

B-FLEX

INDUSTRY DAYS 2025

Six case studies for students, academics, and experts.



EPOKA VALLEY
SUSTAINABLE LIVING LAB



GreenWB



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

01

PREFACE

02

AGIA

06

PLENTY

10

BEU

15

NELA

19

RRELI

24

ALBUJI

29

FINAL REMARKS

CONTENT

Dear friends and partners,

We are living in an era defined by modern technology and co-creation. Technological advances are profoundly shaping individuals' everyday lives and the well-being of our planet. In this interconnected world, creation is no longer a one-way process—it is a collaborative one.

In today's hyper-competitive, dynamic, and interdependent environment, we at Epoka University are committed to fostering synergy with our partners in order to enhance existing realities and build a better and more sustainable future. We view our stakeholders not merely as participants, but as essential partners—together, we are part of a larger, shared vision.

As part of the European Union's Erasmus+ Program, Epoka Valley was launched under the project ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CBHE-STRAND 2 101128457 — GreenWB — ERASMUS-EDU-2022-CBHE Sustainable Living Labs for Regional Entrepreneurial Cooperation (GreenWB).

This project aims to bring together students, academics, and industry to strengthen collaboration and enhance regional competitiveness.

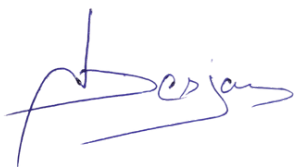
Situated within the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Sustainability (YCSBS), Epoka Valley operates as a dynamic unit dedicated to collaboration—both with other centers and units within Epoka University, as well as with national and international partners in the Albanian market and beyond.

B-Flex 2025, the result of a series of collaborative workshops involving students and industry experts, features six case studies with unique value. These case studies are designed for use by educators, students, and professionals, aiming to support reflection, learning, and practical application in their development journeys.

Allow me to share with you this carefully and professionally prepared document, created by my colleague at YCSB, Ms. Rilinda Korbi.

With warm regards,

BESJON ZENELAJ, PHD
DIRECTOR



EMBROIDERY IN THE ERA OF DIGITALIZATION



Introduction

After successfully completing his Bachelor's studies in Civil Engineering at "Epoka" University, Engineer Elez Agia worked for some time at a construction company. Influenced also by his family environment, which had been established in the tailoring business in a small town in Shkodër, Vau i Dejës, the young engineer decided to take on something bigger than what he was currently doing. The desire for flexibility in work, as well as the ambition for progress, were among the key elements that allowed this family business to continue its journey from a small town in northern Albania to the heart of the country's economy, in the capital, Tirana. The obstacles were significant, but focus on the right elements, intuition, and the knowledge gained in the field of marketing proved to be decisive.

Thus began the journey of Agia Embroidery, a successful business with a strong presence in the tailoring industry.

The Journey

Agia Embroidery has been operating in the capital of Albania, Tirana, since 2012. The beginnings as a family business now seem distant when considering its impact on the market, both in terms of wholesale collaborations with other businesses and its success with individual customers. This move, which involved considerable risk at the time, turned out to be a success, as the business transformed from a simple retail unit into a true brand aiming to succeed in the Albanian market and beyond.

The journey was greatly aided by positive customer experiences, as word of mouth (WOM) played a key role in shaping favorable perceptions among clients. Today, Agia Embroidery offers services to various industries, serving both the private sector and government entities, with a rich range of products—from simple embroidery to professional workwear.

Operations and Current Structure

One of the most evident aspects of the business is its dependence on a single individual, who also serves as its leader. His vision, operational skills, and managerial abilities are the strongest pillars of the business. Looking forward, the goal is to create a more sustainable structure where the business is not solely reliant on one person.

Considering that the products are neither essential goods nor luxury items, Agia Embroidery has invested in making these products as accessible as possible to the Albanian consumer. The most widely used strategy has been direct communication with clients to foster emotional engagement. Recognizing the growing importance and wide usage of social media, investments have been made to reach the target audience effectively and to establish collaborations that meet client needs.

The business consistently maintains a supply of raw materials, offers embroidery on products customized according to client preferences, and ensures timely delivery through postal collaboration. These elements define the company's client relationship approach. Additionally, various issues are addressed with an empathetic perspective, treating the client as right in nearly all situations. This approach has positively influenced client perception, reflected in the steady return of customers and in their recommendations, often saying they were "referred by someone they know."

The current structure of Agia Embroidery consists of Engineer Elez Agia, who serves as the Operational Director; two employees dedicated solely to digital marketing; a technical specialist; a quality specialist; the embroiderers; and a logistics coordinator responsible for business orders.

Marketing and the Customer

Agia Embroidery sells products not only to individual customers but also to businesses. The B2B and B2C relationships are characterized by different dynamics: businesses place great importance on competitive pricing, quality, and delivery times, while individual customers, in addition to these elements, highly value the emotional connection conveyed through embroidery.

Another major step for Agia Embroidery is that, for over a year, it has been exporting to several countries and plans to enter the markets of Germany, Switzerland, France, and Belgium.

Beyond managing various activities, Engineer Elez Agia emphasizes that he personally supervises and monitors most marketing-related operations. Although his educational background is in a different field (civil engineering), he has invested in attending various marketing training programs and has collaborated with experts to advance his knowledge, particularly in digital marketing, consumer behavior, and branding.

The transformation of this business from a trading company (as Mr. Agia initially referred to it) into a structured, recognizable, and scalable business—with market presence and sales volume—has been made possible solely through marketing, which has proven to be the element that "enables you to do everything."

Simply relying on word-of-mouth among customers was not enough. Various strategies were implemented, including social media (currently with over 220,000 followers), search engine optimization (SEO), TV advertising, participation in events, involvement in activities promoting craftsmanship, membership in platforms offering business promotion opportunities, and promotional materials to increase brand visibility. One of the business's goals is to be present on the mobile devices of every Albanian citizen by targeting customers with different needs (e.g., births, moving to a new home, events, and other special occasions).

Notably, the online presence has been built organically, with appropriate investments and sponsorships, while maintaining professional ethics with real people and clients who interact with the business.

Collaboration with suppliers is also a critical element of success. Unique products and their updates are made possible by working with reliable suppliers who provide high-quality raw materials in real time, without major delays. Paradoxically, the volume and frequency of work require that raw materials are always available but not in excessive quantities, as large stocks would increase storage costs.

