

STRONGER  
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# The Stronger Roots Program

Case Study:  
Medve Matek

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# Medve Matek: Maths, even for those who believe it's not for them, on a new online platform broadening constituencies

*Medve Matek took their existing offline math and logics contest online, which enabled them to develop a new and more inclusive communication strategy and appeal to the broader public. It resulted in setting up direct communication with children and parents, attracting many new teachers who continue to be an important amplifier to the organization's efforts to reach children, and a spillover effect, with many people attracted to the online contest now also following the organization's other online channels.*

*Medve Matek creates experience-based learning programs for students, such as interactive contests and summer camps in Hungary. They focus on promoting mathematics and logical thinking, which also strengthen the participants' cooperative thinking and collaboration skills.*

## NEW PLATFORM - A DIRECT PATH FOR CONSTITUENCIES

Medve Matek launched their first online event to the broader public in April 2020, in order to provide some content during the Covid lockdown. The free mathematics-based quiz contest, called Logirintus (word play from logic and labyrinth) followed a special format similar to that of the outdoor version: it consisted of a chain of short exercises, available on their website and via Facebook Messenger (see *toolbox at the end*). It turned out to be a resounding success.

Even though the idea started since their regular outdoor mathematics contests had to be postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the idea presented the organization with a new strategic opportunity. The new platform signified a new approach in

Medve Matek's relation towards its constituents: they could now communicate with the participants themselves directly in the recruitment phase, while previously the contestants were only reached through their teachers. They could also reach their parents directly, which they had no possibility to do previously.

More than half of the participants of Logirintus were family teams, with parents and children playing together. Logirintus provided the opportunity for parents to become involved in Medve Matek's „mathematics can be fun“ approach, and participate together with their children in a joyful, non-frustrating way. It also opened up the program to the age group 8-10, a new target group, who could now join in with the help of their parents.

Unexpectedly, many adults, such as couples and friends, who previously had negative feelings towards mathematics also joined, as the promotion of Logirintus focused on logic and playing. For them, a new communication approach was needed. Logirintus has a separate website and Facebook page, which those who have negative associations of math find appealing, and the focus on logical thinking and common problem-solving still fits Medve Matek's mission.

The only exception to this separate communication method were families, as in the email sent to them after the game, they could find information about Medve Matek's camps, with some children actually joining the camp. On Medve Matek's social media pages, Logirintus is actively promoted, as their followers are already interested in logic and games, and for them, it was unnecessary to come up with new messages or strategy.

Overall, this resulted in Medve Matek bursting out of their communication bubble, which showed in the number of online followers: the Medve Matek Facebook page now has more than 1000 new followers, whereas the Logirintus Facebook page has 2500 followers. Every participant of the contest was required to sign up to a newsletter, thus they came into direct contact with roughly 10 000 parents.

- **Reaching the same constituencies via a different path can bring huge results. The new platform meant building different connections and direct contact to parents and students. And managing the new platform in an integrated manner meant establishing long-term connections with the constituencies: from simple contestants, they became newsletter subscribers and social media followers.**

- If a new platform manages to reach completely new people, it might create a need for differentiating communication goals and messages. Returning to our mission can prove to be useful to see how to keep in line with our core values and integrate a new, wider public.

## ENRICHING EXISTING RELATIONS WITH ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

No matter the success of the online games, teachers and schools remained important partners, who can reach and recruit students most efficiently. However, with events canceled, Medve Matek couldn't communicate with them the usual way. Therefore, Logirintus was used to help maintain contact with teachers: they launched a successful campaign among them, encouraging the use of Logirintus, which resulted in a huge turnout, with 20 000 students playing it during school hours. The content was offered to educators for free if they signed up for the newsletter, resulting in getting approximately email addresses of 300 new teachers. They also received a lot of positive feedback: sometimes whole classes played together, and as the online app proved to be easy to use and familiar to students, it even helped during the difficulties of online classes.

## LOOPING IN FEEDBACK TO ENHANCE IMPACT

The team decided to maintain the online activities – no matter how the pandemic situation may evolve - even if it needs extra resources. The first website launched for Logirintus was only a one-pager, so they built a new site, offering a much better user experience. The new page also has a functioning webshop, selling packages of online games and merchandise, so direct donations through online payments are now possible.

To ensure the popularity of Logirintus, Medve Matek asked for feedback from the very first edition: all players could evaluate the individual games with 1-5 stars, so the organizers could see what kind of tasks work best for the players. Those who purchased any of the games in the webshop received a short survey about the games, and possible upgrades. Medve Matek also received direct feedback on Facebook from players, and based on all this data, made changes which resulted in the next event being even more successful.

- An online platform can also be used to enrich those connections that originate offline - but not to substitute it!

- For a successful online event at this scale, the surrounding system must be developed too, which can even create a platform for connecting or even fundraising.
- Online platforms make collecting feedback easier, thus involving the

opinions and experiences of the constituencies simpler.

*Quote from a user: "A warning should be issued that it's highly addictive, impossible to stop! It's fantastic, we enjoyed it, thank you!"*

## Toolbox

### Using a chatbot to turn Messenger into an event platform

Participants could sign up via Logirintus's separate Facebook profile, and the whole event took place in a Messenger app conversation. Using the chatbot made it a more personal experience, and also offered a seamless user experience, as the contestants could easily pick answers, decide on which "routes" to take, and get their results. It also made it easy to reach and remind the participants when the next event was coming up. Via a chat message they got the information personally, and could sign up with a single click.

This case study was written as a part of the Stronger Roots Program.

The Stronger Roots Program aims to increase the resilience of civil society organizations and their networks, strengthen their social capital and embed them in the communities and societies in which they operate. It is implemented by Open Society Fund Prague, the NIOK Foundation, Open Society Foundation Bratislava and Glopolis.

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