

**Bojan
Leković**

**Bears
on the
road**

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Foreword by Lazar Džamić

From the heart of an entrepreneur,
from the head of a manager

You cannot set out on the thorny road to business independence without passion, and without the special kind of excitement that is unique to those pursuing their dreams. Yet if you take that first step without thinking it through, the road will not only be strewn with thorns, but it will be very short too. Bojan Leković, CEO of the company *KupujemProdajem*, has travelled a very long road. Along the way he has earned some of the most valuable currency there is – experience. There is a great quote from Heinrich Heine: ‘Experience is a good school. But the fees are high’. Bojan has paid the dues for us. There are not too many people out there like him – who have tackled not just the challenges they have faced but their own dark side too – and lived to tell the tale. And he has experience aplenty to share. Here are just a few examples: launching the first mobile phone with a colour screen in Europe, the first mobile phone with polyphonic ringtones and the first mobile email system and defining the first European emojis. A lot of ‘firsts’ in one of the most advanced economies in the world.

This experience has now been condensed into this book. Bojan and his team are masters of evidence-based

management. There is no place here for pop-management philosophy. Running a company has nothing to do with naked instinct, feelings, or emotions, especially when you reach the point at which your business needs a proper structure, needs to professionalise, and needs to plan for growth. There can be no successful business without structured methodologies, strategies, measurement, and evaluation. Data, coupled with professional, rational planning, is the fuel of business success, both internally and externally. The heart of the entrepreneur needs the head of a manager. Or as another saying wonderfully puts it: ‘Practice without theory is blind; theory without practice is impotent’.

Data, record-keeping, and experience lead to insight – another priceless currency in modern business. In that respect, this book is also a mini encyclopaedia of business insights from the personal, successful practice of the author. Insights are little nuclear bombs of meaning: what is **REAL-LY** important in a given situation, what will save time, energy and frustration. Insights are shortcuts to achievement. And this book is replete with them.

One such is about when the IT Team was renamed to the Delivery Team, and the impact this had on the company culture; or what about this business insight: ‘My personal challenge was being based 1,600 km from the rest of the company and the fact that I was mostly in touch with my employees via Skype. On the other hand, this physical distance has made it possible for me to get involved more with my mind than in day-to-day operations. Running a business is, after all, primarily a matter of the mind. In addition to this, when I come to Belgrade once a month, I am able to observe things as a “guest”, more objectively than someone who is used to

the day-to-day.’ Or the importance of the admission, ‘I don’t know’: ‘I have come to value when someone tells me, “I don’t know”. Because that is a quality piece of information. There is no room for misunderstanding, and anyone who admits they do not know can be considered a reliable source of information.’

All this, and much more besides, is delivered in a written style that comes as great refreshment amidst the current crop of business literature – authentically modern and cosmopolitan: simple but pithy, concise but deep, straightforward, but worth its weight in gold. On top of it all, Bojan’s book – to the Balkan sensibility – is one of shocking personal frankness and transparency, even on topics that in our part of the world are usually kept tightly under wraps: on the financial and legal structure of his company, about the personal ‘black eyes’ he has earned through experience and in the learning process, on recruiting employees, on employee incentivisation, on working with investors, and much more. Perhaps this is why the book carries a distinct tone of mentorship, a feeling for people, an atmosphere of friendly conversation about things we wanted to know more about but did not know anyone credible and sincere enough to ask. Mentors are people who are experienced in different aspects of life; they have scars on their backs, sometimes in their souls too, they have battled Circe the Enchantress and the seductive Sirens; they have won the most difficult battle in their lives – against their own dark sides – and lived to tell the tale.

The eighty-five texts in this book are, in their Zen-like conciseness, worth several traditional management manuals. Like Bukowski they are deceptively simple and will only reveal their true depth and value when read a second time, as

the reader him or herself evolves as an entrepreneur. I predict there will be a lot of ‘Now I know what Bojan meant!’ moments.

This is a personal growth and entrepreneurship book of focused simplicity, belying the 20 years it took to write in the starkest (and most bloody) ink there is: personal experience.