Another critical factor for market success is ensuring fast and convenient distribution for both individual customers and businesses. After various experiences, Agia Embroidery now collaborates with the international logistics company FedEx, which is one of the most expensive courier services on the market, but provides high-quality service and excellent client communication. This justifies the cost, as it overall improves the customer experience and adds further value to the final product.

Regarding the budget for marketing activities, Engineer Elez Agia believes that 50% of the business's revenue should be allocated to marketing (product development, promotions, logistics, sponsorships, trade fairs, etc.), as this allows the adoption of new methods—marketing is a field that evolves rapidly.

Success in marketing often lies hidden in storytelling, as the customer does not buy only a product but also the emotions conveyed through personal dedications (for individual clients) or through embroidered logos and other brand elements (for businesses). When asked about possible failures in a marketing strategy, Engineer Agia responds simply, without any confusing terminology:

"Of course, there will be deaf ears, because the audience is not always ready. When something doesn't work, you fix the situation—but with marketing, you can do anything. With marketing, you can create magic."

Challenges and the Future

Once a business is in the market, it must take into account both visible and hidden challenges that may arise over time. Current challenges include shortcomings stemming from fiscal policies in certain situations, which reduce the momentum for expanding into markets outside Albania. A real challenge remains the transportation of goods due to high costs as well as the still fragile addressing system in the country. Another evident obstacle is the delayed payment from business clients due to various factors, which directly affects many aspects of business planning. Relationships with business clients require further strengthening and must be built on reliability. To address this serious challenge, which impacts the company's liquidity, Agia Embroidery strives to be firm in order to prevent situations that could jeopardize business operations.

Another visible challenge is staff training and development, as it is impossible to maintain a high level of updates and competitiveness if the workforce is not skilled.

Looking ahead, technology is expected to play a key role. Investment in machinery that increases product variations and reduces dependency on human labor is a business priority. Investing in online commerce through a functional and interactive website is also a top future priority. Improvements in production, design, and embroidery technologies, as well as the development of new products, are key elements for the future.

This section concludes with a powerful message for guests and readers:

"With focus and dedication, anything can be achieved."

Summary and Evaluation

This case study presents the journey of Agia Embroidery from a small family business in a town in northern Albania to a consolidated brand with a strong presence in the national market and international ambitions. The case clearly illustrates the decisive role of entrepreneurship, individual leadership, and marketing in transforming a traditional activity into a structured, recognizable, and scalable business.

From a managerial perspective, the business is characterized by a high dependence on its main leader, which is simultaneously a strength and a weakness. While his vision and skills have been crucial for success, the lack of a more decentralized structure poses a challenge for long-term growth. In terms of marketing, Agia Embroidery represents a strong example of customer-oriented strategy, where storytelling, personalization, and creating emotional connections around the product have generated added value and high consumer loyalty.

Challenges such as fiscal policies, transportation costs, liquidity management, and staff development present real risks to the business. However, the focus on technology, investment in modern machinery, and the development of online commerce demonstrate a clear vision for the future. This case provides a valuable study on the strategic role of marketing and leadership in achieving business success in the Albanian market.

COSMETICS AND PERSONAL CARE: WHAT AWAITS US



Introduction

As part of activities aimed at strengthening collaboration between the university and the business world, B-FLEX was enriched by the participation of two special guests: Sara Lumani, founder of Plenty Albania, and Ester Prifti, CEO of Schwarzkopf Albania.

During this meeting, both entrepreneurs shared their professional journeys with students, reflecting on the challenges faced in their entrepreneurial paths, the strategic decisions that influenced the growth of their businesses, and the managerial practices that enabled them to build and run sustainable businesses in the Albanian market.

The Journey

Sara Lumani, a former student of International Marketing and Logistics Management at Epoka University, shared her experience as an entrepreneur, emphasizing that the initial steps in building Plenty Albania were accompanied by significant challenges. She started this venture without in-depth knowledge of how a business operates as a whole, but through intensive and continuous commitment—working long hours every day, starting at 8:00 a.m. or earlier and finishing at 9:00 p.m. or later—she aimed to understand every link in the operational and managerial process in detail. According to her, fully knowing your business is a fundamental prerequisite for success, stating:

"If you don't know your business from A to Z, then you don't have real control over it."

One of the main challenges identified by Sara Lumani was human resource management, which she described as a widespread problem in the Albanian context. She noted that young people often have expectations for quick success but are not ready to take long-term responsibility or make the necessary sacrifices required to build a sustainable business.

On the other hand, Ester Prifti, representing Schwarzkopf Albania and one of Plenty's main suppliers, presented a different managerial perspective, as the company she leads primarily operates under a B2B model, with its relationships mostly with businesses rather than end consumers. She emphasized that, regardless of the size of a company, it is essential for the leader to have clear knowledge of every process and function within the organization. In this context, she shared with students that she even completed a professional hairdressing course to better understand the products Schwarzkopf offers and to communicate professionally and credibly with clients.

She highlighted that the long-term success of a business is directly linked to the people who make it up. According to her, building a trained, motivated, and committed team forms the foundation for sustainable growth. In terms of team management, Schwarzkopf Albania follows a non-hierarchical structure, where each member enjoys autonomy in carrying out their tasks. Decision-making is conducted collectively, and open communication is considered a key element for the effective functioning of the organization.

To strengthen organizational culture and share the company's vision, Schwarzkopf regularly organizes internal activities such as retreats, work dinners, and informal meetings aimed at increasing collaboration and team cohesion. Both guests agreed that creating a work environment based on harmony and well-being is a necessary prerequisite for enhancing productivity and sustainable performance.

Operations and Current Structure

Regarding competition, Sara Lumani emphasized that Plenty Albania operates in a market dominated by two main rivals: Rossmann, with 17 retail locations, and Well, with 11. She noted that, since Well is a local brand, Plenty and Well share considerable similarities in organizational structure and business operations. In this competitive context, one of Plenty's key strategies is to offer affordable prices, conduct regular and systematic market monitoring, and continuously analyze competitor products. Sara Lumani also highlighted the importance of designing and implementing a robust business plan, which has served as a crucial tool to avoid financial difficulties during the company's early development stages.

Regarding product portfolio decisions, Plenty Albania follows a market-demand-driven approach, focusing on keeping the most requested products in stock and consistently offering them. This strategy aims to encourage customer return visits and increase purchase frequency. Before a product is listed in stores, it undergoes an analytical process that includes identifying gaps in the market, evaluating packaging, and conducting various tests to minimize risk and maximize alignment with consumer needs.

