

Business case ID Card

Title: Taina Vie - organic beekeeping & ecotourism

Size of the business: two co-owners and an external employee

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History

This family-run business in eastern Romania has captured a love of beekeeping and its heritage to create quality natural products and a popular destination that has been profitable since year one. The project was inspired by grandparents' passion for apiculture and nature and began for the young farmers in 2010 - growing more significantly in 2012 thanks to some regional funding and initial commercial success.

Product variety began to grow to incorporate everything from chestnut, dandelion and raspberry honeys to include propolis resins for health and lifestyle applications and even low-immunity kits for people who struggle with pollens. Further diversification has developed Taina Vie's commercial reach, with neatly packaged honey sachets for personal use and distribution at hotels, restaurants and café's. The farm has embraced Facebook and Instagram social media channels and numerous fairs and events to build exposure and drive online commerce or in-person visits to support their success.

They have not stopped there though; and the farm itself now also sells a range of ceramics produced in collaboration with a local artist. Visitors can also take photography tours, learn about apiculture or even enjoy an organized cycle ride, making it a popular destination for tourism in Romania and beyond.

Main activities

- Tradition and innovation meet with beekeeping, honey products, tourism activities, ceramics and more
- Majority of sales driven by embrace of online commerce
- High quality, attention to branding and packaging plus ecological certification helps the products stand out from the competition



Market

Taina Vie is looking for an active involvement in the community and local economy life, environmental-friendly activities towards a well-defined target group. Additionally the successful use of the brand and identity, implementation of a coherent marketing strategy (with the integrated use of the registered trademark), their own identity message and sales channels specific to short food supply chains are key elements.

The selling of apiculture products predominantly through the online store, ensuring penetration on a global market. The customer segment is a niche one (the category of clients with average and luxury incomes). Customers are primarily interested in high quality organic products. The products of Taina Vie are present in natural stores, but also in pharmacies. Also, Taina Vie products are being sold through the largest online sales platform in Romania - <https://www.emag.ro/dulciuri-1/brand/taina-vie/c>

Challenges and solutions

Keeping the standards at the level required by organic norms and standards is a very important aspect and through the requirements that also the customers impose on the company.

The biggest challenge for Taina Vie is to keep their bee hives in good health. They have to fight against pests such as Varroa and other specific diseases - that's a continuous process of learning and adapting to new challenges related to the health and survival of the hives.

Additionally pollution is increasingly affecting the rural environment and choosing new hives or places where honey is harvested is becoming a challenge too.

Funding

Between 2012-2017 Taina Vie received public funding worth 38.000€ by accessing M12-Installation of Young Farmers within the NRDP 2007-2013.

Also Taina Vie is a beneficiary of the Romanian-Swiss Programm, MFE 2014-2020.

What makes this case innovative?

The selling approach, with reference to: Customized adobe packages, personalized products, **apicultural** mixtures, energy products using only hive products. Taina Vie apiculture farm is "open to the public" type: it offers tastings and explanations on how to obtain apiculture products by organizing during the summer period tourist and educational activities in their ecological apiary.

Additionally they provide Jooyridez E-Bike tours, www.jooyridez.ro and thereby combine rural tourism with the promotion of their honey products.

Key takeaways / Lessons learnt

Product quality comes first. Teamwork (family business), innovation management, packaging, identity message - each sold apiculture product has a Pre-Christian



Cucuteni symbol, brand, registered trademark, ecological certification, original promotional materials - photo materials. The way of selling the products through short food supply chains, the existence of Taina Vie's own presentation stand, participation in internal and external fairs (participation to Biofach Nuremberg fair together with BioNest Cluster) - all of this combined with a careful business strategy made Taina Vie a total success story. Entrepreneurs who want to start with similar activities should start with a thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, of the opportunities and risks that exist in their area.

Impact

Through customer education Taina Vie ensures a positive impact on their health, publicizing the bee's role in the environment, promoting Cucuteni pre-Christian culture and its connection with beekeeping.

Regarding the environmental impact - beekeeping by its nature has a positive impact on the environment. Also all labels are made of recycled paper, reusable jars - Taina Vie encourages the return of used jars.