Bears on the road



A handbook for growth

Other people's experience

The first book I read about business, right at the beginning of my studies, was the autobiography of Lee Iacocca, one of the best-known executives in corporate America. The book gave me an insight into how a corporation (*Ford*) was organised and into Iacocca's own ascent up the corporate ladder, from a rookie in the marketing department to the CEO of the company. It also talked about how cars were manufactured and how one of the best-known models in the automobile industry was born – the Mustang. The book also helped me to understand what it was like to both lose your job as CEO of a company and lose all your friends at the same time. It describes how he pulled himself out of that situation, became CEO of a struggling *Chrysler* and turned it around. This book gave me probably the best business education I have had in my life. I have read it seven times over the years. And every time I have learned something new.

Then I discovered the book *My Years with General Motors* by Alfred P. Sloan. In it I discovered how, from the ball bearing manufacturer he originally joined, he created the biggest automobile company in the world solely by partnering with

other similar and complementary companies. I understood then how, by working with others who would share both the vision and the risk, you could accelerate the growth and development of a company.

Then there was Jack Welch's *Straight from the Gut*. In it, this celebrated executive describes how the world's largest conglomerate of diverse businesses, *General Electric*, actually works. I learned about his infamous strategy of 'fix, sell or close' and how he founded an in-house university for growing talent, how he introduced Six Sigma quality processes, but also how his propensity for firing people earned him the nickname Neutron Jack. Most striking was the way, after a process lasting several years, he chose his successor from among three ideal candidates purely based on feeling – 'straight from the gut' – while the remaining two were made to leave the company. While I was reading this it all seemed strange, even far-fetched, but later, as I was building *KupujemProdajem*, I realised that investment in people is the key to the success of any organisation.

These books helped me to see the world of big companies from the personal aspect – that of the CEO, and to absorb this valuable and unique business experience. Our hunger for other people's experiences is the reason we have books, theatre, films, and social networks. However, it is books that give us the greatest freedom of enjoyment. Inquisitive people read because they are hungry for new experiences. That is why at job interviews I ask candidates about the books they have read. Their responses help me evaluate how inquisitive they are, how hungry they are for new knowledge and how they absorb it; what they find useful in those books.

This is also why I have written this book – I want to share my personal experience with you, the inquisitive ones. Maybe it will help you.

Bojan Leković
Founder and CEO of *KupujemProdajem*
The Hague/Belgrade, April 2020.

Being an entrepreneur is probably the most lonely thing you can do.
Peter Jones, Dragon's Den, BBC

**Looking to
the future**

▼ Trying my luck

Journey's beginning

I have always known what I wanted and that has helped me a lot. I remember I was in the seventh grade of primary school (aged around 13) when I knew I wanted to study electronics at the university in Niš. This meant that I needed to get on the Bora Stanković High School maths programme first. Throughout my high school education, I never once questioned this desire of mine. When I began my studies, I didn't give much thought to what I would do in life – but I did know that I wanted to start my own business one day. Walking the streets of Niš and looking into the shop windows, I imagined seeing my own office space in one of them, big and bright, with lots of people in it, doing something. Over time I put this desire to one side as I focused first on my studies and then on my academic work. One time, in my third year at university, another student asked me, 'Hey, what are we going to do after we graduate?' I answered without a moment's thought, 'What do you mean, what are we going to do? There's Serbia Telekom, there are lots of radio stations, there will be work for telecoms engineers.'

Towards the end of my studies, I particularly enjoyed the subject Electronic Systems Design because of the way

it integrated knowledge from all areas of electronics. It also seemed to me that staying on at the faculty would be the best course of action. I asked one of the professors if I could become an assistant lecturer if I did my final undergraduate paper with him, and he agreed. After a time at the faculty, it began to dawn on me that to reach the position of full Professor would take me no fewer than sixteen years. Meanwhile, the Internet was happening and was inexorably drawing me to itself. As was the great wide World. It would be nice, I thought, to see how others live and work, to try my hand at living in a foreign country.

Sunny Dutch skies

Leaving the country

In the years following my graduation, the Internet explosion was happening all over the world – but not in Serbia. Here, war was brewing. In summer 1999 I decided to continue my academic career somewhere abroad: in Canada, America, anywhere. Right around that time I met a friend whose brother was doing his PhD in The Netherlands. We got talking and he asked me why not try there. I wasn't sure why I should go specifically to The Netherlands when there were so many bigger and more interesting countries. His first argument was that The Netherlands was in Europe and relatively close, so if I got bored, I could get in my car and be back in a day-and-a-half. Secondly, he argued, everyone spoke English there. Most importantly, The Netherlands recognised postgraduate studies as employment, unlike America and Canada, where you were just a student.

