



Online is a dominant but also confusing trend in contemporary marketing

Jan Podhorný

He has experienced marketing in a large corporation and as a freelance consultant, too. He can compare what marketing activities in different industries involve and what a good „marketer“ cannot be without. We're talking about Jan Podhorný, who has been working for companies such as Tescoma and Trinity Bank, and he was willing to let us take a look at some of his experience.

1. Students often choose marketing majors when they are professionally ambiguous, without realizing that marketing is a very creative discipline. How do you perceive marketing and what has been your approach to it?

„First, so many students think that marketing equals advertising. That's a common shortcut, but it's not true at all. Marketing as a concept is extremely broad. It currently uses hundreds to thousands of tools and different applications - from very technical stuff to really creative ones.

I tend to do creative work - I play guitar, compose music and have always been close to creating. Plus, I studied graphic design and marketing. Even there, my path led from graphic design to advertising and creative work. I'm definitely more of a creative person than an analytical person. I've always disliked working with numbers, I'm much more interested in coming up with creative campaigns, executing them and creating visual and strategic marketing.“

2. Based on your experience, how does marketing differ in different industries, for example, in conservative versus modern industries?

„Quite extremely. Just compare start-ups and big corporations that have been doing the same stuff for 30 years. Often, creativity is a tool to overcome a competitor's higher budget and get a higher impact. A good example is the banking sector, which is very conservative, but if you approach it with creativity, emotions and also know how to deploy campaigns quickly and based on data, you move both performance and brand further.“

3. In your opinion, how have marketing tools changed in recent years and what would you say is the most significant trend?

„It's definitely online. Online has affected all industries without exception. On the other hand, students like to overestimate the importance of social media. They often don't realize that if something is cheap, then logically, everyone is doing it and therefore, it's challenging to succeed there... Online is also the most specific and confusing because it's very hard to determine which marketing channel will work for whom. I base my strategy on having two main pillars. One is performance marketing, which means something that brings me a specific conversion, and then I have the brand or design to go with that. From my own experience, when those pillars are about equally robust, it works ideally. At the same time, there's then the advantage that if, for example, the brand runs out of money, or something happens, and the performance drops out, then one of those pillars can always hold itself up for a relatively long time. But if there's only one pillar from the beginning, it just doesn't work.“

4. The perception of marketing is often narrowed down to the B2C (business-to-customer) sphere, but B2B (business-to-business) marketing also plays an important role. For example, our students sometimes struggle to identify what works for a targeted customer in the business sector. How do you feel about this kind of marketing?

„This is one of the most difficult questions. In general, it's terribly hard to detect a B2B position in marketing, especially in the online space, because behind every B2B position, there's actually someone B2C in the end. The tricky part is finding that moment when, for example, the CEO of a company, the decision maker, is in a position where he's thinking for the company or if he's at home buying a fishing rod. It's the same person but in a very different role. For example, with our start-up Archetypo, where we produce baby changing and nursing boxes and sell them B2B, for example, to shopping malls, offices and so on, we target our communication at the final customer. So, actually, as a business, it's B2B, but we do B2C marketing.“

5. It can also be concluded that there is a renaissance of some of the earlier tools, such as LinkedIn. In general, tools that facilitate networking in B2B marketing are coming back...

„Yes. LinkedIn is great as a tool because it contains information that you can't find anywhere else, for example, the experience or length of time a person has been in a particular position. For B2B, I would 100% recommend LinkedIn, even though it is a bit overwhelmed by the HR area and actually, the campaigns are

relatively expensive because HR departments pump big budgets into it. But for example, we used LinkedIn for a new B2B campaign where it was about training for specific IT technology in Prague. The course cost about 2,000 euros, so it was expensive. We looked for contacts through LinkedIn, where the decision maker is the head of the IT department, who sends two of his specialists there to get trained. And it was worth it."

6. Going back to the B2C sector, we notice that word of mouth has become an all-encompassing term lately. How do you perceive this trend?

