Academy 2019 – Cultural Heritage ePromotion in the Krka & Kolpa/Kupa River Basin

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**Renovation of the Communication Strategy**

**in the City Municipality of Novo mesto**

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In 2015, the Municipality of Novo mesto set itself the task of a comprehensive reform of the communication strategy. The professional planning and implementation of public relations, which included the upgrade of communication policy and communication channels, primarily pursued the following communication objectives:

• greater knowledge of both the activities of the Municipality of Novo mesto and the current events in the municipality,

• greater credibility and a more positive attitude of citizens,

• understanding, trusting and supporting the role and the activities of the municipality,

• increasing the visibility and strengthening the reputation of the City of Novo mesto and the Mayor at the national and international level.

Activities

• A new communication protocol.

• Renovation of the existing and the establishment of new communication channels.

• Regular, proactive communication with the public.

• Open, two-way communication.

• Being more present at national and international level.

Renovation of the website as one of the key communication channels

The City Municipality of Novo mesto wants to provide its citizens with a quick and high-quality access to information, helping them to be more informed and to achieve a prompt communication in the local area, which is why communication has been strengthened with many modern channels. The main tool for these endeavours is the renewed website of novomesto.si.

It was a large project that the municipality addressed because the old website was obsolete, unclear and rarely visited, which, according to its original design, was no longer serving the purpose of informing citizens and other public.

The renovation began in the summer of 2016 and was finished in autumn 2017, covering roughly:

• the analysis of the existing web site, including all the activities on the website,

• the analysis of websites of comparable (urban) municipalities,

• the implementation of public procurement,

• the organization and management of the implementation,

• the development of a communication strategy,

• maintenance, upgrade, improvements.

With the new website, the municipality wants to provide more information to the citizens, and, in particular, to prepare information in the form of up-to-date news for providing relevant information for everyday life, in addition to all official publications and general data that the citizens search for on the websites (official hours, contact numbers, forms, local acts etc.). The home page of the municipality website highlights the important things that the citizens should pay attention to, among them also current notifications, such as information on road closures or detours in traffic, notices on power failure or sewage system failure on certain sections, and similar. All topical news is shared on different social networks in an adapted form, in order to reach as many citizens as possible with information that might be interesting and useful to them. With the new website, the accessibility has increased to both the municipal administration, and, more importantly, to the elected representatives of the citizens, the municipal councilors.

Promotion of cultural heritage through the municipal website

The City of Novo mesto strives to find and publish even the information for which the municipality is not accountable, but is still important for our citizens and other interested persons. In doing so, we successfully connect with various institutions, individuals and societies, as well as public institutions and companies which were co-founded by the municipality.

Since the website is oriented towards providing news, one can find also soft content related to the promotion of the municipality, the building of its brand and the development of tourism. Due to the rich history of Novo mesto, this content is primarily based at cultural heritage (thematic years that the municipality has marked for this purpose were associated with the celebration of the city's 650th anniversary, the rich amber and other archaeological finds and the anniversary of Leon Štukelj's birth; this year the celebrations are connected to the heritage of the renovated historic town centre). In addition to the Slovene version, the new website comes also in English language, for the use of all the foreigners who are or will be interested in Novo mesto in the future.

Given the size of the municipality, the official website cannot provide space for all the rich content from the town's abundant legacy. Therefore, the website serves primarily as an excellent platform for connecting various stakeholders (the citizens, the media, event organizers, activities providers, other municipalities, etc.) and an entry point (through news, calendar of events, links) to specific content and web pages (e.g. other websites providing tourist activities, websites of the Association of Historical Cities of Slovenia, etc.).