

PROGRAM

This program is subject to some changes and does not include our offer on the tourism sector.



This icon indicates the event is in-person (and not online).

Week 1 – What digital innovations mean for business success

Embracing IT Progress for Business Success: What is next in Information Technology – *by Namik Hrle, IBM Fellow*

AI state-of-the-art and opportunity mapping – *by Ekimetrics*

Deep-Dive: From Idea to Impact – *by Ekimetrics*

Week 2 – The offsite

Day 1

Arrival at 3.00 pm

Active listening and Resonance – *by Ignition*

Your year in review and your role – *by Ignition*

Evening and Dinner

Day 2

Situational management – *by Ignition*

Nurturing your relationship with your collaborators – *by Ignition*

My experience in marketing and Your success as a business – *by Davor Bruketa*

Recruiting high profiles – *by Ignition*

Clinic on AI: your 30 minutes-slot to get personalized advice on AI solutions relevant to your business – *by Ekimetrics*

Mutual support and collective intelligence – *by Ignition*

Evening and Dinner

Day 3

Process communication model – *by Ignition*

Bootcamp outline – *by Ignition*

Light lunch

Weeks 3 and 4 – More about your sector



Food Industry: Understanding food trends and standards to grow on the EU market

Navigating consumption food trends – *by Olga Trofimtseva, Agribusiness expert*

EU regulations and food safety (Parts I and II) – *by Kateryna Onul and Yuriy Zvazhenko, IFC Agribusiness experts*

A certification agency's perspective – *by a representative from GlobalG.A.P*

From Farm to EU Fork – *by Olga Trofimtseva, Agribusiness expert*

Hearing from a SME's CEO – to be confirmed

A retailer's perspective – *by Elza Palenik, Head of QA and Sustainability, Metro*



Software and digital solutions: Adjusting to a fast-changing world

AI Ethics, Regulation, and Strategic Governance – *by Civitta*

When the technology is faster than the market – *by Tomer Simon, Microsoft*

Hearing from a CEO in the sector – *by the CEO of [Gorgias](#)*

The future of software development – *by Tomer Simon, Microsoft*

Exploring opportunities in manufacturing – *by Civitta*



Manufacturers: Get more efficient with the Factory 4.0

LEAN manufacturing – by *Nicolas Maksud, Industry executive* 

Hearing from a practitioner about supply chain management in a tire company
– by *Luc Minguet, Industry executive*

R&D management – by *Nicolas Maksud, Industry executive*


Digitalization and Manufacturing 4.0 – by *Luqam*

Hearing from a CEO – *to be confirmed*

Week 5 – Sustaining your success

SME Governance for Business Sustainability – by *Ružica Šimić Banović and Mirela Alpeza, Governance and Entrepreneurship expert*

Understanding Environment & Social regulations – by *an IFC E&S expert (to be confirmed)*

Marketing Clinic – Your 30 minutes-slot to get personalized advice on a marketing strategy relevant to your business – by *Davor Bruketa and collaborators* 

External growth – by *Luc Minguet, Industry executive*

Financing options – by *an IFC investment officer (to be confirmed)*

More about the modules

Week 1

Embracing IT Progress for Business Success: What is next in Information Technology

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Understand the directions in which Information Technology develops

Content: Information Technology (IT) is an engine of every successful business and a major source of competitive advantage. Appropriate use of IT results in superior customer experiences, enhanced productivity, reduced cost and faster innovation. IT also advances faster than any other technology causing the half-life of expertise to become shorter than ever. Businesses that monitor and adopt the new technology create and maintain competitive edge. Consequently, it is important to know in which direction IT develops. The conventional computer components continue becoming faster and more energy efficient. Quantum computing is on a verge of a breakthrough. And AI can enhance business processes in a way that looked like science fiction just a couple of years ago. Each of these technology vectors is very important to understand and adopt, especially as they converge and create a powerful blend of high-performance, AI, and quantum computing.

AI State-of-the-Art & Opportunity Mapping

Speaker: Ekimetrics

Duration: 90 minutes

Objective: Good understanding of today's AI landscape and its business relevance.

Content: Concise tour of current GenAI breakthroughs (LLMs, vision, Demand forecasting) illustrated with cross-industry case studies – from marketing automation to production quality control. Participants will receive a self-assessment canvas and leave with a shortlist of priority domains where AI could create value for their own organization.

Two levels: Beginner & Intermediate

Industry Deep Dives – From Idea to impact

Speaker: Ekimetrics

Duration: 90 minutes

Objective: Understand how to move from inspiration to execution with sector-specific lessons learned

Content: Presentation of two recent Ekimetrics deployments per sector (objectives, success factors, pitfalls): step-by-step implementation playbook and discussion of change-management levers.