„Companies suddenly found that impersonation and recommendations worked out; they suddenly discovered America. It should be a standard part of any marketing. Personal recommendation is always the best form of advertising. It has always been and will always be."

7. Finally, coming back to you, how does your approach to marketing differ when you are running your own business, for example, when you work for Trinity Bank? How much of a difference is it?

„I still approach it the same way, I stick to the Bata values, i.e., hard work and a maximum pro-client approach are essential. What differs are the strategies, which need to be chosen very specifically for each client. At Trinity Bank, we have been able to push the brand knowledge, which has evolved exponentially over the last two years. This is, of course, due to the diligence, expertise and DNA that is typical for all employees at Trinity Bank. Our start-up, Archetypo, is the exact opposite... still in its early stages and therefore needs to be nurtured and looked after very carefully :)"



Mental setup is needed to deal with hard data

Jiří Doležal

The importance of personal management and the path to a learning organization. These are just some of the unusual topics that an inspiring man with an interesting business past and present - Jiří Doležal from the company Univerisy - opens up in his business. And it is the not well-known but increasingly widespread concept of a learning organization among entrepreneurs that our interview was largely devoted to.

1. You studied Finance, which is based on fixed metrics and everything important is defined by numbers. Now you're in a completely different field. When did you realize the importance of inner setup for running a successful business?

„In business, you need to work with hard data and calibrate accordingly to see if you're on the right track. But to be able to confront hard data, you need to have the mental setup to do so. This means, on the one hand, believing you can achieve your dream, but on the other hand, critically evaluating where you stand. You can't do that without mental resilience because when you're running a business, the two realities won't always meet. You may slip into losing faith and therefore losing interest in the business, or you may avoid confronting the hard realities. Inner setup, for me, is the crucial point.

It's good to remember that this is not just a start-up space in business but a continuous cycle. Especially today, when the market is changing very fast and business models become outdated very quickly, you need to be prepared to change them. Compared to the 90s, when the lifetime of business models was something like 33 years, today it's something like 13. Your lifetime of the company may be 13 years because you won't be able to respond to market changes caused by high volatility, technological changes and geopolitics in general. It can affect you even at the level of a small company when you open an e-shop, are a typical manufacturer, or provide services. You need to know how the market perceives it, and at the same time, you need to have a piece of yourself in it because faith and determination come from joy, which you need to keep renewing.“

- 2. If we look at the website of your company Universy, you focus on topics such as the „learning organization“, a concept from foreign literature that was not known to many in the Czech corporate sphere until a few years ago. Do you struggle with the lack of awareness in the business world when applying this concept or has it improved over the last few years?**

„Let's start by talking about what a learning organization means. It's the kind of company or organization that makes sure there's a safe psychological environment so that people can share why they think in a certain way and share data to make better decisions. Within a learning organization, we deal with the fact that quite often we don't have the environment set up to learn effectively.

Sometimes we forget to perceive the learning activity according to the individual need, i.e., what I am currently dealing with and what I need. And certainly not pursuing something called „metanoia“, which expresses that at a certain point in time, we are a set of certain thoughts, patterns of decision-making, and positive and negative events that have happened to us, and this shapes our whole personality. Throughout life, we often get into the same decision-making patterns and we can't change anything. As an example, I mention my personality. I often watch Netflix or Disney, I browse social media, and it's a part of me, how I spend my free time, and how I feel when I am not feeling comfortable or happy. As a learning organization, we strive to make sure that this environment helps us overcome our mental patterns that don't serve us well.

The moment you have an environment that allows you to learn effectively so that you can surpass yourself, it means that you are able to identify well what is holding you back. At a certain point in life, you realize that it's not just about what new things you acquire but what you get rid of. In such an environment, you can grow much faster because you can learn much faster. This topic is starting to resonate a lot in the Czech and Slovakian context because as news about AI and chatbots emerge, people are starting to realize that their work may not be completely relevant in, let's say, ten years' time. So, organizations are starting to see the impact and importance of the environment again. Imagine having a learning environment in a learning organization that you go to and it's full of inspiring people who are much further ahead than you are, and at the same time, there's trust there so that you can share, learn, and be open to positive feedback. It's actually working with an inner dialogue.“

3. Coaches and consultants, or those who focus on soft skills, are often labeled as shamans, which means that they are not very popular with some entrepreneurs. How do you manage to make managers feel that they need your services?

