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Bled School of
Management



IEDC Alumni Success Story

»STAY CURIOUS AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS THAT SOUND BASIC - MOST OF THE TIME THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU ARE QUIETLY WONDERING THE SAME THING. THE SAME GOES FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES: DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOU FEEL FULLY READY, BECAUSE YOU NEVER WILL.«

**JOŠT SOKLIČ, YMP 2025,
SCIENTIST — EQUIPMENT
MANAGEMENT,
LEK, A SANDOZ COMPANY**



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Interviewed by Vera Pasyukova,
photos provided by: Jošt Soklič and IEDC

Let's start from the beginning. Your background is in mechanical engineering. What originally sparked your interest in this field?

Honestly, it wasn't a planned path. At eighteen I didn't really know what I wanted to study, but physics had always interested

me in school, and I was decent at mathematics and technical drawing. Mechanical engineering at the University of Ljubljana brought those things together, so I went for it without knowing exactly where it would take me. It worked out - the way of thinking you pick up there has stayed with me ever since.

During your university studies, you went on an Erasmus exchange in Prague. How did that international experience shape you personally and professionally? Was it the first time for you to live abroad?

Prague was a great experience - the first time I lived abroad, half a year

in a city where I didn't know a single person. You bond quickly with the other Erasmus students, especially in the dorms, and meeting people from all over really changes you. You start to see how different cultures approach things, and how to work with people who think differently than you do. It was also genuinely fun, and I'm still in touch with those friends today.

You completed an internship at Hella - how did that opportunity come about? What were the biggest lessons you took away from that experience?

I first came across Hella at a career fair at the faculty and later spotted the position online. What drew me to it was that the role was in the same field I was studying, so it felt like a natural fit. The biggest takeaway was simply seeing how a large manufacturing company works from the inside - how decisions move through the organisation, and how engineering looks in practice rather than in lectures.

After your studies and internship experience,

People often assume pharma and mechanical engineering are worlds apart, but in practice they're closely linked.

what attracted you to Novartis? Pharmaceutical industry is quite different from what many people associate with mechanical engineering. What convinced you this was the right path?

What attracted me to Novartis was the chance to work for a large, successful company with a clear purpose - improving

Engineering teaches you to solve problems you didn't know existed, using methods you have to figure out along the way. You learn to break things down, test your assumptions, and stay structured even when the situation isn't. That mindset carries directly into teamwork — you define what you're actually trying to solve and work through it together, step by step.



people's lives. People often assume pharma and mechanical engineering are worlds apart, but in practice they're closely linked. The industry runs on machines, equipment, and complex production systems, and someone has to design, maintain, and improve all of it. Novartis offered exactly that combination - meaningful purpose on one side, real engineering challenges on the other.

How does your engineering background influence the way you approach teamwork and problem-solving today?

Last summer you participated in the Young Managers Program (YMP) at IEDC. What motivated you to join the program? How would you describe the overall YMP experience?

The program caught my eye as a chance to try something new - to step back into a classroom after starting my career and look at things from a different angle. It was an excellent experience overall. There was also a personal layer to it: I grew up in Bled, so seeing my hometown

from a completely different perspective was something special.

Was there a particular session, professor, or discussion that had the strongest impact on you?

They were all excellent, but if I had to single out one, it would be Dory Grandia. Her presence in the room is hard to describe until you experience it, and her sessions on communication stayed with me long after the program ended.

What did you enjoy most about the program beyond the classroom experience itself?

The people, without a doubt. You meet so many talented professionals from very different fields, all walking a similar career path - some a few steps ahead, some right beside you - and you end up learning as much from them as from the professors, if not more. The conversations outside the classroom were often where the best insights came from.



What knowledge or insights from YMP do you already find yourself applying in practice?

Quite a lot, often without consciously realising it. The communication sessions changed how I try to approach conversations at work - listening more carefully and being more deliberate about how I frame things. The modules on strategy and finance also stayed with me; I try to see decisions in a wider business context rather than just from my own corner.

What advice would you give to young engineers or students who are just starting their careers

today?
Stay curious and don't be afraid to ask questions that sound basic - most of the time the people around you are quietly wondering the same thing. The same goes for new opportunities: don't wait until you feel fully ready, because you never will. The best lessons come from situations you weren't quite prepared for.

And finally - if you had to describe your career journey so far in one sentence, what would it be?

Less of a plan, more of a path - and a good one so far.



WHAT ONE CANNOT FIND ON JOŠT'S CV



YMP 2025

Jošt Soklič

Slovenia

Scientist — Equipment Management,
Lek, a Sandoz company

What's one song or artist/band you can listen to on repeat no matter how many times you've heard it before?

Oliver Dragojević — his music never gets old.

If your friends had to describe you using a TV series character, who would they choose and why?

I'd have to leave that one to my friends — I don't really watch a lot of series, so I wouldn't even know where to start.

What's your go-to comfort food after a long or stressful day or an intense sports activity?

Honestly, I'm a big fan of food in general — pretty much anything works for me. After a long day or a hard workout, I rarely say no to a good meal, whatever it is.

What sports do you do?

I'm drawn to social sports — anything you can do with other people. Lately I've been doing a lot of running events, and I've always enjoyed racket sports and skiing in winter. I also like trying new sports whenever the chance comes up.

What's a completely random or funny fact about you that people at work usually don't know?

I really enjoy cooking. It's not what most people would guess about me, but it's one of my favourite ways to unwind.

Outside of work and engineering, what's something you genuinely geek out about or spend way too much time on?

Right now most of my free time goes into planning a personal renovation project that's about to start — the engineer in me enjoys mapping out layouts and comparing materials more than I'd care to admit. More generally, I tend to pick up a new interest every year or two and really dive in.

Be honest - how often do engineers secretly judge badly designed products in everyday life?

All the time, honestly. But the flip side is that we also really notice good design when we see it. I'm always impressed by IKEA, for example — the assembly methods they come up with are quietly brilliant engineering, even if no one talks about it that way.