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NEW BEGINNINGS CONFERENCE



2014 is a year of anniversaries for Poland as it celebrates the 25th anniversary of its transformation to the free market economy, 15 years in NATO and 10 years in the EU. It's also a significant year for the Warsaw Business Journal Group as it enters its 20th year on the market with a brand new monthly



Warsaw Business Journal Group publisher Morten Lindholm introduced the new monthly magazine, *WBJ Observer*

Warsaw Business Journal Group celebrated the launch of the new *WBJ Observer* monthly with a conference jam-packed with expert panelists. The event was started with WBJ group publisher Morten Lindholm, who introduced the new publication and presented plans for the future, with the daily, online news service being the cornerstone of the group.

Failure can be an option

The first panel was focused on the IT sector and its problems in Poland. Panelists included Tomasz Snażyk, managing partner in Cytowski LLC, Adam Bergmann, COO at IN2KNO, Krzysztof Kowalczyk, partner at HardGamma Consulting and Magdalena Ostojka-Chyżyńska, a UI engineer from Polidea Software. The



Piotr Krawczyński, managing director and management board member at Kulczyk Silverstein Properties

Images: Roxana David

discussion focused on Polish start-ups and the problems they encounter. One problem many pointed out is that out of the 3,500 IT start-ups in Poland, only a few are actually worth something. Most of the new IT companies are focused on getting EU grants and as soon as the money dries up, the company folds. Which is why, the experts said, private funding is much better as investors need something more in return than properly filed paperwork.

The other message to IT engineers is that they should not be afraid of failure as Bergmann pointed out that “before Edison invented the light bulb, he invented 99 other things that weren’t the light bulb.”

Painting the picture

The defense panel with Adam Bergmann, Krzysztof Krystowski,



Before Edison invented the light bulb, he invented 99 other things that weren’t the light bulb.



Adam Bergmann,
COO at IN2KNO

former CEO of Polish Defence Holding and Marek Matraszek, founding partner of CEC Government Relations, concentrated on the PLN 131 billion Poland plans to spend on new equipment over the next decade. The matter of what the armed forces or military will buy for that amount is more or less known. The question remains, however, who they will buy it from. Most of the high-tech equipment is produced by international companies but the Polish government, would like to have as many of the big domestic companies as possible participating in the modernization of the Polish defense industry. “International companies, that have Polish management are situated in Poland and pay taxes here,” said Matraszek, explaining that there are already many foreign companies that have acquired Polish arms producers and are making its equipment here. “It’s crucial



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“**It’s crucial that Poland uses this opportunity, not only to modernize our army, but also the whole industry.**”

Krzysztof Krystowski,
Former CEO,
Polish Defence Holding



(L-R) Adam Bergmann, COO, IN2KNO; Tomasz Snażyk, managing partner, Cytowski LLC; Krzysztof Kowalczyk, partner, HardGamma Consulting; John Beauchamp, WBJ; Magdalena Ostoja-Chyżyńska, UI engineer, Polidea Software

that Poland uses this opportunity, not only to modernize our army, but also the whole industry,” said Krystowski, jokingly adding that he hopes Poland’s role in the modernization process will go “beyond just painting the missiles.”

Parking slalom

The next panel was on real estate and came packed with experts. Piotr Krawczyński, managing director and management board member at Kulczyk Silverstein Properties, Edyta Potera, director at Jones Lang LaSalle, Maciej Zajdel, managing director in IVG Poland, Robert Mandżunowski, CEO of LHI, Michał Leszczyński, CEO of Grupa 5 Architekci and Paweł Laskowski-Fabisiewicz, deputy CEO of PHN, all discussed how Warsaw’s city center should develop so that its citizens can be proud of it.

Panelists all agreed that high streets are becoming a more important element of the city, although some patience is needed for them to be completely accepted by Poles. “High streets are becoming more interesting for Polish customers, but it’s a long way to go before they fully catch on, I expect that we still need 10-15 years for this to happen,” said Potera.

Warsaw is filled with shopping malls with every major district boasting at least one big shopping center, but despite high saturation levels there is still demand for premium brands. “High streets attract a completely different set of clients and brands than shopping malls do, they’re mutually exclusive,” said Krawczyński,

whose company is working on the Ethos high-street shopping center.

All panelists pointed out that parking space in the city center is currently very scarce, and this hampers urban development. Underground parking would solve most of the problems but it’s an expensive option, time-consuming and difficult to install in highly populated places like Pl. Trzech Krzyży. It looks like people will have to continue to slalom through the parked cars.

Shale revolution?

Last but not least, was a panel on Poland’s energy future. Łukasz Jankowski and Jakub Krasnowski from Wierzbowski Eversheds showed a presentation on recent developments in shale gas and renewables. Both sectors have been neglected by Poland’s authorities, with essential laws still missing. But it looks like momentum has swung in the right direction in recent months and while all the needed bills have not yet been pushed through parliament, it looks as if it’s only a matter of time before both energy sectors will finally pick up the pace. Commercial shale gas exploration in 2014 is still a possibility, according to Krasnowski, although the real shale gas revolution is still a long way off.

The “New Beginnings” conference was the first event of 2014, organized by the Warsaw Business Journal Group, but definitely not the last, we’re already preparing our next event – the launch of the Made in Poland 2014 publication. Stay tuned. ♦

New Beginnings Conference
P A N E L S

Polish IT – Coming of age?

Battle ready?

Real estate: City center revival

Poland’s energy future

Images: Roxana David



The conference was jam-packed

Łukasz Jankowski, head of the energy practice at Wierzbowski Eversheds



(L-R) Maciej Zajdel, managing director, IVG Poland; Robert Mandzunowski, CEO of LHI; Paweł Laskowski-Fabisiewicz, deputy CEO, PHN

(L-R) Michał Leszczyński, CEO of Grupa 5 Architektów; Edyta Potera, national director, Jones Lang LaSalle



(L-R) Krzysztof Krystowski, former CEO, Polish Defence Holding; Marek Matraszek, founding partner, CEC Government Relations; Adam Bergmann, COO, IN2KNO

High streets are becoming more interesting for Polish customers, but it's a long way to go before they fully catch on.

Edyta Potera,
National director, Jones Lang LaSalle