„What is interesting for companies is that I help them create an in-house academy for knowledge sharing. This means a digital platform containing skill pillars and set processes to facilitate the selection of a particular activity. That's what companies hear about because the way the learning process currently works in organizations is usually that you have a team leader who sits down with the person once a year as part of an annual review, not of development but of performance, and they go through together how they did or didn't do. In the end, they'll ask what development project the person would need as part of their training, and they'll pick something from the training catalog. But the reality is that the vast majority of people never ever take anything from that development activity.

In companies, we have well-set financial plans and strategies, and we set targets to grow by another 10 to 15%, but we keep forgetting about whether those people have the skills to do it. We rely on them to learn in a personal area and to be inspired to grow themselves. It's just that the moment you have an external environment that's destructive because your confidence falls, people don't know if they're going to have a job next year, and the personal area to learn ceases to exist. And that's what strong market leaders realize. The educational function needs to precede the strategic function, and that often doesn't happen. There is a hypothesis that 95% of companies have an inadequate learning function. A person leaves my company and I actually lose his or her expertise. That's why we're doing the digital academy trying to find out how to capture the knowledge.

Shamanism occurs when you create processes and you need to raise their emotion in particular. These people often come from schools, feeling that no one taught them anything, learning was a drag, and they have no idea that the most effective learning comes through joy. That's where the shamanic work I do starts, where I take companies to team building, we do male-female circles, strengthening, meditation and breathing techniques. In general, to get them mentally well, to reset them and show them how one needs to have the mental energy to be capable of any cognitive performance.“

4. The concept of a learning organization has much in common with self-management. In your experience, is it true that an entrepreneur must first fail in order to realize the importance of self-management?

„Count on the fact that whoever has been doing something for a long time has usually failed. This is actually a confrontation with hard reality. You need to grow up, have the need to get it right. But it's more about the fact that strong and good leaders are set up for a lifetime of learning. They know they are where they are because they have been able to learn. They've learned that they can simply „dust themselves off“ from that confrontation with a harsh reality and start again. It is said that 80 to 90% of companies go out of business within three to five years. The point is that they don't quit because they don't have the cash flow and so on. They quit because they give up. There are tons of successful companies that started with a completely different business model and it was dysfunctional, so they changed it. It's about YOU within the business constantly looking for what the market actually really wants. You rarely get it right the first time. And the key is the mental toughness to be able to keep searching. But I wanted to say one more thing. I'm working with very successful companies now because, as Harvard Business Review wrote, the number one reason companies stop learning is because they're too successful. It's actually logical. If you have been the market leader for 15-20 years, people become rooted. It's an example of an over-fed cat that doesn't hunt anymore. These companies realize that they were really doing well, but now they're about to see new predatory competitors that are making better use of technology, spreading the pressure on digitization and generally renewing the mindset for people to use new digitization tools. People often don't want to learn with a new tool because the mental energy just isn't there. The resilience to learn new things is not there because learning naturally hurts and requires mental energy. The person has to be very resilient and be set up for a lifetime of learning to be able to go on.“

5. I have noticed that you often help companies with organizing team building and social activities. In some companies, these activities are still handled the old-fashioned way in the form of a bowling tournament or a visit to a restaurant. Does this mean that these companies underestimate team building? How do you see the potential benefits of such activities?

„Nowadays, you need to create space for people to be able to slow down and take a break. A lot of them just have too much on their calendar. You need to remember that we have fast-paced lives. This naturally leads to fast communication. Companies often find that they need to make quick decisions, so they have

quick meetings. When everyone is so fast, certain topics don't get covered. And those are the topics related to profoundness and to humanity. You don't build trust, which is essential for development, after having a quick meeting.