Marketing and the Customer

At Schwarzkopf Albania, as part of an international company operating primarily in a B2B model, marketing follows more formalized and centralized standards compared to a local company like Plenty. Ester emphasized that marketing is not limited to social media communication; it begins with pricing, product positioning, and the development of the market launch strategy.

In contrast, Plenty Albania follows a more dynamic and flexible social media strategy, targeting a broad audience ranging from 15 to 65 years old. Content and product offerings are tailored differently for various consumer segments, reflecting a strong focus on the end customer.

Regarding competitive advantages, Sara Lumani highlighted that Plenty employs a differentiated approach in promotional offers, primarily featuring the most demanded products rather than low-turnover items. This approach differs from some competitors who mainly use promotions to clear unsold stock. According to her, this strategy has helped build customer loyalty and enhance positive brand perception. Another successful practice was the collaboration with Schwarzkopf Albania, where during product launches in Plenty stores, customers purchasing two Schwarzkopf products received a free service at a beauty salon. This form of collaboration proved effective in increasing consumer engagement and trust.

Ester, on the other hand, emphasized that Schwarzkopf Albania focuses on building close, long-term relationships with its clients, providing continuous support for their professional initiatives, such as attending trainings abroad or local events. She stressed that transparency, integrity, and seriousness in fulfilling commitments are key elements in maintaining client trust, and that the company does not tolerate excuses for delays or issues in the supply chain.

In conclusion, both entrepreneurs highlighted that the biggest challenge in managing their businesses remains finding and retaining qualified staff. Although many individuals express willingness and ambition, only a small portion are truly ready to invest themselves fully and take long-term responsibility, making human resource management a critical factor for sustainable business success.

Challenges and the Future

Regarding strategic orientation and future plans, Sara Lumani stated that Plenty Albania aims for a sustainable and well-planned expansion strategy. The company plans to open one new store each year in Tirana before gradually expanding to other cities across the country. Alongside geographic expansion, Plenty also aims to increase its product range and explore opportunities for collaboration at the supply level, even with direct competitors such as Well and Rossmann.

This approach reflects a long-term vision focused on growth, strategic flexibility, and leveraging synergies within the market.

On the other hand, Ester Prifti explained that Schwarzkopf Albania's strategic objectives include further increasing the number of clients, expanding the distribution network nationally, and continuously enriching the product portfolio. These objectives are aimed at strengthening the company's market position and consolidating long-term relationships with existing and potential clients.

Currently, for Plenty Albania, the online sales channel is performing well both in Tirana and in the surrounding districts. Plenty currently operates two physical stores in the capital and follows a gradual expansion strategy, starting from Tirana and then moving to other districts. One of the main challenges in this direction remains building and maintaining a functional online platform capable of managing a portfolio of over 5,800 products, especially given the frequent changes in pricing and stock levels.

Summary and Evaluation

Plenty Albania offers a flexible and dynamic approach, monitoring competition, providing in-demand products, and using digital marketing to reach a wide audience. Strategies include selective promotions and collaborative campaigns, which increase customer loyalty and engagement.

In contrast, Schwarzkopf Albania follows a more formal structure with centralized standards, focusing on quality, transparency, and building long-term B2B client relationships.

Key challenges include recruiting and retaining qualified staff, as well as investing in technology and online channels to support sustainable growth. Plenty Albania's plans to expand its stores and product portfolio demonstrate a market-oriented strategic vision and a focus on competitive synergies. Schwarzkopf Albania, meanwhile, aims to consolidate its distribution network and expand its product portfolio while maintaining its focus on clients and long-term relationships.

The information provided highlights that long-term business success requires a combination of active leadership, managerial engagement, structured marketing, and effective human resource management. This case provides valuable lessons on strategic adaptation, the importance of planning, and innovative approaches to clients and the market.

PIONEER IN MEN'S PERSONAL CARE IN ALBANIA



The Journey

Beu Skincare is an entrepreneurial initiative founded by Joni Beli, co-founder and CEO, which emerged after several years of experience in marketing. After four years working in the personal care industry, Joni and a close friend identified a significant gap in the Albanian market: the absence of a brand specialized exclusively in men's skincare. This market gap presented a clear opportunity to create a differentiated product and address the needs of a frequently overlooked segment.

From this insight began an ambitious project: the creation of a product line for men with a particular focus on formula quality, natural ingredients, and safety of use. Entering the market came with the natural challenges of a new venture, including establishing a supply chain, standardizing products, and ensuring compliance with international quality standards.

Developing products specifically for men was a unique challenge for Joni, who had experience primarily in services rather than production. Facing these challenges required acquiring new knowledge in production management, formula testing, and coordination with international suppliers. The company's strategy was not only product-focused but also centered on building a reliable and recognizable brand in the Albanian market. From the outset, Beu Skincare aimed to create a strong connection with consumers by combining product quality with targeted marketing and clear communication about the value and benefits of each product.

Operations and Current Structure

During its first year of operation, Beu Skincare faced considerable challenges related to cultural perceptions of men's skincare, which was often seen as "unmanly." This cultural context created an initial barrier to product adoption and required the development of a marketing strategy that addressed these perceptions.

To stimulate demand and create an initial market, the company decided to focus on targeting women, identified as the most active and informed buyers in the personal care segment. This group served as an important channel for promoting products to men, leveraging their role as gift-givers for partners, family members, or male friends. The strategy was based on the concept that educating and raising awareness among indirect buyers would influence the perceptions of male consumers.

A specific operational challenge arose with the first product launch during Valentine's Day, which proved unsuccessful due to delays in production and distribution. This highlighted the importance of supply chain management and operational planning for successful product launches.

As a result, the company adapted its strategic approach, shifting from seasonal product positioning (as festive gifts) to a long-term focus emphasizing the brand's core values: high product quality, Albanian origin, and benefits for men's personal care. This shift underscores the importance of flexibility and learning from operational experiences to build a sustainable market position.

During the early development phase, Beu Skincare aimed to establish reference points for quality perception in the Albanian market. To this end, products were formulated in accordance with the standards of well-known international brands, based on ISO-certified practices for safety and effectiveness testing. This commitment to quality was paired with an affordable pricing policy, allowing a unique position that combines professional performance with accessibility in the local market. The result was a gradual increase in sales and the creation of a loyal customer base, particularly during the year-end period, when products sold quickly even without significant marketing investments.

One of the most challenging aspects of product development was selecting the right scent for each product. This decision was influenced not only by consumer preferences but also by the brand's strategic positioning and the emotional experience it conveys to the customer. The final selection was made after testing around 80 different fragrances, reflecting a careful approach based on sensory marketing analysis.

