



(L-R) Beata Socha, Managing Editor, WBJ Group; Aleksander Libera, Advisor to the Board for Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency; Nadia Bouacid, Head of Business Development Unit, The Polish-French Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Jacek Sosnowski, president, The Polish-Iranian Business Council; Tomasz Sobol, marketing director, Beyond.pl; Monika Żochowska, president, Phenicoptere

MADE IN POLAND 2016

BRANDING, GOOGLE TRANSLATE AND (THE LACK OF) INSTITUTIONALIZED SUPPORT WERE AMONG MANY TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING THE ANNUAL MADE IN POLAND CONFERENCE. EXPORTERS AND EXPERTS DEBATED ON HOW TO IMPROVE EXPORT FIGURES, WHAT MISTAKES POLISH ENTREPRENEURS ARE MAKING WHEN ENTERING FOREIGN MARKETS AND THE STATUS OF THE MADE IN POLAND BRAND

The annual Made in Poland conference was divided into two panels. During the first, hosted by WBJ Group editor-in-chief, Jacek Ciesnowski, panelists discussed the export potential of Polish companies. “We have products, but we need to boast about them. We need to go to international fairs, exhibitions, take part in governmental delegations,” said Andrzej Czernek, vice president of the Polish Promotional

Program Foundation “Teraz Polska,” which promotes Polish products, both domestically and abroad. The subject of Made in Poland as a brand was heavily discussed. Should Polish companies use it to describe their products, or are they better off using the less precise Made in EU moniker? “We always present ourselves as a Polish company, wherever we go. I asked one of our clients from Algeria why he had chosen us. And he said that our country is synonymous with



high quality,” said Michał Wilczyński, sales manager at Nowy Styl Group, a furniture maker. Wilczyński added however, that they also have a different approach, they acquire local companies with a strong following and sell their products under that brand on local markets.

That trend, while still strong, is not as significant as in the past. “Some 15-20 years ago, Polish companies usually entered the German market by purchasing local companies. These days however, most SMEs enter the market using their own brands. The perception of Polish producers is getting better each year,” explained Katarzyna Soszka-Ogrodnik, spokeswoman of the Polish-German Chamber of Industry and Commerce, adding that Germany is often the first step for Polish firms abroad on their path to further foreign expansion.

Obviously, with so many different sectors, it’s impossible to pick one good export strategy for everyone. “Our business is closely connected to



politics, defense companies are tied to the activities of the country they come from. That’s why we often use government delegations to promote our products,” said Tomasz Badowski, WB Group spokesman, a producer of military communication systems and drones. He added that what he would

love to see more of is an active approach from the Polish government to promoting Polish products abroad, not only in terms of military merchandise. Marek Foryński, managing director of BTS Group at Panattoni Europe, spoke in a similar vein, saying that “The Made in Poland brand is not a strong

(L-R) Jacek Ciesnowski, Editor-in-Chief, WBJ Group; Michał Wilczyński, sales manager, Nowy Styl Group; Marzena Mażewska, president, Polish Business and Innovation Centers Association in Poland; Marek Foryński, Managing Director, BTS Group at Panattoni Europe; Andrzej Czernek, vice president, The Polish Promotional Programme Foundation “Teraz Polska”; Katarzyna Soszka-Ogrodnik, spokesperson, The Polish-German Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Tomasz Badowski, spokesman at WB Group





one, not a successful one,” advocating not only stronger, but more coordinated support from the government and many of its agencies and institutions, which could help in promoting Polish exports. “We all know that Polish apples are the best, because we were told that after the Russian embargo. But do we know that we’re also a prominent exporters of cosmetics, shoes, yachts and other products?” Foryński added. As it turns out, for some companies, foreign markets are not only a priority, but the only source of income. “About 45 percent of companies present in technology parks are innovative, and many of them, as their first steps in business, sell their goods internationally, as domestically there is not a market for their products,” said Marzena Mażewska, president of

the Polish Business and Innovation Centers Association in Poland.

Attention to details

The second panel, moderated by managing editor of WBJ Group Beata Socha, concerned promoting Polish exports. One of the main conclusions from the discussion was the lack of resources spent on marketing, which is often crucial in getting a foothold abroad. “They often try to enter foreign markets without spending a dime. It’s impossible to achieve success this way,” claimed Nadia Bouacid, head of Business Development Unit at the French Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Poland. Other panelists offered some practical solutions: “Pay attention to details. We have only one product but seven different packages



worldwide. Our customers in France have different priorities than German clients for example, so they need different packaging,” explained Monika Zochowska, president of Phenicoptere. She also offered her opinion on the topic of government support, which was discussed in the first debate. “It’s really crucial. We’ve been going to various fairs and exhibitions for three years, and when potential business partners see that we have serious backing from an institution such as the ministry of economy, they know we are reliable.”

When the discussion switched to the subject of the internet and if it can be a powerful promotional tool or a deterrent, Tomasz Sobol, marketing director at Beyond.pl, suggested using it with caution. “You can spend money on marketing, but you need to know if it brings any effect. Your activities should be measurable. Use tools that can bring you desired effects. Social media are fine when it comes to B2C, but with B2B I’d use other services.” “The internet is important, so is online marketing. But you will never stay away from old-school networking. You have to remember that it can vary from country to country, even in such culturally similar regions as the EU,” added Aleksander Libera, advisor to the board for Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency. A common plea to everyone was not to use Google translate as a marketing tool,





and not to rely exclusively on translators, but to use native speakers as well. Jacek Sosnowski, president of the Polish-Iranian Business Council, dampened exporter's enthusiasm a little bit. "We are one of many countries that export their products. We'll never be as strong as France in Iran, because Paris has a long-standing connection there, dating back hundreds of years. We won't be seen as pioneers of design like

Italy is. In many aspects, we will never be seen as number one. We need to remember that Polish companies are very often subcontractors for other foreign firms and it can also be something to be proud of. We need to promote things that we are good at, our specialties, not necessarily the end product." You can watch both panel discussions in full (in Polish) on our YouTube channel at youtube.com/WBJdotPL