The Czech person is set for hard work. When more is wanted, he works harder. The point is that he can't work forever. He has a limited capacity. And what I need today is to deepen human contact and make these people realize that their best strategy is not to work harder but to work smarter. You're going to be able to learn something effectively, and I need to show you why you're not able to learn effectively now. I've had a great experience doing unconventional activities with them because bowling, sandwiches, and barbecues are fine, but most people get drunk and don't get deep. Plus, there's the other factor that when you have that activity, there's fragmentation or grouping. When I pick an activity, everyone is doing it at the same time and they're still working in a circle. That way they're actually sharing with each other, interacting and they're able to come together more easily. That is also a great recommendation for students. Make what you have done realistic, and remind yourself of it. We are biologically, and biochemically set up to see what exam we still have to do, what we don't have to do, what seminar paper we have to work on, what we haven't done yet, where we've burned out and that's where our focus is, which often goes against our self-confidence. This is what I've done, and this is great because this is what motivates me to keep going. It means that I need to go back to what I've done from time to time and remind myself of what I've done so that I'm able to meet those challenges. That's what I need to figure out for the company."

6. When you mention what you are striving to achieve in companies, it must be very difficult to evaluate whether it has been successful or not. It is probably difficult to set up a KPI for this. Are there ways of testing whether the company has achieved your goals?

„I enjoy the fact that education cannot be easily measured. It is crucial that the educational activity leads to a project. So, education like I'm learning Spanish for fun is fine, but in the context of business, it doesn't help you. Imagine you're a businessman going into the Spanish market and you need to learn Spanish to find a new type of client. That means your KPI for education corresponds with the number of new Spanish clients you get. I'm learning a skill and I'm applying that skill to a project. And that's what I measure - the success of that particular project. The same thing occurs when I set the parameters of a good team, which is basically team ethics. You can measure that too. Do we have credibility, do we have a well-set strategy? Employees will give you a subjective assessment. The trend is actually obvious, it's often called human design, going back to people

and their needs after many years. And it's a phenomenal thing because HR in companies will have to transform to address productivity and people's mental health."

7. Can you give examples of companies that have successfully implemented the concept of a learning organization?

„It's a very difficult topic. A large number of almanacs have been published by Peter Senge, who shares stories of IBM, Honeywell and others. In the Czech context, these insights are shared by the glass factory LASVIT. If a company embarks on the path of a learning organization, it is much more interesting to look inwards and engage a network of people who are already on the journey of lifelong learning. This is because in a learning organization, you need the support of people who are already set up that way, and the ambassadors will pull the wider team together. For me, that means making sure you sit down with people in the organization set up for lifelong learning. Have a meeting together and have some discussions about how you might create an environment where people can breathe and live well."

8. Is there anything you've learned from the companies you are working with? Are individual companies modifying your perception of what a learning organization should look like?

„Definitely. It's an incredible blessing in my profession. For example, at the end of 2022, I had a team building with a marketing agency that I still remember very well. Those people were great. And each of them had something unique which helped me better set my internal perspective."



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I wanted to fulfill my life according to myself, not according to someone else

Václav Staněk

Vasky, Bagind, inhubo, Wuders, Paon and now also Botas are the brands that a young man with an entrepreneurial spirit – Václav Staněk - is associated with. Vašek can be inspiring for us for many reasons. For example, he started his business at an age when many of his peers did not know what to do with their lives. The following interview is dedicated to the beginnings of his business, as well as his experience and views on the entrepreneurial profession.

