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D.1.3.2

Transnational online awareness campaign

WP n°: **1**

Task n°: **A1.3**

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Executive Summary

The deliverable D.1.3.2 Transnational online awareness campaign presents the outcomes of expert interviews conducted by five project partners from five different Alpine countries aimed at enhancing awareness and disseminating insights among SMEs regarding Cradle to Cradle (C2C) technologies, business models, and opportunities. Through these interviews, the objective was to illustrate the concept of C2C and highlight the many opportunities it offers. The interviews underscored the significance of adopting C2C principles in various industries, showcasing its potential to revolutionize business practices and contribute to sustainable development. Key conclusions from the interviews include the importance of environmental responsibility in business operations, the strategic advantages of Cradle to Cradle certification, and the transformative impact of embracing circular economy approaches. The success stories and innovative practices shared during the interviews serve as inspiration for SMEs, encouraging them to explore C2C methodologies and integrate sustainability into their operations. Overall, the deliverable provides valuable insights and resources to empower SMEs in embracing C2C principles and fostering a more sustainable future.

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1. Italy

1.1. Data about the interviewed

Name and Family name	Carlo Valerio
Institution represented	JVP
Web-site of the institution	https://jvph.net/en/
Position of the interviewed	President of Confapi Padova and partner at JVP
Date of the interview	31. 3. 2023
Mode chosen for the interview (online/onsite interview; written interview)	Filmed, due to bad quality published as written interview.
Other information	Interview conducted by Padova Chamber of Commerce.

1.2. Consistency of the interviewed with the project focus

The interview with JVP, a manufacturer specializing in raised steel floors, demonstrates a strong consistency with the Cradle to Cradle (C2C) topic. JVP's mission extends beyond commercial success to embrace environmental responsibility. The company consciously adopts an environmentally friendly approach, aiming to reduce the environmental impact of its products throughout their lifecycle. This aligns closely with the principles of Cradle to Cradle, which emphasize minimizing environmental impact and promoting sustainable practices.

JVP embraces a circular economy approach in its manufacturing processes, from the selection of raw materials to production methods that minimize waste and a forward-thinking program for reuse and recycling. This approach reflects the core principles of Cradle to Cradle, which advocate for the design of products and systems that mimic natural cycles and eliminate waste.

JVP's decision to obtain the Cradle to Cradle certification demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. Despite challenges and the relative novelty of the certification in Italy at the time, JVP recognized the strategic advantages of adopting the Cradle to Cradle approach. The certification process involved careful analysis of every aspect of production and distribution, reflecting a dedication to meeting rigorous environmental standards.

JVP acknowledges the strategic advantages of Cradle to Cradle certification, including the reduction of risks, increased competitive advantage, and alignment with the objectives defined

by the European Agenda 2030. This highlights the broader benefits of adopting sustainable practices, beyond environmental considerations, in enhancing business competitiveness and future-proofing operations.

JVP's successful integration of sustainable business practices serves as an inspiration for others in the industry. The company's story exemplifies how sustainable practices, while demanding, are crucial for meeting market expectations and contributing to a healthier planet. This aligns with the broader goal of Cradle to Cradle, which seeks to inspire positive change in industry practices and promote a more sustainable future.

Overall, the interview with JVP demonstrates a high level of consistency with the Cradle to Cradle topic, showcasing the company's strong commitment to environmental sustainability and its strategic embrace of Cradle to Cradle principles.

1.3. Main conclusions from the interview

The interview with JVP, a manufacturer specializing in raised steel floors, highlights several key conclusions. JVP's commitment to environmental responsibility is evident throughout their business practices, from product design to manufacturing processes. The company's embrace of a circular economy approach, including waste reduction and recycling initiatives, reflects a dedication to sustainability principles. JVP's decision to pursue Cradle to Cradle certification demonstrates a strategic commitment to environmental sustainability, despite challenges and the relative novelty of the certification in Italy. The certification process involved rigorous analysis and scrutiny of production and distribution practices, emphasizing JVP's dedication to meeting high environmental standards. The strategic advantages of Cradle to Cradle certification, including risk reduction and increased competitiveness, highlight the broader benefits of adopting sustainable practices in business operations. JVP's success serves as an inspiration for others in the industry, showcasing the importance of sustainable practices in meeting market expectations and contributing to a healthier planet. Overall, the interview underscores JVP's strong commitment to environmental sustainability and their strategic embrace of Cradle to Cradle principles, positioning them as leaders in their industry.