I have to admit that he had me convinced, and straight-away I set about searching online for a list of the nineteen universities in The Netherlands, of which three were focused on technology: Eindhoven, Twente and Delft. The first two I knew of but had never heard of Delft. Delft also had the worst website, so it seemed to me that my chances would be

best in that little town close to The Hague. My interest was further piqued by an interesting vacancy advertised by Jaap van Till, who signed himself, 'Internet Baron'. I sent him my CV along with a cover letter. He replied that my CV was very interesting but that he was soon to retire. However, he recommended me to the new department head, who was in the process of setting things up, and said he would happily talk to me. After an interview, which he was more or less happy with, he asked me to meet with Dušan Matić, his colleague from the group, in Belgrade. After a brief talk Dušan said he would put in a positive recommendation for me. I asked him if he spoke Dutch, and of course he said yes. Then I asked him what this Delft University of Technology was like, and he looked at me strangely and said, 'Well... it's the best!'

And that was how, in January 2000, barely realising what I had just succeeded in doing, I ended up in the telecommunications department at one of the best technological universities in Europe and one of the most prestigious in The Netherlands.

The doors open

First year in The Netherlands

Travelling to Delft by train I was mesmerised by the endless procession of company headquarters and their logos proudly on display. This sense of admiration probably heralded the gradual awakening of my slumbering desires. At the train station in Delft, I asked a cleaner how I could get a taxi. He helped me out, in good English. The taxi driver took me to the property letting agency. He got my suitcases out for me and wished me luck. At the agency, where I was supposed to pick up the keys to the apartment I would be renting, the lady said my name sounded familiar. I took these little details as good omens. It was as if they were saying that I was not really a foreigner here, I was not so strange. Having left my things in the one-room apartment I headed to the faculty on foot and called my new boss from the phone at reception. He knew that moving to an unfamiliar country would be a shock to me and gave me a week to get to know my new surroundings. I used the time to tour the city in which Vermeer once painted and Van Leeuwenhoek invented the modern microscope. Additionally, I needed to find a bank, go to the tax office, and take out various insurance policies. I was 26, but it was a pe-

riod in which I had to do many things for the first time in my life. Also, everything was in Dutch, and I felt helpless.

Then Dušan Matić, the guy who had interviewed me in Belgrade, advised me to sign up for the ‘Delftse Methode’ – an accelerated Dutch language learning course organised at the university. It was very expensive and very intensive: four days a week, morning and evening, with hours’ more homework and obligatory testing. Anyone failing to pass these tests with a grade of 80% or more would be thrown off the course. The aim was for students to learn Dutch enough to be able to study in the language within the space of six months (five courses). I only needed to start speaking Dutch, so two courses were enough for me. The Delft Method took up the whole day and I assumed that my boss, who worked at the same university, knew that. However, after not seeing me at work for a while he nearly handed me my notice. What saved me was my firm insistence that it had been a misunderstanding – that and his realisation that I must be a hard worker if I was putting in all that effort.

So, after 10 weeks I was speaking Dutch, but I had also finally begun my academic endeavours. I was in the telecommunications department, and my field of work was something called ‘quality of service (QoS) routing on the Internet’. My task was to come up with data packet forwarding algorithms and demonstrate their validity. The aim was to reduce transmission time over the network to below a given threshold, which would enable telecoms operators to sell this as a service. I found this interesting to begin with, but the more of this research I did, the more I got the feeling that the field was not sufficiently broad as to allow me to get my PhD at the end of my four-year contract. My boss did not want

us to change or expand the field of research. That was when I started to seriously worry about my career. I realised that university people weren't like me and that four years was too much, even if it earned me a doctorate. A year-and-a-half in, I was not at all happy. Talking with my wife Aleksandra (who had joined me in The Netherlands after I had got settled) and our attendance at the Orthodox church were all that kept depression at bay. I started looking for a way out. I came across a TV channel that focused on business news (RTL7). In the newspapers I kept seeing those densely printed tables with all the shares listed, and the reports from the stock markets. And there were frequent visits to Delft University of Technology from representatives of all sorts of companies, scouting for young talent. I realised that what I really wanted was to enter the world of business. I knocked on that door and the door opened.