The Offsite's content will remain internal to ensure a unique and immersive experience.

Weeks 3 and 4

Navigating Consumption Trends in the Food Sector

Speaker: Olga Trofimtseva, Agribusiness expert

Duration: 60 min

Objective: To help Croatian agrifood exporters understand and respond to the key consumer trends currently shaping demand in EU markets. The session aims to support product development, branding, and market positioning strategies that align with evolving consumer preferences related to health, sustainability, and novelty.

Content: This session will explore the most prominent consumer trends shaping the EU agrifood market, including the rising demand for sustainable, healthy, and transparent food products. Participants will gain insights into how trends like plant-based diets, clean-label ingredients, and ethical sourcing are driving purchasing decisions across the EU. Real-life examples from retailers and successful exporters will illustrate. The session will offer practical advice on how to align products with market expectations, and to meet evolving consumer preferences.

More about EU regulations and food safety – Part I

Speaker: Kateryna Onul, IFC Agribusiness expert

Duration: Approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour

Objective: Ensure participants understand the legal framework necessary for entering and operating in the broader EU market.

Content: This session will cover the key European Union regulations that food processors in Croatia must understand to operate beyond the national market, including: (1) Introduction to the EU Food Law (General Food Law Regulation – EC 178/2002), (2) Overview of the EU Food Package (key legislative acts on labeling, hygiene, additives, and official controls), (3) Introduction to EU databases relevant for food processors and exporters.

More about EU regulations and food safety – Part II

Speaker: Yuriy Zvazhenko, IFC Agribusiness expert

Duration: Approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour

Objective: Equip participants with essential knowledge of food safety systems and certifications critical for EU market access.

Content: This session will introduce the requirements for implementing food safety management systems based on international standards: (1) Introduction to FSMS (e.g., ISO 22000, HACCP principles), (2) Overview of GFSI-recognized private standards (BRCGS, IFS Food, FSSC 22000, GlobalG.A.P.). (3) Importance of certification for accessing major retailers in the EU.

A Certification Agency's Perspective

Speakers: Representative from GlobalG.A.P.

Duration: 1-1,5 hours

Content: This section will provide: (1) Certification standards critical for accessing large retail networks, (2) Practical advice on how Croatian food processors can meet EU retailer demands, (3) AOB and cases.

From farm to EU fork: case-based strategies for Croatian agrifood exporters

Speaker: Olga Trofimtseva, Agribusiness expert

Duration: 60 min

Objective: To provide participants with practical, case-based insights into exporting to EU markets by studying real examples of required product or packaging adaptation, effective strategies for the market entry and analyzing the real practical barriers with the highlights of how to overcome them.

Content: This session will provide a focused roadmap for participants to enter EU markets through value-added strategies beyond basic compliance with EU-wide standards. Participants will explore real case studies addressing challenges with private standards, product adaptation, and labelling. Practical guidance will cover audit preparation, certification costs, and "smart entry" strategies. The session concludes with tailored advice on how to connect with EU buyers depending on the sector.

A Retailer's Perspective

Speakers: Elza Palenik, Head of QA and Sustainability, METRO

Duration: 60 minutes

Content: This section will provide: (1) Retailers' expectations toward suppliers, (2) Certification standards critical for accessing large retail networks, (3) Practical advice on how Croatian food processors can meet EU retailer demands.

AI Ethics, Regulation, and Strategic Governance

Speakers: Expert from Civitta

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Understand the EU AI Act and adapt policies, oversight structures, and practices for compliance, transparency, and ethical AI innovation.

Content: This module will provide a comprehensive overview of the EU AI Act, including its scope, key requirements, and implications for businesses leveraging AI technologies. Participants will explore strategies for aligning organizational policies with regulatory standards, establishing robust oversight structures, and fostering transparency in AI systems. It will also cover risk management frameworks and ethical considerations.

When the technology is faster than the market

Speakers: Tomer Simon, Microsoft

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Understand the pace of changes in the IT world and how businesses need to adjust governance and decision-making processes.

Content: This session explores the challenges of technology outpacing market readiness, emphasizing the need for businesses to proactively adjust their strategies. Participants will learn how to implement agile governance structures and streamline decision-making processes to respond effectively to technological advancements.

The future of software development

Speakers: Tomer Simon, Microsoft

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Explore how AI is reshaping software development, empowering developers to innovate and adapt to future challenges.

