

Interview with the 2018 CEEMAN Champions



The 2018 CEEMAN Champions at the Award Ceremony of the 26th CEEMAN Annual Conference in Prague.

Zoltán Buzády – Innovative Pedagogy

Livija Marko: Zoltan, your nomination for the CEEMAN Champion Award by Corvinus Business School pointed out that one of your key contributions to teaching at their institution was the adaptation of FLIGBY – a game simulation developed for corporations – for Master's, MBA and executive programs. They also noted its importance considering your area of teaching. Game simulations have long been employed in finance, however marketing and strategy courses are only beginning to be enriched by such teaching tools. Given the differences between corporate environments and business school courses, what was the biggest challenge you encountered in the adaptation process?

Zoltán Buzády: There are conceptual and technical challenges that differ across the two segments. In a business school environment, I place far more emphasis on conveying to students a number of relevant concepts such as the integration of strategy, organizational behavior, change management, motivation, and flow theory. I also have to keep in mind that their course typically runs over several weeks. Thus, I need to organize their learning into a more coherent process. In contrast to this, in business training situations I experience a much greater need by participants to be able to discuss the internal problems of their companies and their own personal dilemmas during the Flow leadership training. This means that I use my coaching and other relevant people-management concepts and tools to deliver the desired transformation and leadership development. There is a technical

aspect in that setting: human resource and corporate training managers want to have a big influence on the process and the outcomes of the FLIGBY game process. Also, we have to support them much more in their use of the newly-gained human resource data for their analytics and strategic planning decisions.

LM: The acronym from which this simulation game gets its name stands for Flow Is Good Business for You. Flow is a concept developed by Prof. Csikszentmihalyi. In 2015, you co-authored a book that explores the relevance of the Flow concept in teaching soft skills in management. If you could introduce anyone to Flow, what should be the main lesson, and how can management educators best utilize it in their work?

A workplace conducive to Flow is ideal because it attracts the most able individuals, is likely to keep them longer, and obtains spontaneous effort in their work.

ZB: Csikszentmihaly asks one of the most fundamental questions: what makes a life meaningful? His scientific (!) answer to this question was the discovery that while performing any type of activity, it is possible to enter a mental state which psychologists call "optimal experience" or Flow in more popular terms. Tribal leaders, warlords, and religious heads led earlier societies. Now this role is given to organizational and business leaders. They have to provide the minimum needed for our daily survival and provide a sense of what creates a meaningful life. Therefore, Csikszentmihaly and we at the 'Leadership & Flow Global Research Network', which I am directing now, urge management educators and business leaders to create organizations in which every individual not only can earn money (type A reward) but can also experience as much Flow as possible during their work in order to live a meaningful life (type B reward).

Zoltán Buzády



While most people enjoy working when the work provides Flow, too few jobs are designed to make Flow possible. This is where management can make a real difference.

For a manager or leader who truly cares about the bottom line in the broadest sense of that term, the first priority is to eliminate obstacles to Flow at all levels of the organization and to substitute practices and policies that are designed to make work enjoyable.

A workplace conducive to Flow is ideal because it attracts the most able individuals, is likely to keep them longer, and obtains spontaneous effort in their work. It is best, too, from the viewpoint of employees because it helps them to live a happier life, and it supports their skill development and personal growth.

LM: FLIGBY can be considered an important milestone, for your work and the gamification process of management education. What other goals are you pursuing in your professional career related to gamification and/or other areas?

ZB: We are currently in the process of explaining and sharing the core insights and technology of Flow-promoting leadership via serious games to other educational partners and training institutions.

FLIGBY is the gamification of the Flow-based leadership growth process. We show how one can build an entire training course around it or use it just to enrich and enliven existing courses. We also collect a large data set, which offers a unique research opportunity, because the players' leadership skill measurements are based on non-intrusive observations, yielding unbiased outcomes. Thus, I am awaiting proposals for future research from partners in which they explain how they envisage to join this new leadership theory and its applications.

We have moved away from conveying abstract business concepts in written form and are moving toward more engaging and highly interactive channels of communication.

LM: This is not the first award you have received for your efforts. FLIGBY also won the Gold Medal at the 2012 International Serious Play Awards in the category of Corporate Games, having been selected as the best digital game for managers that year. What does the CEEMAN Champion Award mean to you and Corvinus Business School?