My start(up) in business



Forerunner of a new era

The battle for innovations

I came to Royal PTT Netherlands (KPN for short) on October 1st 2001, after a series of interviews with at least five managers from different departments. I soon realised that this company, with its 30,000 employees, was a state within a state. I wondered what all those people actually did there. Their job was to maintain and develop the telecoms business, which involved providing all kinds of telecoms services to users and companies in The Netherlands and further afield. However, right around that time a major crisis hit the telecoms sector – the dot-com bubble had burst in America and the value of shares was plummeting everywhere. The ensuing reorganisation led to the loss of my position in the Fixed Networks Division, and I started to look for a new post, in the same company. I figured that there must be a place for me in such a huge organisation. In the internal vacancy list, I spotted a post that needed to be filled at the Mobile Division headquarters, that of ‘i-mode Content Support Engineer’. They needed some kind of engineer, but apart from that I could not figure out what the job was about at all. What got my interest was that the vacancy was in the Mobile Division, and I thought I could learn a lot about business there. Manufacturing cables was

one thing, ensuring data travelled through them and charging money for it was something else. All told, this new job seemed a whole lot more interesting to me.

At the interview I was greeted by Hans, the i-mode Technical Director and someone from the human resources department. I asked them in all seriousness whether there had been any restructuring in their division. Because if there had not, I would be on my way, because I had already learned that I would be first for the chop. They told me right away that reorganisation had already been done and they were now looking for new people – they were getting a big project under way with the Japanese. That same day they called me to schedule another round of interviews with the CEO and in March 2002 I got my new job.

I had only been in my new office a few days when a Japanese guy, Shoichi Nakata, came in. He pointed at me and said,

‘I need you.’ I thought how nice it was when someone felt they needed you. He added, ‘I’m from *NTT DoCoMo*, and under the terms of the i-mode licence we are to share our knowledge with you.’

Our project involved nothing less than developing the first mobile Internet service in Europe. The Dutch had partnered with the Japanese telecoms operator *NTT DoCoMo*, who in the late 1990s had set up the first such service in the world. The service consisted of specially developed mobile phones, a mobile network for the transfer of data and content providers who offered HTML-based web sites that could be accessed on a phone with the click of a button. The service was called i-mode and the tens of millions of subscribers it gained within a short period made it the fastest growing ser-

vice in the world, catapulting *NTT DoCoMo* to the very top of the list of the world's most valuable companies.

I was fortunate enough to join the small team that subsequently worked on developing the European version of i-mode. Based at company headquarters, we worked closely with our Japanese colleagues on behalf of our three mobile operators in Germany, The Netherlands and Belgium, to ensure the transfer of know-how about the technology and processes involved. Along the way we also created specifications for our own mobile phones, imagining what our users would want and negotiating with European mobile phone manufacturers who would begin making them for us. To complicate things, at that time mobile networks were not standardised at the global level – far from it. Europe, Asia, and America all had their own standards, and our GSM phones could not be used outside Europe.

Thanks to our project with the Japanese, we got the first mobile phone with a colour screen in Europe. Also, the first phone with polyphonic ringtones and the first that allowed songs – for example with human voices – to be used as the ringtone. For the first time, email could be received on a phone. Then we had the first HTML browser on a phone that could use the standard Internet protocol. We even defined the first emojis in Europe. We entered agreements with content providers – major websites – to produce content tailored to i-mode phones. Thus, a multitude of mobile Internet services was born, which users could subscribe to with a single click on their phones. In the first five years, in partnership with the Japanese, we developed four generations of i-mode phones. I worked on the development of 36 models which we, together with other mobile operators in Europe, purchased to a total

value of over two billion euros. In many ways, i-mode phones were the forerunners of today's Android and iOS telephones. That period of my career was like falling in a fast-moving river. I could either drown in these turbulent business waters – or swim.

Thorns and stars

Adapting

I looked at these people from KPN and asked myself what I was doing there among them in that foreign land. I wondered whether they found it strange that I was there, too. KPN's employees were almost exclusively Dutch nationals. I remember a conversation with the HR manager, Mark Boerman. He asked me whether after three years I still felt like a guest in The Netherlands. I said I did. He told me that wasn't good, because it meant I would expect to be treated like a guest, and the Dutch were not particularly inclined to show respect to foreigners just because they were foreigners. So, I needed to rid myself of that feeling as soon as possible. He also asked me what I would prefer: for people to see me as an expert or for them to like me. I said the former. I could see by his expression that he didn't agree, but I couldn't imagine someone disagreeing with me over this and so didn't pay much heed to the face he made. It was only later that I understood the real meaning of his question, and what the right answer was. We never broached the subject again.