- 1. It is said that business attracts especially active individuals with a desire for creative freedom. Were the first signs of your entrepreneurial drive at school? And, consequently, did school or studies play any role in your aspiration for the business world?**

"I have never been very enthusiastic about school. To be honest, I first tried to do well at primary school, but then when I started doing athletics and playing sports, my priorities shifted completely. I just put my energy into sports and when I was at high school, I would say I didn't give a damn about my studies. What made me want to do business was rather the unwillingness of some teachers to teach and, at the same time, maybe have no discussion with the students. Somehow, historically, I always had problems with authorities, and it was at high school that I definitely realized that I wanted to be an entrepreneur and that I wanted to fulfill my life according to myself and not according to someone else."

- 2. If I'm not wrong, your family, and especially the entrepreneurial role model of your dad, were significantly important when you started your business...**

"You are rather mistaken. Because my father's business was not successful, and on the contrary, I saw through it rather the suffering and problems that business involves. So it wasn't that I saw the right way to do it, or how someone enjoys the business. I didn't really see that at that time. It was more



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about having an idea that I could do it somehow differently, and in my eyes, even then, I thought I could do it better. I'm not saying it wasn't a naive idea. However, it worked out in the end and the way we started the business was successful. We celebrated our seventh anniversary a few days ago and we are still in business."

3. When I read business plans written by students at our university, they often mention family as a source of funding for the initial steps - a financial gift from parents or a loan from family. Was this the primary source of finance to get started for you as well?

"I was able to rely on the fact that my dad still had a manufacturing facility and I was able to make my first model. But in terms of financial support, there was none. My dad, on the other hand, looked at it in a negative way and at the time when I told him I wanted to have my own brand and do the business, he looked at it skeptically. On the contrary, he wanted to convince me that doing business was hard and that I had no chance. He used to tell me that I imagined it as a fairytale. For every single shoe I made in his manufacturing facility, even the first designs, I had to pay him from my own sources. So, not a penny was from my parents.

Some people don't even believe me, but unfortunately, my dad and I had a complicated relationship. It wasn't a symbiosis. It took a long time to adjust our relationship as a business to business, a business-to-business partnership. It wasn't until we got it right that it started to work in some ways, and to this day, we still have some pairs produced there, although we have a few other products."

4. I'd like to make one more school-related turn. Try to say from today's perspective, what information should the school have given you about business and what it didn't?

*"For me, definitely what helps me in business, whether it's from elementary school or high school, is math. Of course, it's more about the basic one - to quickly calculate how much $a*b$ is. And that's about it for me. I don't do any other complicated calculations. I think the school also gave me the knowledge of Excel tables that I can use, putting a formula in there, and what I need to work out comes out.*

What I missed at school for doing business, I would say, the very basics. I have A-levels in economics. Of course, there was accounting as one of the A-level subjects. Honestly, I didn't really need any of what I learned there. On the

contrary, what I didn't get there, and what would have been useful, is how to actually get started with the business. How to get a business license, what businesses to include, and how to start a limited company. The only thing we learned is perhaps that you can set up a limited company with CZK 1, -, but that doesn't tell you where to go to see a lawyer or that there are modern devices when you just fill in a form on the internet and in a few weeks, you can become the owner of the company. So, I would prefer to learn these basics. Another thing that I have noticed is that a lot of entrepreneurs are figuring out what positive cash flow is as they go along, such as; cash flow may not work out favorably even though you're a profitable company, or vice versa - cash flow may work out even though you're not a profitable company."

5. Where did you get the initial information about business opportunities? And where do you get the information about the world of business today? Could you reveal some of your favorite websites, portals or podcasts?

"In the very early days, I learned from those who already had an established company. So, I asked how they did it and where they did it, with the view that I would ideally follow their steps with the same lawyer and check prices. It was more "word of mouth". However, I have longed to be an entrepreneur since I was 14 and what I was able to do at the age of 14 was reading. So, I read, read, read. There are lots of books everywhere, as well as lots of resources on the Internet. It wasn't like that before. Now there's really no limit to the number of sources. Any topic can be "Googled", especially if one communicates in English. So, in my opinion, there is no topic, however specific, that one can't find either on YouTube or in an article. In my case, it was digging for information that I was interested in at that moment, plus some general development of myself, either in reading books or some courses related mainly to business, people management, marketing, sales psychology, and branding in general. So that was the direction of my ideas. For example, I attended a marketing course in Prague, so I used to go from Zlín every Saturday at four in the morning to be there on those twelve Saturdays when the course was held. So, for me, this is also a kind of controlled resource, controlled education, where you know that you are really going to get from point A to point B.