ZB: I have also won the CEEMAN Case Writing Competition twice already! This most recent award shows that it is possible to further enhance participant-centered learning with new digital technologies. That is, we have now moved away from the conveying of abstract business concepts via a written text and situations outlined in a static organizational setting. We are moving forward toward more engaging and much richer channels of communication, which are highly interactive. The advantages of such a video-based serious game during the learning process are multiple. Although FLIGBY is Flow-based, the leadership challenges and the options that it presents are fully compatible with a wide range of leadership theories and approaches, enhancing them all. So we do not teach just one single concept or framework to our students.

At the end, the game provides an individual report to all players on their skill sets, with a range of benchmarking options available. It brings excitement and inspiration to the teaching of a wide span of leadership topics and most players experience personal Flow during the game.

As to our university, which is highly diversified in terms of academic areas and educational activities in our country, but also across the globe, I think it clearly demonstrates that the post-transition years are coming to an end. Cutting-edge technology and world-class conceptual rigor for solving the relevant managerial and leadership dilemmas of the modern world can now be better mastered. I hope that not only our university but also many other partner institutions in Central and Eastern Europe will continue their successful leapfrogging in the global academic arena and ecosystem.

Sophia Opatska – Institutional Management

Livija Marko: Sophia, in 2008 you and your colleagues took on the task of establishing a business school in Ukraine and identified the Ukrainian Catholic University as the partner to take that step with. Since then, Lviv Business School (LvBS) has changed dramatically. In the last ten years, the number of

Sophia Opatska



students has increased ten-fold, its faculty is very international, and the school was ranked one of the top-three Ukrainian business schools. Having built LvBS from scratch at the time, what was the biggest challenge for you in that process, and what do you consider the biggest lesson for other thought leaders seeking to establish something new?

Sophia Opatska: It is important to keep in mind that creating something new takes time. One should be patient enough so as not to give up too soon. Most people from business have a tendency to be very positive-thinking, especially those who are starting something new. They hope for the best. Generally, entrepreneurs are inclined to delude themselves a little bit and be too optimistic about how things will develop. However, in reality things do not develop so rapidly and it is very important not to give up too early. This is especially true if you have built something and it seems to start working. The start-up still needs time to become sustainable and this can very often take years. In our case, we are still in the process of shaping the market of business education. Despite the fact that some institutions have been in the Ukrainian market for 25-30 years, the needs of Ukrainian business education are constantly in the process of formation. Why is that so? The reason is that we are getting rid of post-Soviet practices and beliefs, such as paternalism and reliance on others. We are trying to demonstrate to society that an entrepreneur is a person who can achieve a lot and can contribute to society. This is a person who is not only consuming but also investing. We are also in the process of doing away with corruption practices and administrative influence. We are building free competition. A customer should get the best value. So, we are all working to create the market for that kind of education and services.

LM: One of your biggest ambitions back in 2008 was to "put Ukraine on the world map of business". Considering the international student body and faculty of LvBS, one could argue this mission has been pursued successfully. What other milestones do you see ahead of LvBS, the institution that you have headed as founding dean and vice-rector for academic affairs, and on whose supervisory board you sit today?

SO: Firstly, to my mind, we are still engaged with the mission to put Ukraine on the world business map. Currently, many Ukrainian companies are at a stage when they are entering global markets and have become aware of new opportunities that they never had before. These companies shifted their focus from the CIS market to those of Europe, the United States, and China. We are positioning ourselves quite differently now as a state and also in terms of a business society. It is commonly known that countries around the world are perceived not only through the prism of their geopolitical position, but also through their influence in business. That is why this issue is very important for us and we want to help the Ukrainian business.

Secondly, Ukrainian business is generally 25 years old or younger. So, in a way there is a replacement going on of one generation by another. We want to help our business with the replacement of owners by professional management, and with the transition from one generation to the next within a family.

We are trying to demonstrate to society that an entrepreneur is a person who can achieve a lot and contribute to society; they do not only consume, but also invest.

Thirdly, we are a business school, but it often happens that we need to broaden our impact and educate people from the state sector. Nowadays, our country is undergoing a pretty tough reform process. Many segments are experiencing a transition from the usual state governance to building efficient management. For instance, we can talk about the ways in which people who are working in sectors of economic development can assist business. For this reason, we have developed an educational program for the executives of the Ministry of Economics and Trade called "Export: The Ukrainian International Trade Team Works for Business". One more example: we are launching programs for the health care system, training chief medical personnel to become effective managers and chief executives. Also, we are working with the biggest and most influential universities to abandon inefficient and insufficiently reformed systems and start effective management instead.

