlowy, Animex, University - Microfilms Inc., Ebert's Fund.

A special role in the development of the school played support coming from the USA:

- programme and organisational support from National Louis University,
- grant of 450,000 USD from USIA for the Craig School of Business California State University, Fresno, California, USA for the programme of business education at WSB-NLU, what allowed in the first, the most difficult period to have at our school 27 full business courses lectured by American professors,
- constant, since the beginning, support from the Polish - American Entrepreneurship Fund transmitted through the Entrepreneurship Education Fund of Professor Jerzy Dietl, based on the scholarships for the best and not wealthy students; in the period of 1992 - 1998 WSB-NLU students received together 800 trimesterial scholarships for more than 360,000 PLN.

Thanks to the scholarships from the Polish - American Entrepreneurship Fund, as well as WSB-NLU own scholarship system, the school has a very advantageous sociological profile of the students. The preparatory year, called at our university 'the year of equalisation of chances', and all the scholarships have made the access to the university possible for young people from the province and poor background. Our experiences show that non-state owned university can have more preferable social profile of the students than even the most prestigious state owned schools, where the courses are only seemingly free of charge.

One of the most important features of our institution, distinguishing us among other Polish universities, is our wide and dynamic conference and instructional activity. In the period of 1994-98 WSB-NLU has organised 33 scientific conferences - in all of them the common characteristic was multienvironmental background of the participants. We were pleased to welcome at our conferences scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs, managers, politicians, representatives of self-governing bodies of different levels and members of non-governmental organisations. These conferences allowed e.g. to integrate different circles of the Małopolska region, what could have been noticed in early (1994) decision to undertake works leading to preparing the strategy for regional development of the Małopolska region and reports regarding the structural reform of the state. The prepared summaries became a very important element of the work carried by the Polish Government in order to implement structural and administrative reform of the state.

Since the establishing in 1992, WSB - NLU has been emphasising an importance of the co-operation with companies of different sectors. For almost seven years WSB-NLU together with the Chamber of Commerce in Nowy Sącz have organised 20 four- and five-day training seminars for presidents of large

Polish corporations which were attended by over 700 top managers from over 300 enterprises.

One of the specialities of our instructional offer is a one-year postgraduate programme for managers from large companies. So far the courses have been finished by 344 managers from such companies as: *Zelmer Rzeszów, Sendzimir Steelworks in Cracow, ZZPC Opoczno, Tymbark Co. Ltd., Kraśnik Co. Ltd., ZNTK Nowy Sącz*. Presently we are just about to start post-graduate studies for *Mostostal Kraków Co. Ltd., Apexim Co. Ltd. In Warsaw*, for members of *Business Centre Club in Warsaw, Alwernia Co. Ltd.*, a group of founding companies and, in co-operation with the town authorities, for a group of managers from Gorlice.

A unique instructional project has been designed at WSB-NLU for selected companies. Its general principle is to provide instruction for different groups involved in the process of managing a company. The companies that participate in this programme are *ZZPC Opoczno, Tymbark Co. Ltd. and Mostostal Co. Ltd.* The programme begins with a three-day seminar for 16 top managers and 16 representatives of labour unions. It is followed by post-graduate studies for 30-person groups of managers and a wide programme of additional instructions (about 6 days a year) for large groups of middle-level managers (e.g. in *ZZPC Opoczno* in 1997 there were 124 participants).

In 1997 Rector of WSB - NLU, personally supervising the co-operation with Polish companies, together with 11 Polish leading managers established a unique centre dealing with research, consulting and education. The main research task of the Institute for Advanced Management is scrutinising the transformation process of companies started after 1989. The task of the Institute is also teaching managerial personnel, particularly young managers.

Despite the fact that WSB-NLU has been operating relatively short, its students have achieved a lot of spectacular and important successes, e.g.:

- twice winning in an international Internet contest *Market Place* with representatives of American and European universities in 1996 and 1997,
- second place in 1997 and first place in 1998 in the Competition of Entrepreneurship organised by the Entrepreneurship Education Fund for the students of the third year of non-state owned business schools and economics departments of state universities,
- Konrad Pryt's first place in competition for the best bachelor's dissertation of the year 1996,
- a lot of spectacular achievements in finding jobs in Polish, international and foreign companies, e.g. one of our this-year graduates Janusz Moneta has been recently offered the position in an excellent consulting company *Booz Allen and Hamilton* after being selected from a group of 300 applicants.

