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Dear AmCham Macedonia members and friends –

Welcome to the fall 2014 edition of *Emerging Macedonia*. I hope you'll find our coverage of social media trends in the world and in Macedonia useful for your organization. While this is certainly one of the busiest periods in the fiscal year as well as in the private lives of our readers, we're glad you found time to tune into some of the hot topics garnering attention among our members.

It was a pleasure to host so many members for our annual general assembly just a few weeks ago. Those present benefitted from an inspiring speech from U.S. Ambassador Wohlers, which I believe inspired many members to engage more in AmCham's mission and vision. Also, the new additions to our Board of Directors is certain to enable another dynamic, creative and impactful year in our organization.

On our events calendar, still to come this year are our traditional Thanksgiving gathering as well as our annual holiday party. Ambassador Wohlers will join our Thanksgiving reception as the guest of honor on November 20<sup>th</sup> where we will recognize the efforts of a number of volunteers who have ensured the sustainability and success of our joint initiatives over the past year.

This year's holiday party will again combine several great American traditions: jazz, delicious holiday food and American beverages. If you ask fellow members about last year's party, I'm sure they'll encourage you to join us and bring your spouse, clients, business partners and government contacts. The festivities will kick off at 7:00 pm on Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at the Vodenica Restaurant wine bar. Don't miss it!

With best wishes for an enjoyable and safe holiday season,

Michelle Osmanli  
Executive Director



## TWO FIRST PRIZES FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVN MACEDONIA

EVN Macedonia once again a winner of several prizes at the national CSR awarding ceremony, this time for 2013 that is organized by the National Coordinative Body for Corporate Social Responsibility and the Business Confederation of Macedonia. This year, the national award is supported by the project “CSR for all” co-financed by the EU.

EVN Macedonia won the first prize in the category “market relations” for the project “Platform for energy efficiency”. The Platform is a form of long-term cooperation between EVN and the Ministry of economy in the area of energy efficiency. The goal of the Platform is to raise the awareness for the need of rational energy usage with concrete activities. A special focus was given to the greater implementation of energy efficiency in the small and medium sized companies.

The first prize in the category “employee relations” was also given to EVN Macedonia for the project “Strategically integrated approach for the support of the professional development of the young”. EVN created an integrated approach that encompasses several types of activities that enable professional development of the young potentials. Through the programs for internship, scholarship and Trainees we are working on increasing of the competences of the young human resources through development of certain skills and upgrade of the theoretical knowledge.

“EVN Macedonia is an advocate for rational energy usage, meaning that we should live and work with the same quality but spend less energy. As a member of the international EVN Group, EVN has very large knowledge and experience in the area of energy efficiency that can be transferred to the customers in Macedonia. That is the reason that we decided to be a part of this Platform, because we thought that there is a lot that we could achieve on this topic. The partnership with the Ministry for economy contributed very much to the success of this project” stated Mr. Werner Hengst, President of the Management Board of EVN Macedonia. The professional development of the young potentials is also especially important to us and we are always prepared to offer our support in this domain, added Mr. Hengst.

Within the Platform for energy efficiency many activities were implemented. It started with a mass media campaign for raising the awareness about the meaning of energy efficiency. After the campaign was implemented, on the national TV a special educational TV show “Energy alphabet” was aired that covered various topics in the energy field. Furthermore, several workshops and trainings were held for more target groups like the media and small and medium sized companies. More than 200 companies went through the trainings within the Platform. The last activity was the so called business plan competition organized for all students in Macedonia that competed with innovative business plans that contain elements of energy efficiency. In the business plan competition more than 150 students in 40 teams from all faculties in the country participated. The Platform for energy efficiency was positively evaluated in the report of the European Commission for Macedonia, where it was noted that on the field of energy efficiency there has been significant progress.

The strategic approach in development of young potentials in the company is a part of a range of activities focused on new employees and students. Several programs have been implemented in the past years that focus on this target group: trainee program, internship program and scholarship program. The goal of these activities is for the students and those who have recently graduated to acquire practical knowledge and skills needed in the real business sector.

These prizes are recognition for EVN Macedonia’s continuous effort and engagement in the domain of CSR. They are proof that our commitment is real and not merely declarative. EVN Macedonia has received prizes in the national CSR awards six years in a row.



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# Social media gets down to business

## Social media gets down to business

Social platforms making global headlines these days, like Facebook, Twitter, Yelp and LinkedIn are thriving on a model that attracts millions of users to use their platform to do everything from promoting themselves to running a small business to staying in touch with loved ones. The platforms have succeeded in attracting a critical mass of users – and, of course, their personal data – which, in turn, has attracted advertising dollars from organizations wanting that access and intelligence. Lots of advertising dollars.

What makes them so lucrative to marketers is the amount and variety of personal information that their users offer up to the outside world. Such detailed data on such a huge number of people have never before been available. That's why these networks are likely to change the course of the marketing industry as we know it.

anything to use them, they have to “put up with” a certain amount of advertising sent their way. This is, after all, not unique to the social media world. In fact, the only places people have the right to be completely free of marketing messages is within their private property.

However, keeping users active on social networks means managing their concerns about how safe their information is. Universal Media's 2013 “Wave 7”<sup>1</sup> social media study found that 67% of people are “concerned about the amount of personal data online,” whereas 44% don't mind companies tracking their online behavior *as long as it improves their user experience*.

*According to a recent Bloomberg Business Week blog social media is killing email as a mass marketing tool.*

“Our “Wave” research shows that concern about sharing personal data online is real and building. However, this concern goes hand in hand with the growing importance that social networks are now playing in users' lives. People are sharing more data than ever before, be this photos, videos or simply updating their profile or status. So it is clear that users are aware that they are sharing data and, while this is a concern, the perceived benefits brought are too strong or outweigh the risks.” says Biljana Pesevska, Head of Digital Services at McCann Skopje.