So this is an important contribution that Lviv Business School is making to society locally, regionally, and nationally. This is where a radical change in Ukraine can take roots, as there is a big need for effective managers. And, the more numerous they are, not only in business, but also in other spheres, the easier it is for business to develop. In other words, we are striving to bring more business thinking to all areas of life. We are trying to implement low-cost initiatives of high value.

Why is this so important? Because businesses try to improve customer experience and it is worth pursuing this goal at state institutions as well. A very ambitious task that LvBS has set itself is to change the paradigm of thinking in society. We feel that we have the strength to do it as the Ukrainian Catholic University and its business school have a strong image.

Another important objective is the ethical dimension and goals of sustainable development. This is a new topic in Ukraine and we are one of the pioneers here. Our task is to have the principles of sustainable

development integrate smoothly in business, society, and educational institutions. People who come to LvBS already possess a definite set of values, which we also share, but in the process of studying they undergo certain changes and become more socially responsible. Moreover, our society is quite ready for this after the Revolution of Dignity, when Ukrainians stated that they were ready to give up selfishness and share with each other.

LM: In 2012, LvBS introduced an MSc in Innovations and Entrepreneurship. Was this step crucial in terms of positioning LvBS on the market of national education offerings, and what other attributes, in your view, set your school apart from others in the country?

SO: Yes, the MSc in Innovations is crucial as we did not follow the idea of specialized MBA products, but developed general Master's programs. Every time we select a subject that is of importance for business, be it innovations in entrepreneurship or technology management. Our selection is based on the observation that the country needs to take a radical step forward. If there is a good opportunity, we help those who wish to take this step. Not a single business school in Ukraine has this range of Master's programs: Key Executive MBA (for owners and CEOs), MSc in Technology Management (for higher managements in information technology companies), MA in Human Resources and Organization Development, and MSc in Innovations and Entrepreneurship (for young entrepreneurs).

We work with some of the biggest and most influential universities in the country to increase efficiency in management. There is a big need for effective managers and we strive to bring more business thinking to all areas of life.

Many people prefer an MBA degree, as it helps them develop as executives. Companies are in need of good human resource directors, technological directors, and innovation directors. This is what makes our school different, to my mind. And this is what enabled us to introduce innovative products that helped us develop faster.

LM: This is not the first time you and your institution have been recognized by CEEMAN. LvBS has been our member for most of its existence, and two

years ago it obtained CEEMAN International Quality Accreditation-IQA. What does the Champion Award mean for you personally and to LvBS?

We have proved that new business school models can be successful; we can stay small and produce a big impact. In the modern world, it is not necessary to be big and clumsy.

SO: For me, this is not just a personal award, but more of a team award. This shows that we are going in the right direction. As I see it, it is very important that Lviv Business School is not a very traditional institution. The school is small as we are mostly an executive institution. We have a very unique model and, still, we got our acknowledgement. In other words, we have proved that new models of business schools can be successful and achieve their goals. For me, this is the evidence that we can stay small and produce a big impact. And this is exactly why we can move on. In the modern world, it is not necessary to be big and clumsy. This is currently being recognized around the world. We are a start-up, and start-ups are often very successful. Maybe, we can serve as an example of big success to somebody, first of all to our clients. When comparing our first students, we clearly realize that they did not choose us for the school's name but because they trusted some people who were here at the start of this process. In my opinion, this is a significant point.

Daniil Muravskii – Responsible Management Education

Livija Marko: Daniil, when you became vice-dean of the International Relations Department at IBS-Moscow, RANEP, you launched an initiative to make your institution wheelchair-accessible, following the application of a student with limited mobility. How did you convince the leadership to enact the necessary changes in such a short timeframe?

Daniil Muravskii: This was my first week living in a new city and working in a new position as vice-dean of a university whose rules were mostly unknown to me. As I started to get familiarized with the ongoing processes, we received a letter from the mother of a new student, informing us that her daughter was confined to a wheelchair, and that she hoped that everything would be suited to her needs. Our central campus in Moscow alone has nine buildings and encompasses a vast geographical area. No one knew where even to begin to respond to this request. That is how this

became my very first task as the vice-dean – to make sure that Anna was going to be able to study with everybody else.

We wanted to stimulate inclusion by creating events in which people with reduced mobility could be equally involved. The goal was to make everyone forget that the person sitting next to them is different in that way.