Going forward, I did all I could to build relationships with people. It helped that I knew Dutch, but it didn't solve the problem. I had to find some way to make friends amongst

my Dutch colleagues, and that's not easy if you don't have much in common with them. There was no natural affinity based on my expertise. They respected me for it, but that didn't mean they liked me. Over time I realised that it was events that brought us closer together: travelling together, re-organisations in the company, chatting during breaks, team social events – all those were opportunities for us to build relationships. Gradually, people began to approach me and to confide in me. It was maybe five years before I began to see The Netherlands as my home and to start to love it: both the country and its hard-working, honest people, as Dušan Matić had described them in our first exchange of emails. That was when my self-confidence began to grow too. I took part in debates on local issues, I took political standpoints, I voted in the elections. Most importantly, I began to make real friends outside KPN. All this brought about a certain maturity, and this helped prompt me to test the waters of entrepreneurship.

In the 10 years I spent in KPM, I managed some very interesting and significant projects such as, for example, mobile television for mobile phones. I advised the management on many technological innovations, such as HD Voice and 3.5G – whether to introduce them, and when. I worked with a lot of major tech companies – manufacturers of mobile phones, software, operating systems, services, and telecoms networks. I was there to see the rise and fall of *BlackBerry* and of *HTC*. I witnessed the decline of *Nokia*. And the rise of *Huawei*. I worked with many cultures and got to know some well, especially Japanese, German and Korean. I represented the company's interests in several international alliances. I was a member of the intellectual property board. I was among the first to learn of new developments of global significance.

I travelled the world, from San Francisco to Tokyo. Within the company I had the opportunity to meet some exceptional people whilst working on different projects, and to team up with some of the most brilliant Dutch minds. These were people who in my opinion had the intellectual capacity to be running the country – any day of the week. I had a career I couldn't even have dreamed of.

But a fewer than five years after it all began, demand for the i-mode service plummeted – the first smartphones appeared on the market, and they supported just about every Internet service a desktop computer did. The company was buying around one and a half million telephones annually, and we needed to know what technologies these phones were coming with, so that our company could build services we could offer to our users. Some of the services included mobile television, contactless mobile payments, high-definition voice services, music services and messaging services. These services needed to be supported by us on the IT side, too. I was right at the source as far as new developments were concerned, and my advice was sought at the outset of or during many major projects in the company. If it was about mobile phones, then I was running those projects too.

But gradually it became apparent that as a telecoms company we were losing the battle. The services we were providing were increasingly being introduced by the big Internet companies and not by the telecom's providers. High-definition voice came courtesy of Skype, digital television from YouTube. WhatsApp and Viber were becoming successful messaging services and Deezer and Spotify were providing music services. It was blow after blow for us. In 2011, the company finally raised the white flag and made it known in-

ternally that it was no longer able to be an innovative leader in the market. All the telecoms' innovations had come to be dominated by *Apple* and *Google* and other Internet companies. When in 2012 this wave of change brought numerous redundancies, I got to be first again – the first to lose my job.

Being special

Business

At one point during my career at KPN, when for a while my desire to have my own business resurfaced, I had gone almost on impulse to the Chamber of Commerce in The Hague, where the Dutch Commercial Register is maintained, and registered myself as *Leković Consulting* – a freelancer specialising in creating web platforms. The idea was to find top-notch programmers in Serbia who would write software for Dutch clients at more affordable rates than Dutch programmers could, and I would manage those projects. I quickly realised that there was nothing particularly special about my idea. Plenty of people had already started similar businesses, and apart from the fact that I was from Serbia, where programmers were paid less and I could potentially scout them, nothing else set me apart. So, this idea quickly fizzled out.

I had other ideas too. I needed something unique, something different to anything else out there, but something that would allow me to leverage all the knowledge and experience I'd gained. That meant something along the lines of developing online services for mobile devices. I also wanted my business to relate to Serbia. I wanted to take something worthwhile from The Netherlands and transfer it to the Serbian market. It was no easy task. Every idea quickly got re-

jected. I had set myself a criterion – any idea had to survive till the following morning and night-times were a massacre.