Thus, advertisers have to be aware that the way in which they use this newfound intelligence will, in large part, determine whether the



## Keeping users – and thereby, advertisers – happy

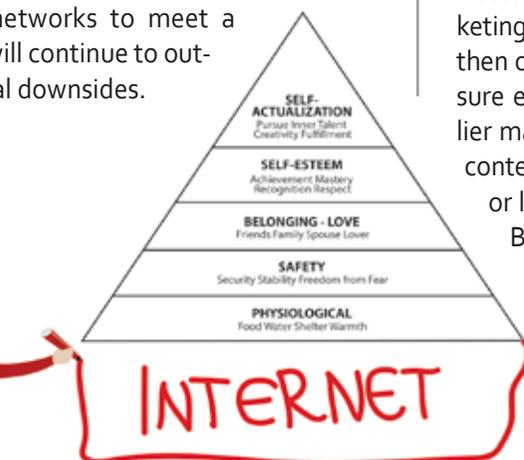
People who are active on social platforms generally understand the bargain. Since they're not paying

<sup>1</sup> Wave is the world's largest and longest running social media study. Covering 65 countries with Wave 7 it represents the views, needs and behaviors of more than a billion of the world's most influential internet & social media users. Learn more at <http://wave.umww.com/>

channel continues to grow in value over time. If the exchange between users and marketers via current social media platforms isn't viewed as mutually-beneficial, a market space is opened for new platforms for users to meet similar needs. Given that social networking sites just began appearing 15 years ago, constant evolution in this space is guaranteed. Marketers hope that individual users' dependency on social networks to meet a number of needs will continue to outweigh any potential downsides.



Design courtesy of McCann Skopje



The Internet has enabled marketers to learn more about the individuals who see their ads AND which ads actually work; social media are the most sophisticated segmenting and targeting tool out there. As marketers gather metrics on ad interaction (e.g., shares, "click throughs"), their ability to identify the right profile of potential customer should get continually more accurate. The result? People will see more ads that are relevant to them, decreasing the distracting "noise" of messages about products and services they don't want. This is more cost effective for the marketer and should help sustain a workable balance between social media users and the companies targeting them.

"Social media is amazing in terms of being able to target not just ads, but content in general to the specific audience brands want to reach. Although the potential is enormous, it is still a great challenge to do this creatively and be visible among all others who are trying to do the same. This is where the capabilities and experience of social media teams are crucial. At McCann, we have a digital creative team that dedicates a serious part of our time in creating social media concepts that

inspire audiences to engage with brands," says Ms. Pesevska.

### The death of mass marketing?

According to a recent Bloomberg Business Week blog<sup>2</sup> social media is killing email as a mass marketing tool. Instead, the blog argues that the future of mass marketing "starts with focusing on the content itself and then on coming up with a strategy to track and measure engagement with that material." Whereas earlier mass marketing strategies focused on delivering content to the desired audience at the right time and/or location, social media is turning the tide. Darko Buldioski, creator of AllWeb, Macedonia's only annual internet marketing conference explains that,

"The user is in the center of communications, now more than ever. In the digital era we see ourselves as celebrities and want everyone to pay attention to us. So, brands should focus resources on the channels and places on the web where their customers are active. Once there, they need to learn how the channel works, listen to people there and communicate appropriately. This means if your customers are on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, your brand should be too. Of course as long as you have something meaningful to say."

Email campaigns and other forms of mass marketing (billboards, hard copy mailings, print ads) are likely to persist for some time, but may be used by major players for fewer and fewer target audiences as "social becomes the new normal", one of many trends cited by the "Wave 7" study.

"The new reality is already here. Social media is a great tool for businesses to seed their messages, but users are not keen to share branded messages that are not relevant or do not offer any added value to them or their friends. The challenge for brands nowadays - and this applies more and more for Macedonia as well - is to constantly create valuable content that will inspire social media users to consume and share it.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-02-24/the-end-of-email-as-a-mass-marketing-tool>

*Continued on page 31*

# Social Media Presence as Competitive Advantage

Interview with **Rick Wion**, Allweb 2014 speaker and McDonald's first-ever Director of Social Media

**EM:** What are some of the cutting-edge ways American companies using social media? Can you name some of the early adopters and what are they doing differently?

**Wion:** There are lots of smart uses of social media. Here are some of my favorites:

- **AJ Bombers:** An example of a small business using social media to attract new customers. It's a few years old but still one of my favorites. <http://bit.ly/1soNyeN>
- **Dollar Shave Club:** A subscription service to receive razor blades in the mail. The company uses only digital, social and word-of-mouth marketing. I'm a customer and a fan. [www.dollarshaveclub.com](http://www.dollarshaveclub.com)
- **Threadless T-Shirts:** Using crowdsourcing art and social sharing to design really cool t-shirts. [www.threadless.com](http://www.threadless.com)
- **Untappd:** Craft Beer is very popular in the United States and this app let's fans of beer "check-in" to whatever they are drinking. It is one of my favorite apps. Badges for special beers and events work as a great incentive for purchase. <https://untappd.com/>
- **ALS Ice Bucket Challenge:** A perfect combination of one-to-one social interaction for charity. This past summer it was one of the biggest happenings online and raised more than \$120 million.

**EM:** Tell us what kind of impact social media has for small organization vs. a big one?

**Wion:** The value of social for a big company versus a small company is actually very similar. Social can be used to connect with customers, build a brand, invite



customers to try products. The scale will be different, but the usage can and should be the same. The key question for a small company to answer is how much it can dedicate in terms of resources to social. To be a social company, you need to create content, work your social media channels and also consider paid ads. This all requires a careful consideration of time, effort and budget.

**EM:** Are there any potential "leap frog" benefits that social media offers businesses operating in developing markets? In other words, might social media be a shortcut for companies that aren't doing a lot of more traditional marketing?

**Wion:** Social media can definitely be a great way for companies to market themselves beyond traditional marketing efforts...but it must be done so in a very careful and thoughtful way. It would be a mistake to assume that social by itself can lead to success. Any company, large or small, should investigate how to reach its customers and determine the best use of

social—whether on its own or as part of a traditional marketing mix.

For example, in the town where I live, most all of the parents are on Facebook and Pinterest. Many belong to groups within these social networks. If I were to open a children’s play area in my town, I would not use any traditional marketing but rather post pictures of the play area on Pinterest and use Facebook to connect with local moms. I’d also buy Facebook ads targeted to my local neighborhood. In contrast, my sister runs a local accounting firm and she relies on traditional marketing (newspapers, billboards) to connect with small business owners in town.

**EM:** How important is the localization of a corporation’s social media strategy for each market they operate in? What does it look like in terms of effort and impact?

**Wion:** Localization is extremely important. Social media is worthless if it is not culturally relevant for your audience. For example, in most of the United States, having ketchup on a hot dog is the most common and logical way to eat. However, in Chicago, people sneer at ketchup on a hot dog as an indicator of being uncultured.

use and what content they create. This can create a very complex organization with a lot of work, however, it is essential to be relevant and welcomed by your customers.