I knocked on the door of every building manager suggesting short-term and long-term solutions to the problem of limited wheelchair access to classrooms and buildings. I had to study the ramp market and modern technological solutions, as well as the restrictions, specifications, and peculiarities of installing temporary and permanent ramps and other supporting facilities. Some buildings were already partially equipped with elevators and ramps, but the infrastructure and supporting processes were not always there yet. For example, in winter, the snow-cleaners' paths did not include the areas necessary to access the ramps. Some ramps were too steep and to open some doors connected to ramps one needed to ask the guards for assistance for security reasons. So, it is needless to say that this was a challenge. I must say that it is still ongoing to some extent. Although we are probably one of the best wheelchair-accessible universities in Russia, we still have room for improvement.

Coming back to the question of whether it was difficult to gain support, I was surprised that it was not. Even though we are a huge institution with a very complex structure, as soon as Anna arrived in her first

week of studies, everybody noticed her even though this is an institution of tens of thousands of students. This was not just because she was the first person in a wheelchair studying full-time on the campus, but because she was noticeably a very bright, cheerful, and approachable person. Everybody – the security guards, the cafeteria ladies, the program office staff and, of course, the students - actively tried to make her stay at RANEPa as comfortable as they could. The university leaders did what they could to help with financial and organizational matters, but I would say that in this case the changes happened from the bottom to the top.

LM: With your student project MOBILE STUDENTS (MOST, which means "bridge" in Russian), you sought to address the causes for people with limited mobility being underrepresented at top educational institutions. The former might feel discouraged from applying at such schools, not considering them viable opportunities for their own development, while many of these institutions are not prepared for accommodating such students either. Oftentimes, there is also a lack of awareness and knowledge among the general student body about what limited mobility entails. What was the biggest challenge you encountered when combating these misconceptions?

Instead of screaming about the importance of CSR every day, it is sometimes more effective to whisper such thoughts from time to time in contexts that do not necessarily have anything to do with CSR.

DM: When we established MOST, we started to approach some of the biggest companies in the market that cater to the limited-mobility population in Russia. They already had many ongoing life-changing initiatives aimed at enriching the lives of people with limited mobility: e.g. special taxi services, wheelchair balls for teenagers, etc. But that was not what we wanted to do. We did not want to organize events solely around limited-mobility people, nor did we want to create social marketing campaigns. We wanted to stimulate inclusion by creating events in which wheelchair-restricted people could be involved equally with others, and where there would be no association with charity. Therefore, we organized guest lectures for speakers with limited mobility, and organized sports and gaming events where students could compete alongside people with limited mobil-

Daniil Muravskii



ity. The goal was to make everyone forget that the person sitting next to him is different in that way.

Surprisingly, this was a new concept to the corporations that we tried to collaborate with. So we had to build our own system and become specialists in that field by ourselves.

LM: In the initiatives that you were nominated for, you addressed two aspects of social responsibility: inclusion of marginalized groups and sustainability. Do you think management education institutions are doing enough in these fields?

DM: I cannot speak for all institutions, but lately, as I got acquainted with the students that I supervised this year, I found myself very proud of IBS-Moscow for paying so much attention to corporate social responsibility in the past year. This is evident from both the topic choices and the approaches to handling corporate social responsibility. You know, it is easy to pretend that you are an institution that cares about the environment. It is also very easy for the students to simulate involvement in topics about social or environmental responsibility so as to get a high grade in a particular subject. It is a much more subtle process to make the students and the staff actually believe in those causes. I personally think that instead of screaming loudly about the importance of corporate social responsibility on a dedicated course every day, sometimes it is more effective to whisper this thought from time to time in particular contexts and classes that do not necessarily have anything to do with corporate social responsibility. This is what I try to do in my marketing classes as well.

LM: You have received several awards for MOST. What does the CEEMAN Champion Award mean to you personally and to IBS-Moscow?

DM: Only after several years following the MOST initiative did I really manage to formulate my point of view on responsible education (the “whispers instead of shouting” and “inclusion-driven” concept). This came out of the process of integrating more social initiatives in my gamified courses. Very quickly, this became something I was widely known for at work. Every game I design has a subtle, yet strong, responsible management component. I never thought that I could get such recognition as the CEEMAN Champion Awards out of my small humble projects. And for me this was a sign that the world needs this, and that it might be the thing I should keep on doing professionally in the years to come.

The 2019 CEEMAN Champion Awards are now open for nominations! We are looking forward to hearing about amazing individual achievements at your institution. Find out more on <http://www.ceeman.org/awards>.