The brand name and packaging design were also approached with a high level of professionalism, forming an integral part of the marketing strategy. Joni Beli explained that the concept of Beu was inspired by a personal moment, when he saw Skënderbeu in the center of the capital, linking the visual identity and brand story to a familiar and culturally valued symbol for Albanian consumers. This strategic focus on quality and branding has helped Beu Skincare establish a recognizable and trustworthy identity in the market.

Marketing and Customer Strategy

Beu Skincare's marketing strategy is characterized by dynamism and a high capacity to adapt to market challenges. In the early stages, the focus was on seasonal events, such as Valentine's Day, positioning the products as ideal gifts. However, facing operational challenges—like transportation delays that prevented timely delivery for the holiday—the company had to reposition the products, emphasizing long-term brand values: high quality and Albanian origin, rather than promoting them merely as festive gifts.

To build brand awareness, traditional marketing tools were employed, including television advertising, which provided broad and immediate reach. This approach was combined with digital marketing, enabling a seamless shopping experience for consumers and faster sales conversion. The integration of these channels created an effective, comprehensive strategy that maximized exposure and access to customers.

At a more advanced stage, Beu Skincare undertook a key initiative to test the product's independence from marketing: following Valentine's Day, ad spending was suspended for one month to assess the sustainability of organic sales. During this period, products continued to sell steadily, confirming customer loyalty and the effectiveness of brand positioning. This experience demonstrates the company's ability to build a sustainable customer base that relies not only on marketing but also on product quality and reputation.

Traditional marketing, including advertising on popular TV platforms such as Ferma VIP, did not lead to immediate sales increases but had a clear impact on brand perception. This investment was considered essential for building trust and professionalism, positioning Beu Skincare competitively alongside brands operating exclusively on digital channels like Instagram. Through this approach, the company communicated its seriousness and commitment to quality and professional standards.

In a later phase, the marketing strategy expanded through collaboration with a well-known singer in Albania and Kosovo. This partnership goes beyond the role of a traditional influencer; the artist actively contributes to product development, helping shape its characteristics and positioning. This approach has two main objectives: first, to reinforce the brand's perception as innovative and community-oriented, and second, to serve as a strategic bridge to enter the Kosovo market, where consumers are more inclined to support Albanian products.

This combination of traditional marketing and strategic collaborations illustrates Beu Skincare's ability to build brand recognition, trust, and an expanded customer base, ensuring a stable and integrated position in both the local and regional markets.

Challenges and Future Outlook

Beu Skincare currently maintains a portfolio of 10 products, including specialized sets such as beard care kits. The company's strategy focuses primarily on everyday personal care products, such as deodorants and body shampoos, which facilitate a gradual transition of consumers from foreign brands to a local brand, fostering long-term loyalty.

In terms of expansion, the company is considering the introduction of hair care products (shampoos and gels). However, this step faces challenges, including strong competition from companies with established networks in partnership with barbers, as well as the capital risks associated with stocking multiple product lines.

Current customer analysis indicates that 80% of consumers are female and 20% male, although the trend is increasing toward male inclusion, particularly in the 30+ segment. The ideal Beu customer is considered someone conscious about personal care, willing to invest consistently in the company's products, and committed to their regular use.

Beu's one-year strategic plan includes entry into the Kosovo market and expansion of the product range, while a longer-term goal is to penetrate markets with significant Albanian communities, such as the USA and Europe. This approach leverages the emotional connection of the diaspora to Albanian products, which is expected to facilitate brand adoption and acceptance in these markets.

Currently, Beu does not plan to open a physical store due to high costs and limited long-term impact. Instead, the company focuses on distribution through pharmacies and participation in exhibitions and promotional points, such as those in TEG Mall, to ensure physical contact with products while minimizing costs and the risks of operating a traditional retail store.

Summary and Evaluation

Beu Skincare represents a clear example of entrepreneurship that identified a significant market gap and developed an operational and marketing model tailored to the specific challenges of consumers and local culture. In a market where male skincare has historically been perceived as "unmanly," the company has adopted an integrated approach, combining consumer education, strategic quality perception management, and symbolic branding elements to strengthen its identity.

The name "Beu," inspired by the historical figure Skënderbeu, serves not only as an identifying element but also as a powerful tool for conveying values such as reliability, strength, and national pride. This combination of strategic marketing, product quality, and cultural resonance positions Beu Skincare as a pioneering and credible player in the male personal care segment in Albania and beyond.

Beu Skincare's strategy has successfully combined elements of traditional and digital marketing, leveraging seasonal events, online channels, collaborations with public figures, and a strong focus on product quality. Portfolio management, scent selection, packaging, and pricing were all carefully designed with a clear objective: to build a strong perception of quality and brand differentiation, positioning Beu competitively against international brands.

Moreover, Beu has demonstrated high adaptability and operational resilience. Strategic decisions, such as repositioning products after an unsuccessful launch for Valentine's Day, illustrate the company's willingness to redesign approaches to overcome unexpected challenges, while maintaining a focus on long-term value for consumers.

This case provides a valuable example for analyzing the interaction between brand, product, and market culture, offering key lessons for start-ups operating in conservative or saturated markets. It highlights the importance of strategic planning, adaptive marketing, and careful management of consumer perception to build a sustainable and respected brand at both national and international levels.

SWEETNESS PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS



Journey

This case study examines the remarkable history of Pastiçeri Nela, a family-owned business with a long-standing tradition that has been passed down through generations, evolving from a small initiative into one of the most well-known names in the Albanian food industry. This case serves as an inspiring model for students, professionals, and entrepreneurs, illustrating how a combination of heritage, innovation, and strategic management can create a sustainable and reputable business.

The business's origins date back nearly a century when the Albanian ancestors of the Nela family opened a bakery in Kavala, Greece, laying the foundations of a tradition that would continue for decades. After the fall of the communist regime in Albania, the family relocated and continued its legacy by opening a stone mill, which still operates today, now within a larger and more modern facility, preserving traditional techniques to offer healthy products of high nutritional quality.

Over the years, the Nela family diversified its activities by opening ice cream shops and creperies, followed by a bakery and pastry shop near the "Petro Nini" school, which continues to operate as a community landmark. The expansion strategy continued with the opening of new stores in the Astir and Yzberisht neighborhoods, increasing the brand's presence and building strong relationships with local consumers.