**EM:** Tell us a bit about your background. It was a while ago, but tell us what attracted you to a career in social media and digital marketing? What keeps you interested?

**Wion:** I love working in social media because it is a mixture of writing, design, storytelling, technology and meeting people. Despite social media being a relatively new tool for most businesses, it continues to evolve rapidly so that my job today is different from what it was last year and next year will be different as well.

*To make the most of localization, a company must think locally both in terms of what platforms they use and what content they create.*

My career has not been in a straight line but I feel that every job that I’ve had has been in a complete logical order and helped me grow as a professional.

I studied journalism in school and worked as a reporter for a few newspapers and magazines. This helped me become a good writer and a good storyteller. Next, I worked as a graphic designer which helped develop my eye for imagery. I then worked for a consulting firm working with dozens of different companies to build e-commerce, online learning and digital conversation tools such as discussion forums. Next, I worked for a PR firm building web sites but also developing blogs and social strategies for a wide variety of companies. At that company, I worked on food brands, pharmaceutical and finance companies. I also

worked for McDonald’s and then joined the company to become their first-ever Director of Social Media.



To make the most of localization, a company must think locally both in terms of what platforms they

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# Winning with Customers Online: T-Mobile and Telekom

Author: **Dimitar Kovacevski**, PhD, Director of Corporate Communications, Makedonski Telekom, Inc. - Skopje/T-Mobile Macedonia, Inc. Skopje



Social media, digital media, social networks and on-line are probably the most frequently used words today. At the beginning, as with every novelty, their usage was limited to more avant-garde writing, shared content and visionary thinking, that accepted the challenge to participate in on-line social conversations. Today we are talking about a communication channel that can't be ignored - a channel which is part of every serious communication and all customer relations and experiences, as well as business operations planning and execution.

Telekom and T-Mobile recognized the power of social media and, together with our creative partners, pioneered their utilization as a communication and customer relations channel.

## Opportunities and challenges

While there are a number of ways to describe social media networks we view them as a free marketplace of ideas from which we can derive a whole set of opportunities and challenges.

Social networks are the best place to capitalize on the power of participation, sharing and engagement,

as well as to successfully utilize an idea-generation channel. At the same time, they are very sensitive places where fans can say whatever they want. The platforms allow a two-way communication that wasn't possible before, and are constantly evolving to help fans share their constructive ideas. They are also open media available for participation where we can share project goals and ask fans to help develop and accomplish them together.

Day by day, social media are becoming the best place to respond to all our fans' opinions and ideas and build an authentic and user-friendly tone of voice. This is extremely important, because in social media, word travels fast; users can easily showcase their complaints so we have to be particularly careful when posting information and providing direction on social media. In recognition of the incredible power and importance of social media, we created a set of fundamental goals that would encourage productive social collaboration, including:

- To provide a strategic framework to ensure we maximize the benefit of our social media efforts;
- To set guidelines for our social media activities;
- To define the relevant channels for official communication; and Ensure that all functions, business units, management and employees adhere to a uniform set of strategic guidelines within their defined organization, roles and responsibilities.

## A business perspective on managing social media campaigns in Macedonia

Social media have become one of the most valuable channels for both brands and consumers, since they offer a wider reach at lower cost. While practitioners and academia might have agreed a few years ago that social media campaigns were for underdogs, today we see more and more industry leaders using these channels. That's because they are the fastest,

easiest and most efficient way to share information with large audiences (the T-Mobile Macedonia Facebook page is currently the brand page with highest number of friends in the country). More importantly, social media provide a uniquely precise audience targeting tools. This makes social networks legitimate rivals to all other media channels and will continue to have a huge effect on consumption.



Social experiences are very powerful, creating strong connections and impact on consumers; word-of-mouth has become click-of-mouth. Thus, our social media activities have passed through several development phases:

- **Building the fan base** – We created the T-Mobile MKD Facebook page in 2009 and were among the first corporate brand pages in the country. Since most other local brands were not present, the combination of our early-mover advantage and inclusion of innovative games that created fun and memorable experiences for visitors created impressive results. We became the fastest growing page in the country, collecting 100,000 fans in less than 2 years and were the number one page for more than 3 years.
- **Company information placement** – After creating a sufficient fan base, we started posting relevant company information, promotional offers, marketing and sales novelties and much more.
- **Maintaining and increasing fan engagement** – To keep our fans engaged, we began posting news on the latest technology, events, gadgets, mobile phones and apps. We also continued organizing games for prizes and awards, interactive applications and quizzes.
- **Customer generated content** – As pioneers in social media activities, we were the first brand to have innovative and interactive customer-generated campaigns, where fans' ideas and suggestions gathered from Facebook served

as the foundation for our above the line (ATL) campaigns.

- **Facebook advertising:** We were the first brand to have an entire Facebook campaign that was then followed up by an ATL campaign.
- **Customer care application:** As more and more customers are using social media to ask questions, we created a special customer care application on Facebook that is integrated with our customer care workflow.

The effort means daily interaction and open communication with the customers. Together with our creative partners we continue to launch innovative and interactive campaigns that include engaging events and games, such as Like Day, Social Media Day, Cool Day, where fans sign up via Facebook to participate in special below the line (BTL) events.

*Social experiences are very powerful, creating strong connections and impact on consumers; word-of-mouth has become click-of-mouth.*

Recognizing the power of social media in combination with traditional media and consumer preferences, we also created innovative and interactive campaigns that were integrated with ATL. The first was the "Sashko Web Show", the first entirely Facebook-based campaign that used the platform as its main communication channel while using 3G internet on the move and the most advanced streaming technology. The ATL campaign was an addition to a Facebook campaign. We organized the first live, exclusively online concert of the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra. We announced the concert on all social platforms and added a live Facebook feed where the audience could comment real-time while watching. The performance received a huge "digital applause".

### Lessons learned and predictions

Our experience with social media over the last five years has resulted in many lessons learned and a strong foundation from which to predict future trends. Firstly, it's clear that social media are the future of customer engagement since everybody is there (83% of Macedonians have a Facebook profile).

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# Key Factors for a Successful Presence in the Digital World

Author: **Alkaloid**, Inc. Skopje

Social networks present an enormous challenge for companies because they require a commitment and openness in customer relations. Companies used to be able to carefully prepare and send messages they fully controlled; social network communication is far more complex because it requires companies to interact in real time with the public in a way that will create additional value for customers first and foremost, but also for the company overall.