And what are my sources now? Again, it's contacts. I know a lot of "founders", whether it's Peťa Hajduček from Footshop or Milan Polák from Zoot, with whom I meet talk about a lot of different topics or personal things. That's what I try to tap into the most because, in the end, you have a filtered answer. There are options A to C, but there are also time-tested options A to Z, and

what worked for us was D, so the recommendation is D. This is the way I try to retrieve information, not make other people's mistakes, and I still read two books a month, that's how I do it.

As for podcasts, I put on at least one podcast every day when I run or when I am about to sleep. If I were to say something specific, yesterday, while I was falling asleep, I was listening to Jeff Bezos' interview with his brother, which was not only educationally interesting but also funny. I think it's incredible that we live in a time when we can draw from the most successful, and almost every "founder" has an interview somewhere. Although, of course, there are exceptions like Petr Kellner and others who have not given many interviews in their lives."

6. Did you recognize the risk when you took your first steps? Can you compare whether your risk perception was higher or lower then than now?

"I have the problem of not being aware of it. So, I guess I was not aware of it before, nor am I aware of it now. Of course, the comment about me imagining it as a fairytale was partly based on truth. However, if that naive attitude maybe wasn't so, the business isn't where it is today. Because fear is often what holds people or entrepreneurs back. They are afraid of taking a step forward. Really not every step works out and not every step has worked out either, but at least you know which path you should have taken. Now I'm thinking of a quotation from Edison, who says that he didn't discover one way to light a light bulb, but that he discovered countless attempts to not light a light bulb, and that left him with the one that was right."

7. Did planning or a more spontaneous approach to managing the company win in your case? For example, did you identify customer segments before you started your business or did you get to know them as you "went along"?

"I was seventeen when I was preparing Vasky to be on the market. At that time, I had already taken courses and read some books, but overall, it was a try-and-fail process. The biggest initial mistake (although I don't think of it as such a big one today) was my idea that our shoes would be for my peers, people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five who wanted to wear Timberland-like farmer's boots at good prices and wanted a better-quality shoe. This idea changed completely in the very first meetings with those to whom I was selling in the cafés because they were instead people who were thirty-five years old and older, who saw the value in quality and in the fact that it was made in the Czech Republic. So, even though I set a segment of customers, it didn't quite meet reality."

- 8. The portfolio of companies in which you are involved continues to grow. This means the need to delegate and have someone to delegate tasks to. Therefore, the question arises, according to what criteria do you choose the members of your team?**

"In my opinion, it changes a lot over time. Initially, the main criterion was enthusiasm. Whether it was a person who had some know-how, some knowledge, some schooling or not, the most important thing was enthusiasm. Because what I lacked, of course, was finance, I couldn't pay the people I needed at first. Maybe it was also about some need or rather motivation of the person to become part of something that might be interesting at some point in the future. That was the main criterion at first.

Now it is primarily competence in the segment we are recruiting for. What I consider the most important thing at the moment is what the person has done. So, for example, when I'm looking for a "marketer", I'm definitely looking for a "marketer" who has been in the e-commerce segment. Not people who have reported to us, for example, that they did marketing for Nestle, which is really something totally different. Similarly, when we were looking for a person to manage our stores, again, we were looking for those with sales management experience. So, I would say the important thing is to find what you really need, just for that period of time."