The key to their success lay in maintaining a careful balance between tradition and innovation, offering products that respect original recipes while adapting to modern market demands. By combining quality, taste, and aesthetically pleasing packaging, they met customer expectations.

The story of Pastiçeri Nela illustrates the importance of family values, sustainability, and strategic market adaptation, demonstrating how a tradition-based business can grow and consolidate within a competitive industry. This case clearly shows how family businesses can preserve their heritage, build a strong brand identity, secure customer loyalty, and achieve long-term growth through a combination of professional management, product innovation, and an understanding of modern consumer needs.

Operations and Current Structure

Pastiçeri Nela represents a rare example where tradition and innovation move hand in hand, creating a successful model of a family business that preserves historical and artisanal values while adopting modern technology to meet the demands of contemporary markets.

With growing demand for their products, particularly frozen byrek, the company has transitioned from a fully manual process to a semi-automated system. In this setup, the artisanal dedication of the women workers in filling the byrek is preserved, while machines are used for rolling out the dough sheets, increasing efficiency without compromising the quality and taste of the products. Additionally, investments in modern technology, such as cake printers, allow images to be printed directly on cakes without using sugar layers, making the product healthier and more suitable for consumers seeking nutritional value while maintaining an advanced aesthetic.

Another key focus of Pastiçeri Nela is the quality of raw materials, where fresh butter and other ingredients are rigorously tested in laboratories to ensure that every product reaching the market meets the highest standards. Their most innovative and processed products, such as frozen dough sheets, byrek, and croissants, are now available not only throughout Albania but also in Kosovo, expanding the brand's geographical presence and creating a diverse and loyal customer base. Furthermore, the company is exploring international collaborations, including exporting baklava to the American market during holidays and preparing to export the “Dubai” chocolate—a product that has gained popularity and viral attention on social media and international markets.

This combination of tradition, rigorous quality control, artisanal focus, and adoption of new technologies enables Pastiçeri Nela to remain competitive in an increasingly demanding market, offering products that unite cultural values, authentic taste, and modern quality standards. This case study illustrates how a family business can evolve and adapt, preserving its heritage while improving operational processes, expanding its product range, and exploring new markets—serving as an inspiring model for entrepreneurs and professionals in the food industry.

Marketing and the Customer

In its early years, marketing did not play a clearly defined role within Pastiçeri Nela's organizational culture, as the primary focus was on production and product distribution, maintaining tradition and artisanal quality. With the involvement of the new generation, the company has adopted a modern and strategic approach to marketing, creating clear plans for social media presence and employing interactive methods such as customer tasting sessions with samples of new products to gather direct feedback. This approach not only helps identify consumer preferences but also serves as a tool to introduce new products and build an emotional connection with customers.

Staff training has taken on a key role within Pastiçeri Nela's strategy. Employees are regularly trained to promote products effectively and implement continuous improvements based on customer feedback. Core elements of these trainings include communication skills, interpersonal collaboration, professional ethics, smiling, and hygiene, ensuring that each employee contributes to a positive customer experience and reinforces the brand's image.

Pastiçeri Nela has built a robust distribution network, supplying approximately 80% of hotels in Albania with frozen products such as dough sheets, byrek, and ice cream, while also collaborating with numerous restaurants and bakeries across the country. With a workforce of 300 employees, the company prioritizes maintaining a close, family-like relationship with its staff, considering this essential for organizational stability and preserving the traditional values of the business.

At the same time, Pastiçeri Nela has expanded its product portfolio to include items tailored for specific consumer groups, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity and market diversity. These include special bread for individuals with gluten intolerance, fruit-based ice creams for those with lactose intolerance, and sweet products for diabetics, such as chocolate and ice cream sweetened with stevia, ensuring that the offerings are accessible and adapted to the diverse needs of customers.

This combination of focus on high-quality raw materials, staff training, and product adaptation to specific market demands enables Pastiçeri Nela to maintain a competitive position and create a unique and trustworthy experience for its customers.

Challenges and the Future

As part of the food industry, Pastiçeri Nela faces a range of daily challenges that require careful and strategic management. One of the primary challenges is food safety, which demands that every recipe is followed with absolute precision, as any deviation can affect not only product quality but also its preservation and consumer safety. This requires rigorous control over raw materials, continuous monitoring of production processes, and strict laboratory standards to ensure that every product leaving the factory meets the highest standards.

Another important challenge is staff management, where unexpected absences or shift changes during critical times can disrupt the production chain and impact operational efficiency. To address this, the company has developed flexible shift plans and implemented ongoing training programs, equipping staff with the skills to manage emergency situations and maintain operational continuity.

The most popular and well-known products currently include spelt bread, which has built a loyal and consistent customer base, with consumers traveling from different areas of Tirana to purchase it. Another notable success is the "Dubai" chocolate, which has gained significant popularity and is being prepared for international markets.

Another example of successful market management is the case of the pistachio amaretti, which was initially not well received by customers. However, after careful promotion, market education, and strategic communication of the product's value, it became one of the most sought-after and best-selling items.

Nela's strategic plan for the future focuses primarily on maintaining high quality and strengthening the brand's reputation. The company aims to further integrate technology, particularly in processes that currently rely on manual labor, such as rolling dough and preparing artisanal products, while carefully balancing innovation with tradition. Expansion into international markets is another key objective, initially targeting Europe and focusing on retail, rather than solely supplying hotels and the tourism sector. Although offers for franchising outside Tirana have been received, the company has rejected these proposals to maintain control over quality, processes, and brand identity, demonstrating a sustainable and strategic approach to business development. This strategy combines the preservation of tradition, operational efficiency improvements, and the development of a strong and reliable presence in both local and international markets.

Summary and Evaluation

Pastiçeri Nela represents an inspiring and educational example of how a business can build and consolidate a sustainable brand by successfully combining tradition, innovation, and strategic management. This case shows that family heritage can serve as a solid foundation for establishing brand identity, preserving values and practices passed down through generations while adapting them to the demands and standards of the modern market.

Through a continuous commitment to quality, Nela has created products that stand the test of time and competition, combining carefully selected raw materials, rigorously controlled production processes, and laboratory standards to guarantee food safety and product consistency.

Another key dimension of success is innovation, expressed through the adoption of new production technologies, such as the semi-automated dough-rolling system and the cake-decorating printer, which allow for efficiency improvements without compromising the craftsmanship and authenticity of the products.

Moreover, maintaining human values and strong internal relationships has fostered an engaged culture, where staff feel part of a large family, contributing to organizational stability, loyalty, and high operational performance.