*In terms of the content that we share through the social networks, we are always guided by the 70/20/10 model...*

With the rising popularity of social networks, Alkaloid recognized the need for bidirectional communication because consumers began talking about our products there whether we were present or not. Thus, our Facebook pages in our six key operational markets have become a hub for direct communication with our target audience.

In terms of the content that we share through the social networks, we are always guided by the 70/20/10 model, which means we work to ensure that 70% of posts on our Facebook page add value to the community and are directly related to the brand and certain objectives, 20% of the content is created by fans themselves and brand-related, while 10% of the content is promotional. This content management model has proven the most effective because it creates a sustainable level of interaction; our customers find what we publish to

be valuable and therefore want to continue engaging with us.

By talking to our customers, we gather important feedback that we cannot get through any other communication channel. Namely, we identified customers' favorite Becutan products, their likes and dislikes and we received interesting and innovative suggestions on our collection. An interesting example of the value of the feedback we receive on the social networks was when we began considering the introduction of new packaging for one of our Becutan products. We weren't sure there was a real need for new packaging nor what it should be like. Given the longstanding and open relationship the Becutan brand has with its community, it was natural for us to ask their opinions. The response was incredible. We received thousands



of suggestions, even from people who were only indirectly part of our community. This approach to analyzing customer needs proved successful because it both helped us make the right decision and reconfirmed the brand's value to our customers.



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A particularly important confirmation that Alkaloid's social network efforts are on target, was our receipt of the Golden Sempler Award given at the SEMPL media event in Slovenia in 2013. The international jury declared the "Becutan Keepsake Journal" campaign a winner in the "Best Social Network Campaign" category. This campaign was created to honour the tradition of creating memory books while taking advantage of new technological trends. The campaign garnered huge interest throughout the region immediately after its launch; more than 10,000 keepsake journals have been created so far.

*Users aren't satisfied with old-fashioned marketing messages; they need something more. That "more" is one of the biggest marketing trends called "content marketing."*

With the development of social networks, people's habits and expectations are evolving as well; there is a tendency for users to outgrow or lose interest in social networks.

Users aren't satisfied with old-fashioned marketing messages; they need something more. That "more" is one of the biggest marketing trends called "content marketing." The idea is that brands create and share relevant content that brings customer value, thus building a long-term relationship with customers. It is important to point out that content marketing is not aimed at directly generating sales; instead, they are meant to increase brand loyalty by offering quality content to its target audience.

We were really intrigued by this type of unobtrusive communication, since practically no other Macedonian brand had taken this marketing approach. This inspired us to convey our New Year's greetings for 2014 in a different way, by means of the most widely used video service, YouTube. "The Most Sincere New Year's Greeting Card" was a short video in which children conveyed the brand's message. We chose this approach in order to personify the brand for buyers (i.e., parents), but also to emphasize childrens' heartfelt emotion. For the first time in our country, we conducted a YouTube "video seeding" campaign where we sent our

greetings to all parents, regardless of whether they were part of our Facebook community or not. The emotions conveyed in the greeting card hit their mark and it became a viral hit in a matter of days.

This positive experiment in content marketing encouraged us to integrate similar elements in our new website, as a unique online space where we offer customers everything they need. Therefore, the new Becutan website, which is in the final stage of its preparation, will not just promote our products, but will be primarily dedicated to parents. We expect our target audience to visit our website primarily to connect with other community members and share their personal experiences. While doing this, they will also be able to access information on our products, if they want to.



Becutan is a brand that is present in our homes every single day. However, in a time of constant change, to be present implies embracing the changes that new generations bring with them. This means we have to be dynamic and constantly upgrade the way we communicate with customers. Keeping pace with the latest communication trends is key to maintaining the customer relationships we have been building for over 35 years by responding to customer preferences and needs.

# Understanding the Needs & Behaviors of Internet Users

Author: [Biljana Pesevska Josifoska](#), Head of Digital Services at McCANN Skopje

Social media remains at the top of the agenda for many brands. However, it is clear that as a tool for marketers it's still very much in its infancy mostly because of the continuous changes in how users consume it. Popular measures of success, such as "Likes", posts or Tweets, are no more than proxies for other more meaningful brand objectives. In

fact, by definition, setting these goals suggests you may have already confined yourself to creating a one-dimensional social experience.

Perhaps this is one reason why so many social media strategies look the same, using familiar platforms in familiar ways to achieve similar goals. Do they make people want to spend more time with the brand, do they make them feel valued as customers, or do they encourage people to recommend the brand to others?

Universal Media, our agency specialized for media strategic plan-

ning and buying, gives the answers in the annual study Wave that is conducted each year for 8 years in over 65 countries including Macedonia. Over 50,000 respondents included in the study represent the views, needs and behaviors of over 1 billion active internet users worldwide. The Wave survey, conducted in Macedonia by Universal Media Skopje and McCann Skopje is the only relevant study that analyzes the active internet users in Macedonia which gives us in-depth knowledge on how the users' needs and behaviors are developing over

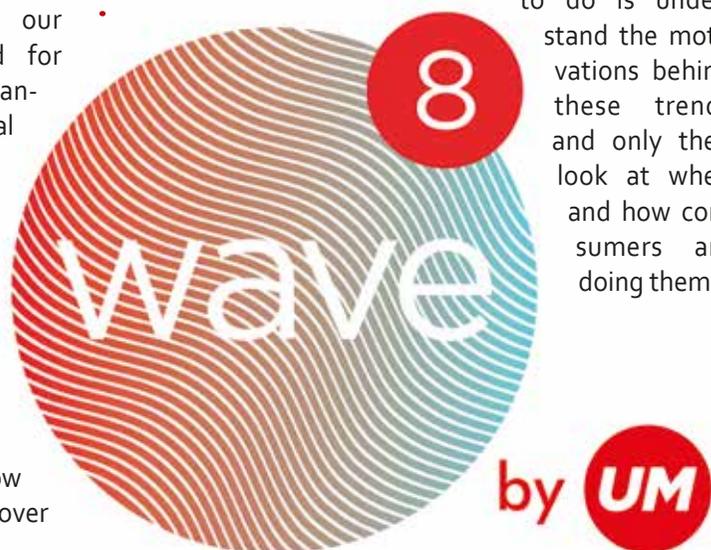
time. This insight is crucial for us to create successful communication strategies for McCann and UM's clients.

