



Simona Kocurova, the “holiday designer” is speaking how The Covid-19 pandemic has helped her to expand her business in Italy.

Every negative thing comes with something good in it, right? The perfect proof of this statement is Simona Kocúrová, who developed her business even in the pandemic of coronavirus. The Slovak, who chose Italy's destination for her life, set up the agency Tuscany by 1st class, focusing on travelers' experience and tailor-made experience. When people changed their travel plans due to pandemic, she started together with other entrepreneurs to bring innovative products to the market. They decided that even if the travelers cannot come to Italy, Italy can come to the travelers.

Always on the go, never rest on one's laurels

Simona tried many jobs, but she was very much attracted by the business sphere since studying at a university. That's why she started to organize fashion shows connected with the wine tasting in smaller Slovak locations. And that was precisely the moment when the big challenge appeared; she described it as an opportunity. “I was approached by one company to organize a wine tour

over Italy. Then I was approached by other clients again regarding Italy. Step by step by step, I was getting closer to Italy.” Later, Simona started to travel more worldwide; she is very thankful for this experience now. These tours in various destinations opened her eyes and also the mind. She always desired to work in a field reflecting her hobbies, so she decided that exactly in Italy she sets up her

agency Tuscany by 1st class and starts to offer concierge service. “When you think and choose the place to live, you should like it. History, art, aesthetics, these are all significant factors for me,” she says when thinking about Italy. She also considers a big plus that this country has all the perfect vacation destination attributes. Nature, mountains, sea, cuisine, wines, fashion, architecture, and we can continue forever. Within the Tuscany by 1st class is Simona “tour designer”. She creates tailor-made holiday, experiences such as celebrations, weddings, wine tastings in villas and many more. Her task is simply to understand

what each and every particular client needs. And why has she decided to be active in this particular field? “At a certain moment, I realized that I have an excellent network of my contacts, and I can provide a lot to the others. I have traveled to all regions, I know the best hotels, restaurants, places worth to be seen. I know who to approach and who does the business the best,” she explains. That’s why she decided to use this know-how and swap it into her real-life business. In her agency, she offers services that are really difficult to be sold, as the client cannot see them. The client has to experience them.



The basic when creating your own business is per Simona, perseverance and patience. “All we need is time, everything comes at the right time, the most important is not to give up and face the challenges, solve the issues, and we have to be also a little bit of visionary, so to expect what could happen,” says Simona. She and her agency Tuscany by 1st class,

first have to deal with the fact that she can’t be alone anymore. That’s why she decided to delegate specific tasks to the external colleagues. Another challenge is the innovation of products, services. “Be creative, always bring something new to the market, you always need to have your eyes open in this business, never satisfy with what you have,” she adds.

How pandemic has expanded her business?

Simone’s life has also been affected by the pandemic of coronavirus. “Tourism business is seasonal; therefore, clients use it only approximately 8 months a year,” she says. The low season usually takes about four months, but it has lengthen to almost one year due to pandemic. In the spring and also at the beginning of summer, Simona had no income in tourism. “All the clients, whether weddings or tours, stays, excursions I had to move to the end of summer, autumn, some of the projects even to 2021,” she explained the situation. Italy was hit by the pandemic very hard. Simona, since

the very first days, tried to stay calm and do not panic. She knew very well that the situation is not her failure, but a worldwide issue. Therefore she started to do activities she had no time to do at all in the past. “I started to paint again, I finished reading of all the books about Egypt, Marco Polo, entrepreneurship, and I also practice sports a lot,” she mentions. Simona also says that the pandemic changed not only her personal life but also the professional one. She studied and dealt with prognosis, based on which she realized that this situation will be here even



Simona presents a new italian design product - the WINE TRUNK

longer with us. "Will it return to how it was, if at all? I think that traveling will not be anymore the same as it was before," she said. She also decided to consider this fact in her business; therefore, she focused more on products over the services during the pandemic. Together with other Italian entrepreneurs in the gastronomy, Italian products, fashion and design, they joined together and created innovative products. „I'm currently developing a new website and the new concept for international clients, mostly from the United States of America. I created a new team of people, offering services on my website, attracting not only avid travelers. People will be able to enjoy the online experience; otherwise, they should travel to Italy to get the real deal," she says. Together with other entrepreneurs, they developed unique wine 'safes' that clients get along with the virtual degustation. "Think of it as a very big trunk, Louis Vuitton design, all leather made.

Each trunk contains a selection of awarded wine of top quality and the best brandies. Furthermore, glasses, a book about Tuscany, bottle openers. They fit perfectly into the modern house, and we also are currently working on a version to be brought to yachts," describes Simona one of the products. Pandemic also caused Simona's business to expand more. She does not plan to stop organizing excursions, weddings and services in concierge service. "I am not thinking about giving up on my dream, because traveling will be there forever, although limited," she added. In this crisis, she considers such an impulse she was waiting for also in the past. Since the end of August, Simona is very busy with the agency Tuscany by 1st class. "Our clients are coming, except Americans, those are missing very much in our business," she explains. Her service is in high demand mostly by Americans and Slovak, Czech, and people from other countries.