This case provides a clear model for entrepreneurs and professionals aiming to build or expand a sustainable business, demonstrating that long-term success is achieved through a combination of heritage, quality, innovation, and human values, all integrated into a well-planned strategy executed with professionalism.

SETTING STANDARDS IN HOME AND HOSPITALITY TEXTILES



Journey

As part of the fifth day of the “Industry Days” activities organized by Epoka University, students had the opportunity to learn about the experience of alumnus Erik Shpofi, currently the Chief Operating Officer of Rreli Textile. This case provides insight into the development of a family business that, over three decades, has evolved into one of the most sustainable sectors of the Albanian economy: the textile industry.

Erik Shpofi shared with students the history and journey of Rreli Textile, a family business founded by his grandparents in 1993, during a transitional period in Albania when the economy was just beginning to consolidate toward a free market. In its early years, the company faced numerous challenges but managed to become one of the country’s leading textile suppliers. From the very beginning, Rreli Textile established direct relationships with Asian markets, primarily China, differentiating itself from competitors who mostly partnered with Turkey. The company’s product range includes textiles for homes and businesses, upholstery, various fabrics, and technical uniforms, including fire-resistant clothing for employees in various industries.

After a 15-year period as a distributor, Rreli Textile entered its second phase of development by investing in textile production and processing lines. Today, the company operates a technologically advanced production unit, equipped with modern machinery for manufacturing fabrics used in curtains and other home applications, while some processes still rely on active employees to ensure quality and artisanal standards. The company’s headquarters and warehouse are located in an 8,000 m² facility in Tirana, where production and processing activities also take place.

In terms of distribution, Rreli Textile operates as a leading distributor in Albania, while for the B2C segment it offers a physical store under the name “Rreli Home” in Tirana, as well as an online platform for e-commerce, providing broad and direct access for customers to its products. This combination of family management, long-standing experience, and adoption of modern technologies has helped Rreli Textile consolidate its market position and build a recognized and trusted brand in the Albanian textile industry.

Operations and Current Structure

Rreli Textile primarily operates in the B2B segment through the “Rreli Textile” and “Rreli Hotel Collection” lines, while the “Rreli Home” line targets end consumers (B2C). The company’s competitive advantages include strong and long-term relationships with suppliers from China, Turkey, Greece, and Germany; advanced technical expertise in textiles; careful selection and analysis of raw materials; and the use of modern technologies in processing. Maintaining a large and continuously replenishable stock represents another strategic advantage, ensuring ready products for clients even after several years. For example, a single curtain model with 10 color variants in stock contains up to 2,000 meters per color, sufficient to supply five hotels.

Regarding production, the wide product range requires detailed weekly and daily planning to avoid downtime and ensure efficiency. In collaboration with a programmer, the company has developed a system that allows real-time tracking of customer orders to the relevant production departments, implementing a “just-in-time” production model.

Rreli Textile has also invested in environmentally positive innovations. This includes water-resistant fabrics made from recycled plastic with a 7–8 year lifespan, fire-resistant products for hotels in partnership with certified European companies, and items supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in water conservation and pollution reduction. Another innovation involves the use of fibers produced from plastic collected in the Atlantic Ocean.

In terms of social and human resources management, the company prioritizes quality over costs. Employees are paid above the market average, up to double, to ensure high-quality products and a stable workforce. Currently, the company employs around 30 people, with each department led by individuals with more than 15 years of experience. New staff are trained by department heads and follow a rotation system in the sales department to become familiar with product operations and improve communication skills with clients.

Decision-making at Rreli Textile is inclusive and collective; each decision is made in consultation with relevant employees, especially those on the front line, ensuring that staff experience and knowledge are incorporated into strategies and daily operations.

Marketing and Customers

Strategically, the return of Erik Shpofi after completing three years of studies in Germany marked a turning point for Rreli Textile. He identified a critical gap in the company’s digital presence and initiated the development of an integrated marketing strategy, which included the use of social media, creation and optimization of the official website, and traditional media channels, with the exception of television, which had shown a disproportionate cost-benefit ratio.

Despite being perceived as a less modern medium, radio proved to be an effective tool, particularly for the local segment. During the two-year implementation period of the marketing strategy, the company leveraged radio's high audience during peak traffic hours, successfully increasing awareness of its products.

After this two-year period, the first results of the strategic focus became evident: approximately 30% of total sales began coming from digital channels, including social media, the company's website, and email marketing. This demonstrates the effectiveness of focusing on a strong digital presence and interactive engagement with customers.

Moreover, Rreli Textile integrated traditional marketing methods, such as participation in trade fairs and "door-to-door" meetings with business clients, creating a powerful combination of digital and physical channels. Social media marketing has now become an essential component of the company's strategy—not only for product promotion but also for educating customers about technical features and product benefits, interacting with consumers, and building a closer connection with the market.

This integrated approach has allowed Rreli Textile to develop a strong and consolidated presence, leveraging the advantages of modern technology while maintaining direct and personalized relationships with clients, thus creating a sustainable balance between innovation, tradition, and operational efficiency.

Challenges and the Future

A key milestone in Rreli Textile's history was reaching 30 years of operation, a period that required significant strategic decisions. To optimize its product portfolio and focus resources on lines with potential for in-house production and export, the company decided to withdraw some B2B products, concentrating its activity on lines that can be produced internally and sold in regional and international markets. Greece was identified as a priority market due to its similarity in demand to Albania, representing one of the company's first expansion efforts through moderate campaigns, including newsletters and direct contacts with hotels and beach resorts. Beyond Greece, Rreli aims to enter the Italian and German markets, with a particular focus on the "outdoor" line for products intended for open-air use.

However, challenges remain. Declining purchasing power in European markets, the consequences of international conflicts, rising prices, and the fact that Albania is not part of the European Union directly affect the company's operations. An internal challenge relates to the informality and lack of reliability of some clients, particularly those who delay purchasing decisions, creating additional costs and giving competitors an advantage. According to Erik, the ideal client is one who makes quick, clear, and consistent decisions. Sales channels are adapted according to the segment: B2C relies mainly on online sales and social media promotion, while the B2B segment is dominated by personal contact, face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and communication via email or WhatsApp, ensuring a sustainable and trustworthy relationship with clients.

Despite being perceived as a less modern medium, radio proved to be an effective tool, particularly for the local segment. During the two-year period of strategy implementation, the company leveraged radio's high audience during peak traffic hours, successfully increasing awareness of its products.