**Wave 8** is just around the corner. This December, we will unveil the findings from our latest study "**The language of content**". The study not only identifies the type of content people love, but also shows that it is at its most powerful when it becomes a valued social commodity. With Wave 8 we will demonstrate that the understanding of this power is the key to create powerful content that motivates people to share.

Wave reveals a deeply complex environment where different social experiences meet different marketing objectives. An experience that drives brand advocacy in one category simply creates awareness in another. An experience that encourages brand participation for one person does very little for someone else. Knowing the value of an experience means we can build a social media strategy designed to meet a marketing objective, rather than starting with how to exploit an existing social platform.

It's no longer enough to simply track the latest trends because much of what we see is background noise or worse, a complete distraction. What we really need

to do is understand the motivations behind these trends and only then look at when and how consumers are doing them.



# Employees or an external agency: Who should handle your social media presence?



Author: **Damjan Dano**, IWM Network, Ltd.

The ongoing debate on whether to insource or outsource your organization's social media presence is nothing new. One side argues that outsourcing a company's social media presence is risky and even unethical, since the whole point of social media presence is to give direct access to company resources. The other side argues that a serious social media presence requires specialized skills and attention that aren't generally available in-house.

Clearly, companies need to believe that paying for external services brings value they could not generate with existing resources. In short, there is no right answer; it depends on a company's specific situation, goals it wants to achieve and the level of resources it has available.

## In-House

**Pros:** The pro-"in-house" argument is that social media communications must be handled by someone who knows the business in detail, has experience and relevant industry knowledge and easy access to

management personnel, materials and unique company insights.

**Cons:** Most managers think that handling a company's social media presence is about taking a few minutes to post a few status updates. With this in mind, they delegate the responsibility of managing their social media profile to a lower level employee who already has a full-time job. The truth is that it requires significant knowledge, time and focus to manage social profiles, post daily content that will engage an audience, answer questions and moderate discussions from customers online. If this responsibility is treated as an insignificant, part-time job for someone with no management connections, a company's social media presence is bound to suffer.

## Outsourcing

**Pros:** To execute a successful social media strategy, you need a combination of industry knowledge and relevant social media experience, design, unique content, video production, public relations savvy, the ability and tools to quickly handle the occasional "troll" (i.e., people that just want to argue). Realistically, this can't be handled by one, non-superhuman person. It requires a dedicated team of various talents generally available in specialized agencies.

**Cons:** You are bringing an outsider to handle one of the most crucial aspects of your business – someone you will need to trust to "speak with your voice". On top of that, in the first phase, you will need to invest significant time and effort explaining how your business operates, your values and beliefs, your mission and vision, constraints and where you draw the line between public and private information. All of this candor carries a certain amount of risk – especially if your agency is working with a competitor – so non-disclosure agreements are a must.

BREAKDOWN	
In-House	Agency
PROS	
Familiarity with the business	Diversity of available talents
Industry experience	Social media expertise
Quick access to company materials & news	Up-to-date with latest innovations
You know your company culture best	Ability to create diversified content
Greater budget control	Access to specialized technology and tools
	Network of relevant contacts & influencers
	Flexible working hours
CONS	
Limited technical capabilities	Need constant input from you
Limited working hours	Limited availability
Social media learning curve	Learning curve to get to know your business
Limited content variety	Possible conflicts-of-interest

### The Benefits of Synergy

Given that in both situations there are pros and cons, a combination of the two options is generally considered to be the best option toward creating a winning social media strategy that will inspire customer engagement and an optimal return on investment.

One or two employees can't possibly have the knowledge and experience of an agency that lives and

breathes digital and social media; and no agency can execute a good social media strategy for your business without your constant involvement. Companies should start by assessing their internal capabilities and limitations, then look for an agency that is compatible with their needs and long term goals, works transparently and is ready to supplement their in-house efforts to enhance customer relationships.

### Sliding Scale Proposed for Legally Mandated Fines

In response to criticism that severe misdemeanor fines were partially to blame for the failure of local startups and discouraging new investments by local business people, the Macedonian Government recently proposed changes to Misdemeanor Law that would change the way fines would be levied. Though the proposed Law entered Parliament in July, a vote has yet to take place on this potentially beneficial measure.

According to proposed changes, business fines would be adjusted according to the following formula:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{10-70\% of mandated fine} \\
 \text{depending on previous} \\
 \text{year's annual revenue}
 \end{array}
 +
 \begin{array}{l}
 \text{5-20\% of mandated} \\
 \text{fine depending on} \\
 \text{the \# of employees}
 \end{array}
 +
 \begin{array}{l}
 \text{10\% of the mandated} \\
 \text{fine if \textit{not} the} \\
 \text{company's first offense}
 \end{array}
 =
 \begin{array}{l}
 \text{Amount} \\
 \text{of fine to} \\
 \text{be levied}
 \end{array}$$

This means that if the legally-mandated fine for a misdemeanor is €5.000, a first-time offender company with 9 or fewer employees and <€8000 annual revenue would pay just €750; while a company with previous infractions, annual revenues of >2 EUR million and more than 250 employees would pay the full €5.000.

# 6 Common Pain Points Felt by Macedonian HR Departments

Mention employment-related issues at any gathering of international business people working in Macedonia and you're likely to hear a number of pretty consistent complaints. They range from personal diatribes on the process of applying for a visa or work permit to expressions of disbelief that companies are legally required to give advanced, written notice to the Labor Inspectorate every time employees are scheduled to work overtime.

AmCham Macedonia's team, recently surveyed a number of HR specialists who work in large, international AmCham member organizations to create the following list of issues they have in common.

**1 High administrative burden, lack of proper systems, coordination and consistency between & within institutions** – when it comes to issues of employment, companies are required to report, report and report again. Unfortunately, most of these reports are only accepted in hard copy and contain repeat information already submitted to another institution. It is sometimes hard to even submit documents, since some institutions

only accept documents 2 days per work week. Companies also report that officials within the same institution are likely to give different instructions and to accept different documents for the same procedure. Accurate application requirements are rarely published online, so at least 2 trips to the institutional counter are most often in order. Due to the ministries' reliance on hard copy applications, documents are sometimes lost, slowing the process and requiring applicants to start over. The lack of electronic payment options in most State institutions results in time-consuming trips to banks and maintenance of hard copy proofs of payment.

