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## My Startup Weekend Belgrade victory

by Nikola Milošević - Tuesday, March 26, 2013

<https://inspiratron.org/blog/2013/03/26/my-startup-weekend-belgrade-victory/>

From March 22nd to March 24th was held first Belgrade Startup Weekend.

STARTUP WEEKEND in Serbia was organized under the auspices of HRH Crown Prince Alexander's Foundation for Education and Culture with the support of the Ministry of Internal and Foreign Trade and Telecommunications and very special effort and initiative of Mrs. Alison Andrews, HRH Prince Peter and Mr. Goran Mialcic.

Over eighty young entrepreneurs gathered at the Royal Palace over the weekend for a crash course of developing a business idea and turning it into a business.

And I was amongst these 80 people who attendet the event. Actually I was the one whose team and idea won first price! So here are the impressions:

### Start

Since this event was organized by HRH Crown Prince Alexander, it started quite formal with lot of protocols, but it was nice to see. Not many times in your life you have a chance to be part of protocols on that hight. Actually there are few royal familes in Europe, so we should be proud that we have one of them and can see it from first hand, even thou royal family does not speak Serbian much. So there was a lot of speeches in the begining. HRH Crown Prince Alexander held speech, CEO of Orion Telecom, some guy from Ministry of Internal and Foreign Trade and Telecommunications etc. We also played some games and the cool thing about it was that royal family attended. I was in team with grandson of HRH Pricess Katarina Michael and we had to build business with business plan on two given words - Bus and Monkey. So we build a fast food business that will sell food that eat monkeys and the restaurants would be busses, that can move around the city. Our Business was called Monkey Bus.

Then we had to pitch ideas. I had one, so I stood in the row for pitching. Since one guy was packing something I was almost last. We had one minute to tell the idea in fron of everybody. Then wrote idea on paper and papers were put on table. Everyone got 3 stickers and could wote for ideas. There was 11 ideas chosen, but if someone really wanted to do something and found at least one person to help him or her, he could do it. So 14 teams were created. Also there was head hunt season, where you had to build your team from people who do not have team. My team at the end was built by people who work with me ether way. I had about 3 people who I did not know, but they were persuaded by others to leave my team and join theirs, which they will later regret. And this was it for Friday. It was time to rest, and come back on Saturday morning.

### First day

We came at Royal Palace about 9am. We got breakfast and during the breakfast we did some networking. I got to know Patricia Gannon, Managing Partner at Karanovic & Nikolic, and shared with her our idea. She seemed quite interested, and mainly because idea was in machine learning and that we were not developing it for long time, but that I just pitched idea without almost any preparations. I got her business card, and then we moved to the basement of Royal Court to work a bit. But we were not left long uninterrupted. One of the first coaches that approached us was one bigger Greek guy, that I cannot find his name on [website](#). As he was a long in business I consider his advices most valuable. He gave us some direction in how to charge for the service we were making. Idea was to be freemium service that does not charge for one country, but if you want statistics about your brand from multiple countries you have to pay. Also, he looked interested in idea, but told us, that if we persuade him to pay us, we will persuade everyone, because he is tough in it, but that he needs analytic in all field, and sentimental analytic seemed interesting to him. He told us that we can win with our idea, witch was great encouragement at the beginning of the day.



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Other coach that approached us was Panos Kalatzantonakis. He also liked our idea, but had not gave much advices.

Patricia Gannon again approached us asking if we had some legal questions, but no we did not. So we told her our idea, she was asking how we will charge, enter the market, do marketing etc. Most question we already had, but some we did not. Most important question we did not had was what will be costs for starting it, building first version and when will we be profitable. Questions investors want to be answered. Ok, we had to build our estimations.

I think next was Prince Peter and Philip Karadjordjevic asking about idea. We pitched our idea to them as well.

Then, Vladimir Prelovac came to our table. His main question was when we have out product what will happen. How we will reach enough customers to become profitable. It was tough because he gave assumption that we have no money for marketing, so guerrilla marketing was only solution, but also we had to build it well.

