
Abstract

Ceramics as the art craft has a very long history dating back to the days BC. It is still here despite the present technical achievements and survives the attempts to replace it by cheaper but not such quality products. We can say that every ceramic product as absolutely natural material is an irreplaceable original.

Nowadays the situation in ceramic industry is not easy. There are only a few manufacturers to produce but they cannot compete with large producers who use cheaper materials. Moreover they can offer much lower prices. But ceramic producers can offer something that no large producers can. They are mainly quality products with high art or utility value that is connected with many years tradition that makes the high prices. The problem is a significant fragmentation and work focus of the artists. So there is a need to connect them and manage them efficiently.

This project focuses on small and medium business support and development of the ceramic industry and also on help to the artists. The project deals with the ceramic art support and microregion development too.

Aim of this project is to propose platforms to support the sustainable development of traditional crafts that are based on historical skills of the analyzed microregion. The aim of the suggested center is to associate individual ceramists from the region and offer them legal, business and marketing support for production, distribution and product sale. Those products can be classified as ceramic items suitable for gardens, parks or public areas, building items (fireplaces, pavings ...). The goal is to offer products with higher added value and creative value of the manufacturer. Not just to produce products of normal consumption and compete to cheap Chinese high-volume production such as the cheapest flowerpots from hobby markets, and so on.

The project is divided in two separated parts. The first part concerns the secondary research. There is Porter's five forces analysis made concerning the customers, competitors and substitutes. This part is followed by PEST analysis where the political, economical, social and technological environment is defined. We have also included opportunities and threats analysis where we discuss about subscribers and products substitutions. The current unions and guilds are not missing as well.

Second part of this project contents our own primary research. There was made survey research, personal interviews and then we made own project output. We have created two types of surveys. One was addressed to the producers and one to the distributors. According to the research, one half of producer respondents are interested in association entry. Four fifths are willing to pay an annual membership fee and more than a half thinks that 500 CZK/year is an appropriate sum. Only 22 % is willing to pay the sum between 500 - 1000 CZK/year. Those ceramists see our open economy as a big problem because it allows cheap Chinese products to get to our market and ruin the local products. Another problem is seen in current educational system and in that young people are not interested in this sector. Positive is that more than 80 % of distributor

respondents want to distribute or buy ceramic products. They are most interested in ceramic paving, artistic works or ceramic tiles.

There were also several personal interviews made with the field professionals. As we found out the ceramic market is very various and segmented. Current ceramists do not have sufficient propagation and sufficient amount of sales channel for their products. This matter should solve our suggested website for ceramists and their products presentation. The recommendations are to join to the region where the ceramist lives in and gain the regional mark, because it indicates “home product” itself, and this is for current customers and possible subscribers very interesting. Ceramics products should be modelled by history, nature and modern style.

The only possibility how to beat China is to focus on quality and originality. The customers must understand that a cheap flowerpot might save some money but not for a very long time. We also find out there are individuals that would like to transmit their know-how which could bring a synergy to this field. These ceramists could also participate on school teaching as externals and which could increase the interest and perspectives of all field.

For the purpose of establishing the ceramic union seems to us as the most appropriate to establish professional association under the Act No. 83/1990 Coll., The association of citizens. For this association we suggest the name “Svaz keramických řemesel” and its main purpose will be to associate natural and legal people involved in art and utility ceramic work. As an appropriate we find also to associate the raw material distributors and also the final product sellers.

The higher negotiating position of the manufacturers to distributors could be ensured in the way that the manufacturers would get raw materials from distributors in the union for better prices. On the other hand the distributors would have certainty of permanent subscribers which could compensate them the discount.

It is very important to raise the interest among the young pupils at elementary schools and also among the high school students. It is also appropriate to cooperate with universities. There could be also competitions where young artists could compare their skills together on the model of for example apprentice competitions.

To the craft support the union could publish a regular online magazine with field news information. The news is connected to other activities. Those could be seminars for professional and general public. Other activity is a member meeting to relationships strengthening. There could be also excursions to fairs abroad or taking parts at the fairs. Important is to emphasize the manufacturers utility products quality that must be controlled regularly.

The union itself could have a good negotiating position in dealing with state institutions. It is meant that the union could cooperate in related legislation preparation and could help its members to deal with state institutions. If members would be interested in legal or economical assistance, they could pay fees to the union.

The most important activity that the union should focus primarily is establishing own website. This website could be designed by the university students

(for some financial sum, of course). The website will content field news but also the member informations and the union informations themselves. There will be a signpost too where the visitors could find required manufacturer according to the specified parameters, for example according to the place of living. This signpost will be completed by model of UKCraftFairs (2013). Except place of living the signpost will content also pictures of each manufacturer's products and brief subscription of them. Other contribution of this website will be an opportunity to complete the ceramic products demand for free. The costumer may through this site enter his requirements and the union will send those to appropriate union members and they will send their offer and price list to the customer.

As a good way we suggest organizing the open days in ceramists' ateliers. In case of possible propagation there are several ways suggested. They are regional informational channels, regional news daily, including the internet, and garden and building fairs. For ceramic products sales abroad would be appropriate to start cooperation with local and good working unions. From the western markets we marked Germany and Great Britain as potentially most interesting.

As the icing on the cake we propose establishing of the entertainment park (modelled on dinopark) for young people and families with children. For this park it could be created pc games characters and more traditional fairy tale characters (dragons, etc.). This campaign promotion should be through social networks where young people present. We recommend creating an entertainment Facebook page where the park pictures and videos of the characters will be shown together with their YouTube links. This page would be also an information channel for our union and its creation is for free. The exhibition could be placed to park or to unused hall. Minimal entrance fee could go to our union cashbox as the additional income. This is the way how the ceramists could ensure originality and public interest because there is nothing like this in Czech Republic. We should let the characters creation to ceramists themselves. They would create those characters or sculptures for free to our union and more over they could create a lot of characters miniatures. If the visitors would be interested, they could buy them immediately. At every character shown, there would be references to the author and other additional informations. We have chosen this promotion way because we think that segment of young people has its strength and might bring publicity to this park, our ceramic union and eventually to the ceramic segment in general.