**2 The number of official holidays** – Macedonia recognized no less than 27 State, national, ethnic and religious holidays in 2013; when combined with a minimum annual leave allowance of 20 days for each employee, reduced productivity is a real concern;

**3 Overtime** – by law, employees can work a maximum of 8 hours overtime in a given week (4 hours less than their EU counterparts) and companies have to notify the State Labor Inspectorate before any overtime is worked;

**4 Arbitrary vacation bonus "K15"** – starting this year, companies must pay a standard annual vacation bonus to all employees, regardless of their current salary level or performance;

**5 Overly strict vacation usage constraints** – employees must take at least the first 12 days of their annual leave in one go, even if they don't want to;

**6 Extended sick leaves** – while the system is designed for the State Health Fund to assume responsibility for paying salaries of employees on sick leaves longer than 30 days, changes in an employee's diagnosis can restart this clock, requiring the company to continue footing the bill another 30 days, ad infinitum.



# Corporate Income Tax Rules Change Again

Just before going on summer vacation this year, the Macedonian Parliament unexpectedly reintroduced corporate income tax on undistributed profits after a 5 year break, given as an anti-economic crisis measure in FY2009. The main justification for reintroducing the profit tax requirement was that the world economic crisis had ended, eliminating the need for the measure.

Despite the fact that the new legislation wasn't adopted until the middle of the year, its rules will apply to profits generated throughout all of FY2014. As a result, companies are likely to be unprepared because they didn't anticipate this expense in their FY2014 budgets. Unfortunately, Parliament's adoption of retroactive measures that carry financial impact is not unusual in Macedonia. Predictably, the practice reduces companies' readiness and ability to

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comply when the new rules come into force, thereby decreasing the likelihood of their full compliance. This unnecessarily increases stress on companies working here as well as enforcement-related costs incurred by oversight authorities.

## Tax relief for reinvested profits

The new Law isn't just the reinstatement of the old CIT. It also creates a way for companies to decrease their annual tax base by the amount of last year's profit that was reinvested for development purposes. This tax relief covers investments in both tangible and intangible assets, but excludes certain types of assets intended for administrative purposes. To take advantage of this measure, taxpayers must own the assets purchased with reinvested profit for five full years.

Unfortunately, the Law is unclear on whether the reinvested profit tax relief could be applied to profits generated in FY2013 and reinvested in FY2014. Thus,



Author: **Ana Shajnoska**, Senior Tax Consultant, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ltd. Skopje

more clarification is needed to prevent confusion and legal uncertainty early next year.

## Carrying forward financial loss

The new Law stipulates that losses incurred in a company's annual income statement (adjusted by non-deductible expenses) can be carried forward against future profits for up to three years. However, this practice requires an explicit approval from tax authorities. With this change, companies are no longer allowed carry forward the tax credits that exceed their taxable base.

## Taxation of previous years' accumulated profits

The new CIT Law stipulates that profits accumulated from FY2009 - FY2013 are taxable upon their distribution. Unfortunately, the new Law doesn't address dividends that were paid in advance from FY2014 profits. Since the new rules don't come into force until January 1, 2015, dividends that companies distributed during FY2014 will apparently be subject to the 10% CIT. The lack of an exemption for FY2014

appears to have been an oversight that, again, opens the door to many (mis)interpretations and does not give a clear picture of companies' tax burden for the year. Fortunately, this headache will only be experienced during this transition year.

### Limited use of the tax credit

The ever-troublesome issue of determining the eligibility for a tax credit has been resolved to some extent – by making the tax credit available only for the amount of *collected* receivables, which were already taxed. The previous law allowed tax credits to be applied in the year when taxpayers obtained either (i) an enforceable court decision or (ii) confirmation from the bankruptcy or liquidation manager that their receivable had been duly reported and confirmed. In practice, the tax authority interpreted this to mean that company write-offs were tax deductible only if they were recorded during the same year that the required decision/confirmation was obtained. The new Law makes this interpretation official, generally disallowing the use of tax credits even when the decision/confirmation is provided. Thus, if companies write off receivables in a fiscal year prior to receiving a decision/confirmation, no tax credit will be allowed.

### Treatment of monetary funds transfers remains ambiguous

Despite expectations, the new Law didn't clarify whether outstanding

receivables from loans are taxable when they aren't collected in the same year the loan was granted. Thus it is unclear whether the Law refers only to those outstanding receivables that are due for payment or it covers all receivables, regardless of their maturity period. The new Law also fails to limit this taxation to unreasonable transactions with related parties, which would avoid any unfair taxation of normal transactions between companies.



### What next?

With the year-end approaching and the start of the new "tax season", the open questions created by the new CIT Law are sure to become burning issues for all companies working here. Luckily, there is still time for clarification of the remaining issues, if the Ministry of Finance keeps its promise to adopt a Rulebook for implementation of the CIT Law by the end of November 2014. This document should shed some light on the issues that otherwise threaten to become stumbling blocks for many taxpayers.

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# 90

ГОДИНИ  
ПРЕМИУМ  
КВАЛИТЕТ

1924-2014



КОНСУМИРАЈТЕ ОДГОВОРНО!

# 10 AmCham Macedonia Members Won National CSR Awards

No less than 10 of our member companies won National Awards for Best Corporate Social Practices. The winners were selected by the Corporate Social Responsibility National Coordinative Body, founded in 2007. The awarding ceremony every year is organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia.

## National Award Category: Investment in the Community

- **T-Mobile Macedonia, Inc. Skopje** for the project "The first 5 are most important in the world"
- **Tinex-MT, Ltd. Skopje** for the project "Humanity is important – Who will we help today?"
- **Alpha Bank, Inc. Skopje** for the project "Clothes for everyone"
- **Nova International Schools Skopje** for their "Service learning program"

## National Award Category: Supplier/Consumer Relations

- **EVN Macedonia, Inc. Skopje** for the project "Energy efficiency platform"
- **Makstil, Inc. Skopje** for the project "Our customer and supplier relations speak for us"
- **Sparkasse Bank Macedonia, Inc. Skopje** for the project "Bank's alphabet"
- **Tikves, Inc. Kavadarci** for the project "Education, creativity, inventiveness"

## National Award Category: Employee Relations

- **EVN Macedonia, Inc. Skopje** for the project "Professional development support in EVN Macedonia"
- **Makstil, Inc. Skopje** for the project "Continuous education for employees – the foundation of company success"

## National Award Category: Environmental Protection

- **Cementarnica USJE, Inc. Skopje** for the project "Minimizing noise in Cementarnica USJE's surroundings"

## National Award Category: Ethical Management

- **Feni Industries, Inc. Kavadarci** for the project "Transparency – Feni Industries' ethical choice"

*Congratulations to all of the winners for their success in raising the CSR standard in Macedonia again this year!*

# 14th Annual AmCham General Assembly

“For the benefit of your companies and the business community – and ultimately for the benefit of Macedonia – we need to work together to encourage an environment that fosters economic growth,” said U.S. Ambassador Wohlers while opening AmCham’s 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Ambassador Wohlers went on to encourage members to further “a regular, robust, and blunt dialogue” with government.