Andre Pier Buzdum just approached us to tell us that he bet with his friend on the pitches day that my idea would be great, and that my team will win the event. Another great encouragement for the day.

Aleksandar Gvozden was advising us to start acting locally, but our model was quite global. We took advice to shorten our target group, but still we are global internet service. Good advice from Aleksander was to focus on business model, and to forget about coding. No one would really be interested in your code and prototype if you have 5 minutes to present idea.

Zoran Ilić, CEO at Biomelem, was quite interested in idea and gave us his contact and told us to call him and that he can help us with media support and marketing when we have product.

Danny Stefani? also gave us a lot of advices about price prediction, asked about customer acquisition prices, we had no idea that we need to put that on paper, and even think about it. Also, there was prof Danilo Goliani, and he told us interesting thing that we need to have all assumptions about prices, when we will be accurate, but we don't need to be precise. Just put some value on paper, try to be real, but if it is not that, you can change it and adjust it. So we made some values.

So we worked a bit more, and I started doing my presentation for last day pitch. The internet was quite crappy so we left the court and I

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continued doing presentation at home. Senka already draw some wire frames, and we did some market researches and technology research.

At the evening as I was summarizing what happened I get thought that our idea is really the best, and if there is no predefined winner (based on corruption), my team can win.

### Last day

We again arrived at 9am. Had a breakfast, and then Crown Prince Aleksander Karađorđević invited us to come to palace's chapel and give honours to his father king Petar Karađorđević, who died in Denver, USA, and was the only Serbian king that was not buried in Serbia. After that we continued to work on our presentations and concepts. Main problem that day was wireless internet. Internet was available for about 10 minutes every hour. Organizer said that they have computer that routes internet in the building that they do not know where is, and that he was calling some ladies on upper floor, whose called internet lady who was restarting the PC. He asked "Does it makes sense to you?", and my answer was "No!". But does it make sense or not, I could not do anything about it, we had internet problems. Actually we were building internet company without internet... sounds like fail. Friend of mine Jelena made hotspot with her phone, so we could finish presentations. She was really our saviour.

Before pitches started we had opportunity to have guided tour around Royal Palace. Slightly before tour I had a chance to talk Aleksandar Đabro, co-founder of Balcan Business Angels Network, and one of the Judges, so I pitched him our idea. Get some great feedback and his experience and thoughts about similar projects.

Now it was time to hear competitor's pitches and to present our. We were 7th from 14 teams. There were good and great pitches but also many of pitches were really bad. I presented our pitch, and it passed without any problems, and seemed that our idea was quite well accepted. So we had to wait till the end, and judges voting. It all ended up having us on first place :). I have to say it was great success. So we were taking photos with our Princes and Judges etc. Having some interviews with some journalists from main newspaper. I also talked with some Judges and Coaches. Most interesting was with Andre Pier Buzdum who won his bet that I'll win against Nenad Orlić. And it was time to go home. Next day we were on many portals and newspaper. I guess I am not still sure what happened to me. Here are several links:

[http://royalfamily.org/index.php?148.en\\_the-first-startup-weekend-in-serbia-a-great-success](http://royalfamily.org/index.php?148.en_the-first-startup-weekend-in-serbia-a-great-success)

<http://www.24sata.rs/vesti/aktuelno/vest/pohvale-za-it-ideje-a-investitora-nigde-nema/81911.phtml>

<http://www.ekapija.com/website/sr/page/704415/Rizikom-do-profit-a-kakve-su-%C5%A1anse-mladih-u-Srbiji-da-zapo%C4%8Dnu->

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[sopstveni-biznis](#)

<http://www.dobrevesti.rs/??????/item/2017-????>

<http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Beograd/373787/Aplikacija-za-emocionalno-brendiranje-pobednik-prvog-srpskog-Startup-vikenda>

### Summary

All in all this was great learning experience. I learned a lot about what is needed to ship product to market. Learned a lot from experience of coaches, and we built a great product. I would like to realize this product. So we applied to SeedCamp, and hopefully application will be accepted. I strongly support everyone with some idea about creating a business to try Startup Weekend.

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