

Business behind the scenes

Every business that Liviu Stanescu has started during his entrepreneurial career has managed to become leader of its industry. But he isn't stopping here: the young entrepreneur intends to maintain the leader position of Five's despite the unfavorable current economic environment.

BR ANCA IONESCU

Liviu Stanescu, general manager of Five's, was always tempted to set up his own business. Despite graduating from the Polytechnic University in Bucharest back in 1993, he has never worked as an engineer.

In 1992 he had both the idea and courage to establish the first restaurant specialized in international cooking, Tandoori. The Indian eatery was a top-ranking restaurant back in 1994. One year later, Stanescu decided to launch another business, the nightclub BackStage, one of the first private clubs in Romania where customers could hear live rock and blues music.

"Backstage was the No.1 live music club for a long time both in Bucharest and nationwide. But it was 1996 when one of the most loyal customers of BackStage put to me a very bold project that changed my professional path: to organize a tour of ten shows across Romania. It was a great chance, especially because I got to work for BAT, one of the major multinationals in Romania," remembers Stanescu. He adds that the idea to invest in technical equip-

ment came to his partner Sorin Danescu, and it was a natural evolution from a show-organizing company to a technical producer.

"I launched Five's firstly because I was fascinated about the world behind the stage and the whole engine that makes everything shine in front of the viewer. Plus, each event is different in essence and thus every day of my work is different and a permanent challenge," explains the young entrepreneur. He says that he preferred to develop his business gradually rather than taking big risks. "But when your company becomes large enough in terms of cash flow and number of employees it's impossible to continue its development with your own money," says Stanescu. He adds: "This is why we borrowed some money from lenders to build our storage space and offices. After that we needed credit to buy new equipment. If this development could be called 'risky', then this is the biggest risk I have ever assumed," adds the general manager of Five's.

And it seems that Stanescu had the right vision for his company. In early November this year, the National Council of Private Small and Medium Enterprises in Romania ranked Five's top of a national list of private companies in Romania for 2009, awarding the company for the outstanding financial results it posted last year. This performance saw Five's become the leading company on the corporate and musical events production market in Romania in 2009. As in previous years, the ranking was based on data provided by the Trade Register Office and Ministry of Public Finance, including the financial results posted by the company and stated in the balance sheet on December 31 last year.

If Stanescu started another business he probably wouldn't change anything, "because my way had its charm and I am nostalgic about those times. Plus I have to admit that I was lucky. But I truly believe that



Liviu Stanescu, general manager of Five's

if I started another business today, I would draw on my entrepreneurial spirit, intuition, courage, patience and analytical thinking," adds the businessman.

Originality and continuous challenges are the main aspects of Five's activity. Each day is different and each problem needs a specific approach. But there is also a dark side to this business: "It is both interesting and sometimes sad that all that we build with our equipment is temporary and lasts just for the show. This is a profession where you cannot make mistakes with time, which is your major enemy," explains Stanescu. But despite this, what remains is the happiness of the audience. "That's why the technical team could be

COMPANY PROFILE Five's

Number of employees: 40
Initial investment: USD 800
Total investment: EUR 5 million
2009 estimated turnover: EUR 2.7 million
2010 estimated turnover: EUR 2.5-2.7 million
Estimated market share: 25-30 percent
Organized events: Liberty Parade, Faith No More, Iron Maiden, Mariza, Redbull Flugtag, J&B Tour, Avon Tour, BMW launches, Dacia Duster tour, New Year's Eve Constitution Square

perceived as an artistic one, because they work with artists in order to create emotions," adds the general manager.

Stanescu thinks that the internal structure of his company and his employees are the main elements that differentiate his business from the crowd. "The internal structure of Five's is analogous to that of each similar European company. And this is because we are affiliated to one of the most powerful European structures in this industry, Synco Europe Network. Besides that, the most important thing in my work is my team," adds the businessman.

As for his future plans, Stanescu intends to maintain his company's leading position and to invest in lighting and sound equipment. He also wants to develop the firm's video department, which has so far been outsourced. "Last year Five's didn't decrease. On contrary, it grew because of the measures we took. We managed to maintain the same organizational structure without cutting salaries and we created an action plan that led to an increase in our number of customers and maintained our turnover at the same level as in 2009," he concludes.

WHO'S NEWS

Business Review welcomes information for Who's News from readers.

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Catalina Balan



Has been appointed general manager of **Medicover** Romania as well as member of its board of directors. She has worked for local and international offices of banks such as Citibank, BNP-Dresdner Bank and ABN AMRO. She holds a master's degree in finance from the Academy of Economic Studies and an MBA in finance and strategy from the London Business School.

Jan Gijsen

has been appointed president of **Ford** Romania and director of the Ford Factory in Craiova starting next year. He will also be responsible for relations between Ford Europe and the Ford Otosan factory. Gijsen has been with Ford for the past 30 years, holding various positions in production.

Mihai Mares



Former office managing partner of Garrigues Romania, together with the firm's team of lawyers, will join **Musat & Asociatii** following the Spanish company's decision to close its Bucharest office and relocate operations to Warsaw. Mares has been managing the Garrigues office in Bucharest for the last two years. He has ten years of professional experience, with expertise in M&A, energy, infrastructure and public-private partnerships.

Alina Damaschin

is the new CEO of **Rogalski Grigoriu** Public Relations. She is taking over from Simona Dan, who has decided to dedicate herself to other professional projects. She has over ten years of experience in brand communication, the



Irina Albu

last seven of which at Rogalski Grigoriu PR. She served as account director, client service director and cofounder of a digital communication agency.

Is joining **Liebrecht & wood** as leasing manager. She has over ten years of experience in real estate, specializing in the selling and renting of both residential and office projects. Irina Albu has worked at Colliers International for the past eight years, serving as senior office broker and head of the residential department.

She is a graduate of the Ion Mincu Architecture and Urbanism University in Bucharest.

Codrut Pascu



managing partner of **Roland Berger** Romania for the past five years, has been promoted to regional level. He will be responsible for the company's operations in Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania as a member of the steering committee for Central and Eastern Europe. Pascu is a graduate of the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest and holds an MBA from INSEAD.

Radu Toncu

is the new development director of branding agency **Grapefruit**. He has 16 years' experience in marketing, trade marketing and communication and has previously worked for advertising agencies as well as larger companies and consultancy firms.