Presenting a year in review report, Executive Director, Ms. Michelle Osmanli highlighted AmCham’s activities that aimed at advancing business-university cooperation and increasing the quality of internships in the country; improving expat visa and work permit procedures; raising public awareness and protection of intellectual property rights; and promoting progressive human resources practices, volunteerism and a commitment to corporate social responsibility among members. She also emphasized the organization’s productive cooperation with the U.S. Embassy in Skopje which had greatly increased the contribution of U.S. know-how to a number of AmCham events and activities.

Ms. Liza Popovska, Board President for the last 2 years, recognized the work of two departing Board members – Werner Hengst and Makram Ghribi for the significant time and energy they invested in the organization during their years of Board service.





Over 58 member companies then officially confirmed 11 new members that applied for membership over the last 12 months. They were:

- Ecotip, LLC Skopje
- Feni Industries, Inc. Kavadarci
- Forton MK, LLC Skopje
- GAEA Green Alternative Energy, Ltd. Skopje
- Inbox Archive and Data Center, Ltd. Skopje
- IWM Network, Ltd.
- Kristina Kostovska Notary
- QSI International School of Skopje
- Roche Macedonia, Ltd. Skopje
- Sparkasse Bank Macedonia, Inc. Skopje
- Uniqa, Inc. Skopje

Finally, 2 new Board members were elected and a third member reelected to a second term; they were:

- Emre Kozlu, General Manager, Philip Morris, Ltd. Skopje;
- Slavko Projkoski, COO, T-Mobile Macedonia and CFO, Makedonski Telekom, Inc.- Skopje and T-Mobile Macedonia, Inc. Skopje; and
- Miroslav Marchev, Tax & Legal Services Director, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ltd. Skopje.

Following the business meeting, Ms. Sonia Georgiadou, a Certified International Coach with over 30 years of experience working in and for multinational companies, led a change leadership seminar entitled, "Developing a Growth Mindset in Your Organization". Roughly 48 members explored the differences between fixed and growth mindsets; tell-tale signs of each; the importance of disruption as a crucial trigger for changes, and mindfulness as a practice proven to increase leadership effectiveness.





# Запознајте го новиот Windows

**Windows 8**  
Прекрасен, брз, едноставен.

Во новиот Windows сè се врти околу тебе. Најважното те чека на твојот Start екран каде ќе ги најдеш сите твои контакти и апликации, за помалку да бараш, а повеќе да остваруваш.

**Windows 8 Pro**  
Подготвен за работа.

Со Windows 8 Pro добиваш сè што доаѓа со Windows 8, плус побогата функционалност за полесно да се поврзеш со деловни мрежи, да пристапиш до твоите документи во движење, да ги енкриптираш твоите податоци и многу друго.

# Members Gain First-hand Insights from IMF Rep



Mr. Patrick Gitton, Resident Representative of the International Monetary Fund in Macedonia attended Amcham's Business Breakfast on September 29, 2014. He presented the missions, the functioning and the main challenges faced by the global institution. He underscored that the IMF has evolved over the past years with the view to better reflect its membership needs and to be more effective.



Patrick Gitton reported on the work done by the IMF in Macedonia since the opening of a local office in the mid-1990s, including significant technical assistance provided to various national institutions. He also explained the conditions of the ongoing macro-economic and financial dialogue with the country's authorities, through a Post-Program Monitoring.



## PAST EVENTS

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The IMF Resident Representative presented the vision of his institution on the situation and the outlook for the Macedonian economy. Mr. Gitton said that supportive macro-economic policies have helped the country to weather relatively well the effects of the crisis, and that a key challenge is now to stimulate growth and employment while keeping a sustainable trajectory of public finances.



He emphasized that an important part of his role is to collect feedback on business climate-related issues from the local business community. A number of concerns were raised by present members, particularly with respect to the impact of a highly conservative financial services sector on the ability of small and medium businesses to grow and export.



Guests valued the networking opportunity as well as the insightful discussion of big picture topics that are not a part of their everyday routine, but inevitably impact their business performance.



# Combined Member Efforts Make a Difference at Local School

A generous donation from our member, **Cementarnica USJE**, and funds gathered at Dobrodojde Macedonia Welcome Center's 2014 International Charity Bazaar were combined to create an entirely new after-school activity room in Skopje's "Zlatan Sremec" special needs elementary school. The renovation included new flooring, freshly painted walls, a new entry door, lighting, tables, chairs, curtains, a couch and bookshelves. The room was transformed from a drab, old-fashioned classroom to a brightly colored and welcoming place for kids to spend their afternoon hours relaxing or working in groups.

At the official opening, Michelle Osmanli, the Executive Director of AmCham Macedonia, delivered care packages to the school's over 100 students, including t-shirts, school supplies, antibacterial soaps, teas, and a variety of snacks donated by members **Tinex**, **Vitaminka**, **Alkaloid** and **Alliance One**.



As part of the opening program, guests at the opening were treated to several short student performances. The event had great media exposure, particularly on the country's web portals.



*Social media gets down ...  
continued from page 7*

This a tool that helps brands seed their messages via social media users, since people are likely to listen to their friends than an official brand message," says McCann's Pesevska.

### What about the company website?

For the last 20 years or so, companies the world over have poured big time and money into building and maintaining their individual websites. It seems like that is rapidly becoming unnecessary since fewer and fewer people are likely to visit them. According to the "Wave 6" study, consumers are moving "away from increasingly siloed brand websites, viewing them as specialist or one dimensional experiences compared to those offered by social media." The study shows a 13% decrease in visits to single brand websites, a trend expected to continue. And this downward trend was most obvious among 16-24 year old survey respondents.