After this two-year period, the first results of this strategic focus became evident: approximately 30% of total sales began coming from digital channels, including social media, the company's website, and email marketing. This demonstrates the effectiveness of focusing on a strong digital presence and interactive engagement with customers.

Furthermore, Rreli Textile integrated traditional marketing methods, such as participation in trade fairs and "door-to-door" meetings with business clients, creating a powerful combination of digital and physical channels. Social media marketing has now become an essential component of the company's strategy—not only for product promotion but also for educating clients on technical features and product benefits, engaging with consumers, and building a closer connection with the market.

This integrated approach has allowed Rreli Textile to develop a strong and consolidated presence, leveraging the advantages of modern technology while maintaining direct and personalized relationships with customers, creating a sustainable balance between innovation, tradition, and operational efficiency.

Challenges and the Future

A key milestone in Rreli Textile's history was reaching 30 years of operation, a period that required important strategic decisions. To optimize the product portfolio and focus resources on lines with potential for in-house production and export, the company decided to withdraw some B2B products, concentrating activity on lines that can be internally processed and sold in regional and international markets.

Greece was identified as a priority market due to its similarity in demand to Albania and represents one of the company's first expansion efforts through moderate campaigns, including newsletters and direct contacts with hotels and beach resorts. Beyond Greece, Rreli aims to enter the Italian and German markets, with a particular focus on the "outdoor" line for products intended for outdoor use.

However, challenges remain. Declining purchasing power in European markets, the consequences of international conflicts, rising prices, and the fact that Albania is not part of the European Union directly impact the company's operations. An internal challenge relates to the informality and lack of reliability of some clients, particularly those who delay purchasing decisions, causing additional costs and favoring competitors. According to Erik, the ideal client is one who makes quick, clear, and consistent decisions. Sales channels are adapted according to the segment: B2C relies mainly on online sales and social media promotion, while the B2B segment is dominated by personal contact, face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and communication via email or WhatsApp, ensuring a sustainable and trustworthy relationship with the client.

Challenges and the Future (continued)

Another challenge relates to high import costs and logistical issues. For example, blockages at the Port of Durrës have forced the company to use the Port of Piraeus in Greece, significantly increasing operational expenses. Global events, such as disruptions at international ports or the COVID-19 pandemic, have caused dramatic increases in shipping costs—from \$3,000 to \$25,000 per container from China—directly impacting the final cost of products.

Regarding product performance, bed sheets remain the most demanded product, followed by the “outdoor” line for beaches and outdoor environments. The least demanded products are hand-made curtains and 100% linen items, which currently have low recognition and limited appreciation in the Albanian market. Nevertheless, Rreli Textile has been a pioneer in introducing innovations to the market, presenting the first polypropylene fabric products and fire-resistant textiles, strengthening its position as an innovative company and leader in the textile sector.

Summary and Evaluation

The journey of Rreli Textile—from a modest family business founded in 1993 to a sustainable leader in the Albanian market—represents clear evidence of long-term vision, hard work, and the ability to adapt to contemporary challenges. With a philosophy that integrates tradition with innovation and human values with technological advancements, Rreli Textile serves as an inspiring model for any enterprise aiming for sustainable growth, integrity, and continuous development in the market.

HEALTH THROUGH WATER FILTERING



Journey

Alb Uji is a Albanian family business founded in 2006, specializing in water filtration systems for both household and industrial use. The idea to create the company came from Ardit Dishë's father, who, during his experience as a translator in NATO missions in Kosovo, became acquainted with modern reverse osmosis systems used by the American forces. Inspired by this technology and noticing its absence in the Albanian market, he decided to introduce this concept to Albania, creating a new and innovative solution for the needs of local consumers.

In the beginning, challenges were numerous, including the lack of public awareness, skepticism toward the new technology, and the difficulty of convincing clients of the effectiveness and safety of water filtration systems. The company opened and closed three times during 2006, reflecting the natural challenges of starting a new enterprise in a market unprepared for modern technology. However, the third establishment proved decisive, marking the beginning of a sustainable business and laying the foundations for leadership in Albania's water filtration market.

Over time, Alb Uji has built a strong knowledge base and relationships with international companies, facilitating the adoption of advanced technologies and production standards. Initially, the company focused mainly on household clients, offering simple filtration systems, but later successfully expanded into the local business sector and industry. Today, large water filtration systems used by Albanian companies are supplied by Alb Uji, demonstrating its national impact and reliability.

Alb Uji covers approximately 60% of the water filtration market in Albania, establishing itself as a leader and a reference point for quality and innovation in the sector. The Alb Uji case shows that the combination of innovative vision, family commitment, and efforts to educate the market can turn into a success story, creating an inspiring model for entrepreneurs and professionals aiming to develop sustainable businesses in similarly challenging markets.

Operations and Current Structure

Alb Uji operates in two main business formats, B2B and B2C, serving individual customers, businesses, and institutions simultaneously. The company has established long-term relationships with 16 international partners, acting not only as a distributor but also as an installer and provider of post-sales maintenance services. Some products are supplied ready-made by international partners, while others are designed and assembled locally by Alb Uji using specialized components, ensuring full customization according to customer needs and technical requirements.

The company's staff consists of approximately 15 people, organized by key geographic areas such as Tirana, Durrës, and Vlorë, enabling fast and personalized service. The operational team handles system installation, periodic maintenance, and post-sales support, ensuring optimal product performance and customer satisfaction. With over 20 years of experience and exclusive specialization in the water filtration sector, Alb Uji provides clients with confidence in the quality and durability of its products and services.

In the last five years, Alb Uji has expanded its presence with a store in Kosovo, taking advantage of market opportunities and the growing demand for advanced filtration systems. A key factor contributing to this successful expansion has been the reduction in water filter costs due to technological advancements: in 2006, a filter cost on average €400–500, whereas today the price is around €150, making the technology more accessible to both individual customers and businesses.

Alb Uji offers a wide range of approximately 2,000 products, including various filtration systems differentiated by size, functionality, and usage—from basic household systems to advanced industrial setups. The right product is selected based on water analysis and the client's technical specifications, ensuring that every installed system meets specific needs while guaranteeing maximum quality and efficiency.

This operational model highlights the importance of professional management, specialization, and adaptability to diverse market requirements, positioning Alb Uji as a leader in Albania's water filtration industry and an inspiring example for entrepreneurs aiming to build a sustainable, specialized, and technologically adaptive business.