HISTORY:

- **October 1991 - two-year post-secondary college (64 students)**
- **October 1992 - a formal agreement with National-Louis University, Illinois, USA; a ministerial accreditation for licencjat / Bachelor's Degree**
- **October 1997 - accreditation certificate of the Association for Management Education for the full-time programme**
- **July 1998 - formal ministerial accreditation for Master's Degree**

THE BEGINNING:

- ◆ lack of academic tradition in Nowy Sącz
- ◆ lack of financial support from the Government and local authorities
- ◆ initial capital of the Founder - 2,000 USD in 1991
- ◆ lack of professional programmes for teaching business in Poland in 1991

PRESENT DAY:

- 3,010 students, including 1,700 of full-time
- more than 1,000 graduates with Bachelor's Degree
- 344 graduates of post-graduate programme for managers
- 138 of full-time faculty
- the most up-dated equipment in Poland (220 computers in the network, including 110 Pentium II 266, own television studio, electronic library with 950 titles of American scientific magazines
- more than 50 didactic rooms, including 2 fully-equipped amphitheatre halls

TODAY:

Balanced budget since 1996 with a relatively low tuition fee – in 1998-2000 (only 1,665 USD a year)

STRUCTURE OF THE INCOMES IN 1997/98:

• tuition fee	2,822,100 USD (75%)
• outside activities	183,500 USD (5%)
• grants	199,100 USD (5%)
• credits	222,500 USD (6%)
• other	336,000 USD (9%)
• total income	3,763,200 USD

STRUCTURE OF THE EXPENSES IN 1997/98:

• educational costs	1,868,200 USD (50%)
• investments and purchases	594,700 USD (16%)
• administration costs	359,100 USD (9%)
• permanent costs	421,400 USD (11%)
• scholarships	406,315 USD (11%)
• other	113,485 USD (3%)

POSITION OF THE SCHOOL

Ranking list of Polish non-state owned universities in 'WPROST' magazine: first position since 1995; since 1997 together with Prof. A. Koźminski's School.

Ranking list in magazine 'WPROST' in 1998, a joint category of state and non-state owned universities – *Where to study business?*

1. The Graduate School of Business - National Louis University in Nowy Sącz
2. The Warsaw School of Economics
3. Higher School of Entrepreneurship and Management in Warsaw
3. Warsaw University
3. Higher School of Management – The Polish Open University in Warsaw

Position of the School

- 1996 and 1997 - first place in an international students' Internet contest „MARKET PLACE”
- 1997 and 1998 - final level of the Student' Competition of Entrepreneurship
1997 – second, behind the Cracow School of Economics
1998 – first, together with University of Toruń
- 20 seminars for top managers of large Polish companies (700 managers)
- excellent jobs of the graduates
- awards and distinctions for the creator and Rector

*HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE?*A - academic reasons

- basing the teaching programme on the experiences of the American partner-institution
- intensive programme of foreign languages (990 hours during first two years)
- additional, preparatory year for students with insufficient command of English (720 hours)
- wide, comprehensive, 'head opening' programme of teaching
- wonderful atmosphere of co-operation and respect between students and faculty
- support from the partner-institutions from abroad (in the first period there were 62 courses lectured by foreign professors)
- strong priority - quality of education (about 50% of classes in small groups, interactive methods), instead of financially attractive model of the fast increase in the number of students

*HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE?*B - financial reasons

- 1) Financial support in the first period from international institutions:
 - Polish - German Co-operation Fund
 - United States Information Agency
 - Swedish Institute for International Support
 - Polish - American Entrepreneurship Fund
 - Ebert's Fund
 - European Programmes PHARE
- 2) Support from Polish business circles:
 - Polish Chamber of Commerce
 - large companies and banks
- 3) Careful budgeting (only 9% of administrative expenses and only 11% of permanent costs)
- 4) Faculty and staff members' consciousness that there has been a need to limit salary requirements

*HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE?*C- leadership

- 1) strong leadership, sometimes stubbornness and constant availing of opportunities from the founder and Rector
- 2) opening the founders of the School towards the world and lots of innovation activities
- 3) effective work of a small but extremely engaged group of the School organisers
- 4) unique in Polish circumstances strong relationships between the School and a large group of different companies
- 5) fast opening beyond traditional academic activities - in the period 1994 - 1998 WSB-NLU organised 33 multienvironmental scientific, regional and political conferences
- 6) strong engagement from a large group of students in the conference and organisational activities

*HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE?*D - media

- 1) WSB-NLU from the very beginning became for the Polish media a positive symbol of the process of transformation in Poland (dozens of articles, TV and radio programmes)
- 2) Article about WSB-NLU by Kevin Dove in *Financial Times* from 25 March, 1998:

 ”...CUTTING EDGE OF TRANSITION IN POLAND”