

THE TOC Times

Avraham Y. Goldratt Institute

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UpClose & Personnel: Network Members from the former Eastern Bloc

*by Martin Powell,
Contributing Writer*

The UK office of AGI is also the Regional Office for what was originally Southern Europe when AGI was established in 1986. The geography map has changed considerably since then. The fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War has brought an increasing interest from the former Eastern Block countries in TOC. With English being the international language we have a steady flow of enquiries from these countries into the UK office.

From 1989 all the large consulting firms swarmed into these countries, charging large fees for results which were often less than satisfactory. Those of you that attended the Iskra Mechanizmi presentation at TOC WorldSM 2000 heard this from Milan Zajc (Scepter d.o.o.), our Certified Expert in Slovenia. Increasingly, people are looking for proven methods that can be learned and disseminated without the traditional consulting dependency syndrome.

Many of you will also have heard of the success of Heiti Pakk and his team (OU A.Y.Goldratt Baltic) in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia (the

Baltic States) in creating the attendance of over 500 people at The Goldratt Satellite Programme in 1999 together with selling many thousands of Eli's books.

At the end of August this year, Oded Cohen, AGI Partner, and I visited the Czech Republic to support our Certified Expert Mirek Smira (Goldratt-CZ) in the delivery of the second 4 of a 4x4 for a wood processing company, Lukaavec. Mirek had facilitated the viewing of the tapes during the first 4. This was not an easy assignment as very few of the management team, other than the CEO, were very comfortable in English. Despite this we had a very successful 4x4 which Mirek has converted into an Enterprise Wide Improvement Solution. The process convinced Mirek that the 4x4 is a valuable product and marketing tool and that to support it he must commence on the translation of the tapes. This is underway and together with the recently translated books, Goldratt-CZ will have excellent tools to use in promoting TOC to the Czech market. Goldratt-CZ is also investing in creating more Certified Experts to support their expanding client base.

At the end of September, Oded and I visited Poland to conduct the second part of a 4x4. We worked with the

current three partners of Werbel Sp. z o.o., who are a new consulting company that has chosen what they call the "TOC Compass" as a major product offering to the market. The three guys, Krzysztof Abramowski, Jarek Kozicki and Zenon Parol were formerly part owners in a Polish company that provided ERP software and services, mainly to manufacturing organisations. They have many years experience of such systems and had a good reputation in the market.

However, they became increasingly aware that what they were selling and delivering was Necessary But Not Sufficient (where have I heard this?). Their search for something of real value for their clients brought them to TOC and the realisation that their existing organisation was not prepared to change. So they have established Werbel. Jarek came to TOC WorldSM 2000 where he made contact with us. The outcome from the 4x4 was an outline plan which will create all three of them as Certified Experts and collaboration on joint projects with their former clients and the many USA and UK companies that have established operations in Poland.

Whilst we were in Poland we all took the opportunity to visit a Lear Corporation plant which has integrated



some elements of TOC with those of TPM, TQM, Six Sigma, Team Working and Kanban (for high runners).

About 3 years ago, when they were part of UTA, the management team attended a European Programme on TOC run by Oded and Mike Dinham, sponsored by an outstanding Jonah, Ken Bell. During our visit we

were all impressed at the results and the outstanding continuous improvement culture that the plant manager



Andrej Wardzinski has achieved. *[The photograph shows the visit.]*

We are currently in the middle of a J o n a h Programme being held here in the UK, which includes the “Experts under Development” from the Czech Republic and Poland, as well as participants from Israel, India and of course the UK. Towards the end of November we will commence an Expert in Production programme in Poland (two weeks), followed by

weeks three and four in the Czech Republic and the UK respectively, in the new year.

Martin Powell
Regional Director
m.powell@goldratt.co.uk

Milan Zajc (Slovenia)
scepter@eunet.si

Heiti Pakk (Baltics)
heiti@goldratt.ee

Mirek Smira (Czech Republic)
mirek.smira@goldratt.cz

Krzysztof Abramowski (Poland)
kab@werbel.formus.pl

The TOC Times

Published by:
AGI
442 Orange St.
New Haven, CT 06511 USA
+1 203 624 9026

Steve Simpliciano Editor-in-Chief
Rika Visser Subscription and Content Editor
Robbin Inorio Content and Copy Editor
Sylvia Ebbson Content and Copy Editor
Jennifer Foley Technical Editor

All contributions for *The TOC Times* should be sent to Rika Visser, AGI 442 Orange Street, New Haven, CT 06511 or RikaVisser@goldratt.com

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