Studying successful people, I realised this: if you are going into business wanting to make money then you are doing it for the wrong reasons. To put it another way, you are starting out with the wrong mentality, and it will probably prevent you from succeeding. So, I needed to create a product or service that would help people solve a problem or address a need and which they would be willing to pay for. Not only that, but it needed to be repeatable and scalable. This meant that the same service would solve the same problems for the same people the next month or year, and that I could easily provide the same services to an increasing number of people as and when they came to want them.

But I needed an idea for this product or service, the know-how to shape it and help in executing it. I would probably need help in the form of money, too. Even that wouldn't mean I had a business, though. Only when your company can find clients for its products and continue creating revenue regardless of whether you are on holiday or not, and whether you are off sick or not – only then can you say you have a business. In that sense, 'lawyer' is not a business, it's a profession. A law firm with several lawyers – that is a business.

Building a business means creating and multiplying products, but also building processes, and building an organisation that will support those processes. And of course, it also means selecting people for that organisation. Although I mention them last, people – and their passion and their motivation – are the key to growth and success. I knew that there were a great many unknowns on the road to starting my business. Many 'bears', as the Dutch call these problems along the way.

Eureka on the balcony

Idea

It was not long after I arrived in The Netherlands that I discovered the Dutch classified ads sites Marktplaats and Via-Via. I loved to endlessly browse them, entranced by the ads. Each of them was like a window into the life of the Dutch, which I was keen to get to know as soon as possible. Although prosperous, Dutch society is very modest and thrifty. The Dutch express this thriftiness in a variety of ways, including their fondness for buying second-hand goods from one another. The seller gets to clear their house of things they no longer need and gets a bit of money for them too. The buyer saves some money by buying second-hand things that are perfectly serviceable but cheaper than if they were bought new. They were doing it *en masse* and they were using these websites, not the newspapers.

I often thought about how setting up a site like that in Serbia might be worthwhile. A site that anyone could use any time they wanted to advertise something for sale and update their listing whenever they wanted. Then I didn't give it any more thought. I was too busy building my career at KPN.

Occasionally I would exchange ideas over Skype with my brother Ratomir, who lived in Serbia. The only business

you could build over 1600 km, in your free time, with not much money up front, and as a hobby, was an online business. Despite my very successful career at KPN I couldn't exactly rest on my laurels because the company had reshuffles every year, and in those purges anyone could lose their job. Ratomir, for his part, led a very stressful life as a salesman in a major Serbian company. His need to get out of that – and my recognition that I was going to end up on the street at some point – increasingly prompted us to think about our own business.

My wife Aleksandra was all for it, too. She was working as a project manager for our rival T-Mobile (the subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom in The Netherlands), and her experience and support meant a lot to me, as did the fact that, above all else, she had always been good at listening to me and giving me very sound advice in just a few words.

One day a colleague called René dropped into my office. His wife was Lithuanian, and he often travelled to Vilnius. He had moved there with her a long time ago, even before the Iron Curtain fell, and had gone into business trading metals. But a 'misunderstanding' with the Russians had forced him to move back to The Netherlands, and he had ended up in KPN. He told me he was thinking about starting a business, a classified ads site in Lithuania, and that he was prepared to ask the people at Marktplaats to license the software to him. Oh, I thought, but I don't need to license anything, I can make it all myself.

Finally, I had hit on an idea that I started to like more and more every day. In the spring of that year, 2007, I made up my mind. I focused all my attention on that one idea and identified two key problems. Why would anyone post an ad

on an empty classifieds site? And what should it be called? The name had to be something accessible, something easy to understand, a truly timeless brand.

I got the answer to my first question from a lawyer at KPN, when I told him about my hobby project and said I didn't know how to get things going. 'Why not put some content on the site, some news, say, that would look like ads?' The idea was brilliant, and we went with it, launching a portal with some 300 interesting news items, all of which were meant to look like advertisements. Miša, my cousin and the family genius, found them and translated them, adding his own touch of humour.

We got the answer to our second question during a trip back to Niš in 2007. Aleksandra, Ratomir and I were thinking aloud on the balcony of our apartment and Aleksandra said, 'What about KupujemProdajem?' It was a eureka moment. The name combined the words *kupujem* ('I buy'), and *prodajem* ('I sell'). It sounded very catchy in Serbian. First, I checked to make sure the domain name hadn't been taken, and then Ratomir and I, excited, went up to a high point above Niš to daydream about the future. And that was how it all began.