Content: This session examines the transformative impact of AI on software development, highlighting its role in automating tasks, enhancing productivity, and enabling new possibilities for innovation. Participants will think of the developer's role and workflow in this new AI area.

Exploring opportunities in manufacturing

Speaker: Expert from Civitta

Duration: 1-1,5 hours

Objective: Understanding manufacturing's digital needs and how to approach these businesses

Content: This module explores the manufacturing sector's growing demand for digital solutions, AI tools, and intelligent agents, highlighting opportunities for IT firms to address these needs. Participants will gain an understanding of manufacturing-specific challenges, such as integration, cybersecurity, and operational efficiency, and how tailored tech solutions can drive value. Real-world examples will demonstrate how IT firms can position themselves as strategic partners in manufacturing's digital transformation journey.

LEAN Manufacturing

Speaker: Nicolas Maksud, Industry Executive

Duration: 1-1,5 hours

Objective: Understand Lean Manufacturing principles to enhance efficiency and drive improvement.

Content: This module will provide an in-depth understanding of the 8 core Lean principles. Firms will learn to assess their current operations using practical tools and frameworks, identify inefficiencies, and uncover opportunities for improvement. The program will also cover actionable strategies tailored to specific business needs. Participants will gain insights into tracking progress through key performance indicators (KPIs) and sustaining long-term operational excellence.

Hearing from a practitioner about supply chain management in a tire company

Speakers: Luc Minguet, ex-Supply chain Director of Michelin

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Gain practical insights into supply chain management.

Content: A practitioner shares firsthand strategies, challenges, and solutions in optimizing supply chain operations within a tire company.

R&D management

Speaker: Nicolas Maksud, Industry executive

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Enable manufacturers to optimize R&D management for innovation, efficiency, and alignment with market demands.

Content: This module focuses on strategies for effective R&D management in manufacturing, emphasizing the importance of innovation, resource allocation, and market-driven development. Participants will explore frameworks for streamlining R&D processes, integrating emerging technologies like AI, and fostering collaboration across teams. The session will address challenges such as balancing cost-efficiency with innovation, accelerating product development cycles, and aligning R&D efforts with long-term business goals. Case studies will illustrate best practices in managing R&D to drive competitive advantage and sustainable growth in the manufacturing sector.

Digitalization and Manufacturing 4.0

Speaker: Krzysztof Sterniczuk from Luqam

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Explore how digitalization and Manufacturing 4.0 transform production lines for efficiency and innovation.

Content: This session delves into the integration of advanced technologies like IoT, AI, and automation in production lines, enabling smarter, more efficient operations. Participants will learn how digitalization drives real-time data insights, predictive maintenance, and enhanced productivity, while addressing challenges such as system integration and cybersecurity. Practical examples will showcase the impact of Manufacturing 4.0 on optimizing workflows and fostering innovation in the manufacturing sector.

Week 5

SME Governance for Business Sustainability

Speaker: Ružica Šimić Banović and Mirela Alpeza, Governance and Entrepreneurship experts

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: To provide a roadmap for SME to introduce governance solutions for long term sustainability and better strategic decision making. This course is intended for SMEs with high growth potential and designed specifically for business founders/owners. It is most useful for companies that have already introduced their service/product to the market, experienced some success (initial growth), and are now interested in introducing policies and practices to continue (or reignite) that growth in a sustainable manner.

Content: Introduction to Governance. IFC SME Governance methodology. Business case for the board of directors.

Understanding E&S regulations

Speaker: IFC E&S expert

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Understand and navigate evolving E&S (Environmental & Social) regulations to ensure compliance and sustainability.

Content: This module provides an overview of key EU E&S regulations impacting SMEs, focusing on environmental standards, social responsibility, and reporting requirements. Participants will learn practical strategies for adapting their operations, mitigating risks, and aligning with regulatory expectations. The session will also address common concerns, such as resource constraints and compliance costs, while offering tools and frameworks to integrate sustainability into business practices.

External growth

Speaker: Luc Minguet, Consultant in Merger and Acquisition

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Explore strategies to leverage mergers and acquisitions for sustainable external growth.

Content: This session explores the fundamentals of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) as a pathway for SME growth, focusing on identifying opportunities, evaluating risks, and executing successful deals. Participants will gain insights into the financial, operational, and cultural considerations of M&A, along with practical frameworks for due diligence and integration, backed by real-time examples.

Financing options

Speaker: IFC Investment officer and/or IFC investee

Duration: 60 minutes

Objective: Explore different financing options available to SME, including lines of credit.

Content: To be determined.

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