Allweb's Buldioski says that he wouldn't recommend that companies eliminate their websites. "That is the brand's home, where you can do whatever you want. The brand owner sets the rules there, so you're in control. But brands do need to find ways to make their sites more social and give users a fresh

experience, which takes some research, time and other resources."

### The business case

Akin to the rather sudden importance of launching a company website in the mid-1990s, the shift toward social media for marketers is about remaining relevant to the next generation of customers, who have different expectations and habits than their predecessors. As with any paradigm shift, companies will need to invest resources to learn about, test and finally change current practices in order to adapt to the new reality.

The shift to social media for companies could reduce costs for everything from providing customer support to recruiting new employees. After all, social media offer companies direct, electronic communication with potential and current clients, employees and partners. This should translate to a significant reduction in resources applied to other channels meant to achieve the same ends – think call centers, brick and mortar storefronts and the like. It should also mean an exponential increase in the effectiveness and reach of their current efforts for a fraction of the traditional cost.

*Winning with Customers ...  
continued from page 12*

It is also more efficient, with a measurable ROI that offers an organic way of promoting products and helps generate leads (social networks drive an increasing amount of traffic to corporate websites).

Next, social media provide an opportunity to build trust by connecting to customers, individualizing their experience and creating a meaningful relationship. Customers expect a quick response to the issues they identify via social media. A strong customer relationship focus translates to positive page feedback overall.

Finally, a few tips and tricks:

- Page post engagement ads are the most effective type of Facebook ads and contests offering prizes and awards boost fan engagement.

*Social media provide an opportunity to build trust by connecting to customers, individualizing their experience and creating a meaningful relationship.*

- The name of the game is being active and generating content instead of external links to increase page feedback.
- The structure of posts influences engagement rates (posted photos are by far the most engaging format of FB posts).

Generally speaking, we can expect increased company investments on developing the right content and platforms with a focus on Facebook re-marketing; custom audience targeting; as well as mobile optimization, utilization and dominance. These investments will aim to get to know customers better, engage with relevant influencers and create more visually pleasing and engaging content.

# AmCham Macedonia Member List 2014

## **PATRON**

Alkaloid, Inc. Skopje  
 EVN Macedonia, Inc. Skopje  
 Makedonski Telekom, Inc. - Skopje  
 Microsoft, Ltd. Skopje  
 Okta Crude Refinery Oil, Inc. Skopje  
 Pivara Skopje, Inc.  
 Skopski Pazar, Inc. - Skopje  
 Visteon Electronics Macedonia, Ltd.  
 Skopje  
 Wabtec MZT, Inc. Skopje

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 Kavadarci  
 ArcelorMittal Skopje (CRM), Inc.  
 ASSECO SEE, Ltd. Skopje  
 Avon Cosmetics, Ltd. Skopje  
 Avto Moto Sojuz na Makedonija  
 \*CBS International, Ltd. Skopje  
 Cementarnica Usje, Inc. Skopje  
 CISCO Systems Macedonia, Ltd. Skopje  
 Deloitte, LLC Skopje  
 DHL Express Macedonia, Ltd. Skopje  
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 Skopje  
 European Bank for Reconstruction  
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 Eurostandard Bank, Inc. Skopje  
 EY, LLC Skopje  
 Feni Industries, Inc. Kavadarci  
 Fersped, Inc. Skopje  
 GD Granit, Inc. - Skopje  
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 Roche Macedonia, LLC Skopje  
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 Seavus, Ltd. Skopje  
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 Skopje  
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 Skopje  
 Bauart Group, LLC Skopje  
 Cakmakova Advocates  
 CEED Macedonia  
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 Ecotip, LLC Skopje  
 Financial Company Mladinec, Ltd.  
 Skopje  
 Forton MKA, LLC Skopje  
 Futura 2/2, Ltd. Skopje

Inbox Archive&Data Center, Ltd.  
 Skopje  
 Infinite Solutions, LLC Skopje  
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 Ltd. Skopje  
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 Monevski Law Firm  
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 Ultranet Ultra, Ltd. Skopje

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \*New Member

# AmCham Advantage Program

## Member to Member Discounts

The AmCham Advantage Program offers valuable discounts to members in good standing at AmCham member establishment. Detailed information about the program and updated information on discounts is available on the AmCham Macedonia website: [www.amcham.com.mk](http://www.amcham.com.mk) (under Membership>Advantage Program). If you are interested in participating in this program, please email [info@amcham.com.mk](mailto:info@amcham.com.mk)



## **AmCham Holiday Party**



*AmCham cordially invites you  
to a Holiday Party on Friday,  
December 12<sup>th</sup> at Vodenica Restaurant  
from 7:00 – 10:00 pm.*

*Come to celebrate the holiday season in the perfect  
atmosphere with world-famous U.S. wine and  
spirits, an American-style buffet and  
live jazz music.*

*Members' spouses, partners, clients and  
government contacts are welcomed!*

## **Support the Red Cross' "Think of Us Campaign"!**

*Thanksgiving is when people gather together with their loved ones to reflect on all of the good things in their lives. It also encourages people to think about what they might do to help others who are less fortunate.*

*In the Thanksgiving spirit this year, AmCham Macedonia invites its members to contribute to the Macedonian Red Cross' campaign "Think of us", which is raising awareness and helping fight hunger across the country.*

*Please join in by:*

- *Organizing an employee donation collection station for food or clothing and/or encouraging individual donations via mobile numbers 070/075/077 143-200;*
- *Making a company cash donation to the Red Cross account in Komercijalna banka (300000001327966, tax number: 4030984271620);*
- *Donating company manufactured products.*



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M A C E D O N I A

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Trust in your ideas and you'll feel free  
Create and be proud of your deeds  
Treasure your love and you'll be loved  
Cherish the spirit and be strong

We in Alkaloid, trust in our creations,  
treasure and cherish the force that sets  
life in motion and builds perfect  
harmony called HEALTH.



# Health above all



**ALKALOID**  
**SKOPJE**

Blvd. Aleksandar Makedonski 12; 1000 Skopje; R. Macedonia  
Telephone: +389 2 310 40 00; Facsimile: +389 2 310 40 14;  
e-mail: [alkaloid@alkaloid.com.mk](mailto:alkaloid@alkaloid.com.mk)  
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