- 9. Are you thinking about how to encourage innovation in your company? Can you name any elements of an innovation culture in your company?**

"My problem is that I have a lot of ideas. Just as I'm soaking up a lot of information and getting inspiration from other companies, I really have a few new ideas in my mind on a weekly basis. So, we're never short of ideas, but I'm more discouraged by my colleagues telling me that this is not the time to pursue another new idea but that we need to focus on working with what we already have. But it's not always about ideas. We have to have the work done and every idea has its time. So, in terms of innovation, we keep it hidden and we kind of pull it out when we have more time. As we're opening two new stores right now, it's exactly the time of year when you don't want to innovate those existing stores because you're focused on getting it open on time and getting it right."

10. You talk about a burst of ideas. What are you doing to make sure that your source of ideas is not running out? How do you relax and where do you find your inner tranquility?

*"I have a sport for these purposes. With sport, there comes a time when the head can switch off a little bit, I would say. When other things are working in the body and other substances are being flushed out. However, even when running, I let information into my head that interests me. I'm really lucky that even though I have multiple hobbies, it's really the business, marketing and commerce that is something that fulfills me. Even if I'm looking for a movie on Netflix, the keywords I put into the search engine are marketing or business. That's what I enjoy - other people's stories, getting inspired by other people. As you pointed out, there can be some kind of overwhelm, so I guess there is. However, for me, a film such as *The Great Hack*, which focuses on how Trump won the election and also how Brexit happened, is exactly the kind of film I enjoy much more than a comedy. By giving me some pleasure and learning something new, it's ultimately a form of relaxation."*

11. I suppose that managing five companies at once means a lot of work and the need to make sacrifices at some points. And all this without being able to pay out hundreds of thousands of dollars at the beginning of the businesses...

"I would point out that I have not taken hundreds of thousands from companies until now. It's really money that is somehow, in my opinion, standard or, conversely, "substandard" for senior management. However, the company allows me to take on some of the costs, so then my life isn't that expensive. Whether it's a car, at the same time consumption and much more. So, for that reason too, I am not doing bad. I agree that the pace is quite fast, but I wouldn't say it's the kind of workaholism you may be describing. I am sure I can find time for myself. Whether it's a sport that I'm currently doing on a daily basis, sometimes it's on a weekly basis, or maybe 3 times a week minimum. Whether it's time spent with friends, whether it's seeing a movie not alone but maybe with someone else, etc. As for me, we each have 24 hours a day and how we use them depends on us. In my opinion, there is no shortage of time. If you set your priorities, what you want to pursue, what you want to reach, and get clear on what you want to experience, then you can manage that time. I was on a lot of vacations last year. I certainly don't want to make it sound like I'm not enjoying life. Of course, you have to sacrifice something, but since I have it set in such a way that I want to push myself every day, I don't see it as a sacrifice but instead, as a good investment and time well spent for the future."

12. What became the main impulse for expanding the portfolio of companies you are involved in?

"I would say one word: naivety. That was in the beginning, for sure. Because I started my second company Bagind at the age of nineteen, added Wuders at twenty, Inhubo at twenty-one and Paon actually only last year at the age of twenty-four. There was quite a long break there because I realized that it wasn't an ideal path. But naivety may have also played a role in making Vasky a success. So, for that reason as well, I was getting into everything I could because I believed I could help with everything. Of course, it turned out to be not so easy, as evidenced by the story of Vasek, which has a lot of hiccups, or the stories of Wuders, Bagind or others that I am a part of. But if you asked me why I co-founded the particular companies I co-founded, it was the founders of those companies in the first place. And what is common for most companies is a craft that I believe in, and I would like to see it continue in the Czech Republic as much as possible."

13. Aren't you afraid that sooner or later you will be affected by something called the special sorrow of the winners? In other words, you will accomplish your dreams and goals relatively young and be unmotivated at a mature age.

"This has happened several times. There's Maslow's pyramid of needs and I realized when I was nineteen, twenty years old that I had sort of encompassed it and reached a high degree of self-fulfillment. I figured out for myself that shift is important to me. If I move forward every year, that's exactly how I wanted to spend that year. I've gotten used to the fact that in life, whether on a daily, weekly or yearly basis, there are successes, setbacks and I'm prepared for them."