Marketing and Customers

Alb Uji has experimented with a variety of marketing strategies to increase brand awareness and expand its customer base. In its early days, the company used traditional TV advertisements, including broadcasts on channels like News 24, to reach a wide audience. However, experience showed that the effectiveness of these ads was relatively limited, as most viewers, while watching TV commercials, often scroll on their mobile devices, reducing attention and the impact of the message.

In contrast, digital campaigns on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have demonstrated high efficiency and lower costs for reach and engagement. These channels allow targeting of specific consumer segments, real-time monitoring of performance, and adaptation of marketing messages according to audience reactions. For Alb Uji, digital marketing has been not only a way to promote products but also a means to establish direct communication with customers, quickly receiving feedback and reinforcing trust in the company.

A key factor in Alb Uji's success remains referrals from existing clients, which significantly contribute to expanding the customer base without the need for formal branding strategies. The company places strong trust in its reputation built over 20 years of experience, reliability, and seriousness in customer relationships, creating a loyal customer base that recommends its products and services.

Beyond digital marketing, Alb Uji also employs other methods to increase its public presence and strengthen community ties. These include sponsorship of sports and student activities, such as Epoka University's football club, marathons, cycling events, and local fairs. These initiatives not only increase brand awareness but also demonstrate the company's commitment to the community and social values, positioning Alb Uji as a reliable and dedicated actor in the development of the local market and youth.

Overall, Alb Uji's marketing strategy combines traditional and digital channels, 20 years of experience, and a focus on client referrals, creating a sustainable model that balances brand recognition, customer loyalty, and operational efficiency.

A particularly innovative element is the development of a dedicated CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system, which manages information about existing clients, maintenance history, installation dates, and inspections. Furthermore, Alb Uji has created an automated filter replacement reminder system that sends automatic messages to customers, developed internally by Ardit Disha, offering a high level of professionalism and differentiation from competitors. At the core of the company's philosophy is integrity toward clients and the provision of complete, high-quality, and timely service. Any issue related to a filter originating from the company is resolved at no cost to the client, creating trust and encouraging customers to cooperate with confidence, knowing the company is committed to reliability and high-quality service.

Challenges and the Future

In its early days, Alb Uji faced a major challenge: the lack of public knowledge and awareness of the concept of water filtration among the Albanian population. For several weeks, the company had no clients, which led to temporary closures of the business multiple times during 2005–2006.

Although water filtration technology is relatively standard and does not differ significantly between companies, Alb Uji stands out for its integrity, reliability, and quality of service. Clients value the company's quick response, provision of free services in case of any filter issues, and the close, professional relationships built with each customer.

The company faces competition from strong international brands, such as Eco Soft, which is financially supported and promoted by its parent company in Ukraine. In addition, there are other competitors that Alb Uji monitors carefully in market developments. According to Ardit Disha, Alb Uji's differentiation lies in its human-centered approach, integrity, reliability, and personalized service—elements that have created a strong reputation and high trust, enabling the company to cover approximately 60% of the water filtration market in Albania.

Agreements with Alb Uji's distribution partners are clearly structured and include standard rules on maximum pricing and services, ensuring uniformity and fairness in client relations. Currently, the company collaborates with around 10 distribution partners, mainly plumbing and sanitary stores spread across Albania. Regarding decision-making, Ardit Disha emphasizes that the company follows a collective and family-oriented approach; meetings are held at the family level and include operational staff, ensuring that decisions are based on complete information and integrating the expertise and opinions of all participants.

For years, Alb Uji has aimed to expand its presence in regional markets, focusing primarily on Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. Currently, the company operates stores in Tirana, Vlorë, and Kosovo, while considering opening new stores in southern Albania due to increasing demand and the lack of local resources. The founder and leader of the company, Ardit Disha, has emphasized that the long-term plan aims at expansion throughout the Balkans, targeting markets with characteristics similar to the domestic market. He notes that the name "Alb Uji" represents the company's pride and origin, and while it may encounter prejudice or discriminatory approaches, the support of Albanian communities in the region helps create a stable customer base. Currently, Alb Uji has engaged clients in North Macedonia and Montenegro.

A strategic objective of the company is the creation of the first water filter manufacturing facility in the Balkans. This investment is expected to provide competitive advantages by reducing production costs compared to Europe and facilitating certification processes relative to Asian countries. Such a facility would allow Alb Uji to strengthen its regional position, create opportunities to enter European and international markets, and enhance its competitiveness and ability to offer products that meet the highest global standards.

Summary and Evaluation

Throughout its journey toward market consolidation, the company has continuously explored new expansion opportunities, including the potable water production sector. However, this opportunity is assessed with high strategic caution due to the significant barriers inherent to this market. Experience from established players shows that entry and survival in this sector require not only substantial financial investment but also deep market knowledge, developed distribution capacities, and strong marketing strategies. Successful cases have demonstrated that building a trusted brand in this industry is a long-term process, which, without the necessary resources, can take decades.

This context positions the company's decision-making as sustainability- and risk-oriented, reflecting a realistic and professional approach to expansion. The strategy followed is not based on short-term opportunism but on in-depth market analysis and evaluation of actual organizational capacities.

Parallel to its business vision, the company's managerial philosophy reflects a clear orientation toward long-term development and innovation. Strategic focus, the ability to identify priorities, and the adoption of modern technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, are seen as essential elements for increasing competitiveness in the Albanian market. This approach underscores the importance of continuous adaptation to changes in the business environment and leveraging technology as a strategic advantage.

The case study clearly illustrates that success is not the result of chance but of a sustainable combination of strategic vision, professionalism, and client orientation. It demonstrates that an initial idea, supported by persistence, careful management, and strong client relationships, can evolve into a consolidated and sustainable business. In this sense, the case represents a reference model for entrepreneurial development in Albania and the region, highlighting the potential of the domestic market and the active role that businesses and the younger generation can play in long-term economic development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this brochure summarizes six case studies that highlight the power of collaboration between academia and industry.

A special thanks goes to the business guests for sharing their experience and expertise, to the students of the Marketing Student Club at Epoka University for their engagement, creativity, and professionalism, and to the colleagues at the Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability for their ongoing support and contributions.

The contributions of all involved have been essential in realizing this initiative and creating valuable content for students, faculty, and practitioners.

This project does not end here; it represents just one important step in an ongoing journey of collaboration and innovation. In the future, we will continue to organize similar initiatives, providing new opportunities to develop students' skills and strengthen ties with academic and industry partners.

B-FLEX

INDUSTRY DAYS 2025

TIRANA, 2025