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**Organization's name:** STUDIO KERNEL  
**Division/Category:** Division 13/ Audiovisual; Subdivision 13.6.; Category: Communication Skills  
**Title of entry:** The Masters of the Plaited Heart  
**Time period of project:** September /December 2002  
**Brief Description:** You will find the story about how modern bakers at the Grosuplje Bakery learned to make the traditional Slovenian plaited heart and how they managed to conquer the hearts of their customers with a 3-minute television presentation.

### **NEED/OPPORTUNITY**

Grosuplje Bakery's development strategy undertakes to combine traditional baking procedures and state-of-the-art technology. Its symbol is the traditional Slovenian plaited bread, while its basic value is "mastery".

Over many years, the Bakery has been supporting the preservation of traditional customs in the local community, mostly by sticking to traditional procedures also in the use of the latest technology. At the national level, the Bakery wants to achieve the position of traditional bakers, since this value is highly appreciated by bread buyers. A quantitative survey carried out among bread buyers showed that the Bakery's main competitor, with whom they share the leading role in the Slovenian market, is slightly better perceived. Until now, the Bakery was using a rather clichéd corporate feature television presentation, without creating a recognizable identity (the Slovenian television channels offer interesting opportunities for broadcasting effective presentations).

The project of learning to plait the traditional heart-shaped bread, shown on television, may be an opportunity to make an effective communication move and strengthen the company's identity.

### **INTENDED AUDIENCE**

The film is primarily focusing on the Slovenian buyers of bread. Mostly, these are women from four-member families and higher income households. They are predominantly under 45 years of age. Normally, they have a high-school or university degree. They are unable to bake bread, but they appreciate the kind of bread made at home by their grandmothers.

### **GOALS/ OBJECTIVES**

A quantitative survey, carried out among bread buyers in November 2002, right ahead of the beginning of the project, showed that the Grosuplje Bakery equals its main competitor, occupying the first place among Slovenian bakeries in terms of quality. Both bakeries were given high marks.

The elements of the bread mostly appreciated by the customers are its taste, its appearance and nutritional features related to traditional baking: healthy ingredients. Regarding the aspect of traditional baking, the Grosuplje Bakery was rated by the customers somewhat lower than its competitor (4.1 of 5). The competitor was given a slightly better mark (4.2). The goal of the Grosuplje Bakery is to improve its mark to 4.3 and gain the leading position in the aspect of traditional baking.

We wanted to achieve sale results in the most important month, i.e. December, by increasing the index of the average sale increase in December compared to other months, which was at 20 percent in 2001, to 30 percent.

## **SOLUTIONS**

The Grosuplje Bakery suddenly discovers Mrs. Marjanca Dobnikar, one of the few people mastering the complicated technique of plaiting the traditional heart-shaped bread. The Bakery proposed her a co-operation with the aim of maintaining the technique - known by few - and she agreed to transfer her knowledge to the Bakery's best bakers.

- We decided to produce a three-minute video film about the project and broadcast it in December over media with the widest public - i.e. both national television stations and thus improve the clichéd corporate television presentation.

- The Bakery did not make any direct statement about the company, but it only referred to responsibility and care. We were showing elements that could effectively convince potential customers - women who appreciate bread as it was made by their grandmothers.

- The film's main message was the mastery - to which the Bakery obliged itself and consequently its title was "The Masters of Plaited Hearts". The message conveyed is that diligent masters can make and maintain masterpieces. At the Grosuplje Bakery, we are able to do exactly that, as we have the necessary skills and a proper approach to the national cultural heritage.

- The movie acts in two senses: directly - with its informative charge about the cultural heritage and indirectly - as a promotion by means of corporate communication. The informative charge is achieved by presenting the product, its history and making, as well as introducing Mrs. Dobnikar and her knowledge. The corporate promotion is carried out through visual elements, the Company's logo and identity, the manager's statement about bread baking as part of a culture.

- Particular importance is given to the original product made by Mrs. Dobnikar.

- The script includes a contribution by a known university ethnologist giving the entire project the necessary credibility. This last feature also confirms the authentic know-how held by the Grosuplje Bakery.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES**

We have been co-operating with a technical crew with wide experience. Particular attention was given to the graphical part of the corporate image. The budget, agreed with the customer, was adequate to the entire project.

A major - successfully resolved - challenge was the co-ordination of the production and script procedures. Indeed, the production started before the script was drafted therefore the film was being created on two sides, using existing materials that were created without a communication concept or goals and new takes following a defined message and script. The technical crew, however, grasped the message and co-operated in the needed adaptations.

Another challenge was the contribution of the university lecturer. In spite of its informative value, the film is a message given by a commercial company and this could be a hindrance to the professor's contribution. However, the professor did not object to that, since - in his view - the Bakery's concept of maintaining the cultural heritage coincided with his own professional efforts. These could be summarized as: connecting the development of modern business with its cultural roots in an advanced manner and thus spread the knowledge on the heritage.

## **MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION**

A quantity-related survey carried out after the completion of the project proved that we have been very successful.

The Bakery's identity as a traditional company reached the intended mark of 4.3 and the evaluation of the quality of its products went up to 4.4 (from the previous 4.3).

The sale results have been achieved, since the index of the average sale increase in December compared to other months of 120 percent in 2001, increased to 139 percent in December 2002, outstandingly exceeding the intended 130 percent.

We were particularly satisfied of the fact that the film excited a journalist of the Austrian TV channel ORF, who presented the project and the Bakery in a show broadcast by the Austrian and the Slovenian national television. The presentation of the wedding heart-shape bread also attracted the organizers of a classy fashion show of wedding gowns and they decided to include in their script a special place to the plaited wedding heart of the Grosuplje Bakery.

The tradition of offering a plaited heart to newlyweds was revived in Slovenia and the Bakery started receiving an incredible amount of orders for that article. The demand was also exploited by the Bakery's masters, who were given permission to bake hearts at their homes and have an additional source of income.