1.4. Link for the accessibility to the interview

- English version: <https://www.alpine-space.eu/project-news/jvps-commitment-to-sustainability-a-journey-towards-the-realization-of-cradle-to-cradle-principles/>

1.5. Dissemination

- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7138560825467850752?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/carlo-valerio-32650621_jvps-commitment-to-sustainability-a-journey-activity-7138887100032077824-cIsc?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ur%C5%A1ka-spitzer-877a48235_jvps-commitment-to-sustainability-a-journey-activity-7138819940215595010-Ods4?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

2. Germany

2.1. Data about the interviewed

Name and Family name	Dr. Jan Christoph von der Lancken
Institution represented	EPEA GmbH – Part of Drees & Sommer
Web-site of the institution	https://epea.com/
Position of the interviewed	Head of EPEA Industry
Date of the interview	3. 7. 2023
Mode chosen for the interview (online/onsite interview; written interview)	Online via MS Teams, due to technical problems published as written interview
Other information	Interview conducted by Georg Weig, CCB.

2.2. Consistency of the interviewed with the project topic

The interview with Jan von der Lancken from the Environmental Protection Encouragement Agency (EPEA) aligns closely with the Cradle to Cradle topic, providing an in-depth look at the agency's role in applying the C2C design framework. The interviewee, Jan von der

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Lancken, is as a Ph.D. chemist with expertise in sustainable chemistry, currently serving as the head of EPEA's industry section in Germany since January 2020.

Von der Lancken explains that EPEA, founded in 1987 by Michael Braungart, focuses on helping companies implement the C2C framework. This framework, co-developed by Braungart and architect Bill McDonough, aims to create products that circulate as nutrients within either the technosphere or biosphere, thus eliminating waste. EPEA's work spans multiple industries, including real estate, automotive, consumer goods, electronics, and textiles, emphasizing a holistic approach.

The interview highlights the future prospects of EPEA, which involve continuous development of the C2C framework and the creation of Circularity Passports® to support companies with performance indicators for material health, circularity, and product footprint. These tools are well-received and facilitate the transition towards sustainable goals.

Von der Lancken emphasizes that C2C is primarily a design framework based on three principles: maintaining nutrients as nutrients to eliminate waste, utilizing solar energy, and celebrating diversity in design approaches. These principles encourage designing products with a clear end-of-life plan and using diverse solutions to achieve sustainability.

EPEA uses various tools, including workshops and the Cradle to Cradle Certified® scheme, to implement the C2C approach, aiming to create a positive footprint rather than merely minimizing negative impacts. The mindset behind C2C challenges traditional sustainability approaches by striving to be actively positive in environmental impact, such as using captured carbon dioxide to create useful products.

The distinction between C2C and the circular economy is clarified in the interview, with C2C focusing on maximizing positive impact across people, planet, and profit, rather than just minimizing harm. This approach involves a rigorous quantitative analysis of material flows and a deep understanding of product composition, often challenging the linear production systems ingrained in current practices.

EPEA actively promotes C2C through projects with clients, sharing success stories on social media and their website. Mr. Von der Lancken also emphasises that although not mandatory in any sector, C2C certification is advantageous, particularly in the building industry for green building certifications like DGNB, LEED, or BREEAM. The principles of C2C apply similarly across different industries, though specific challenges may vary.

The interview concludes by discussing the success criteria for circular and sustainable business models, emphasizing the importance of a company's willingness to change its business model. Transitioning from a linear to a circular model should enhance not only ecological and social aspects but also economic ones, ensuring profitability while aligning with the triple bottom line. This approach transforms product design, material use, and production processes, preparing companies for a sustainable future.

The detailed interview by Georg Weig from Chemie-Cluster Bayern GmbH showcases how EPEA and von der Lancken are at the forefront of promoting and implementing Cradle to Cradle principles, demonstrating their commitment to a sustainable, circular economy.

2.3. Main conclusions from the interview

According to Dr. von der Lancken Cradle to Cradle is a design framework which is rooted in a particular mindset, three fundamental principles, and a toolkit. The first principle challenges the idea of waste, the second focuses on sourcing renewable energy and the last one encompasses conceptual, social, and ecological diversity. The toolkit comprises workshops, circularity passports, and the Cradle to Cradle Certified® scheme to implement the Cradle to Cradle approach. In the opinion of Dr. von der Lancken Cradle to Cradle is often simply seen as a synonym for the Circular Economy.

Whereas the Cradle to Cradle scheme is supposed to work towards a circular economy, some companies that were asked during the work on the regional ecosystem Cradle2Cradle maturity analysis (D1.2.1) expressed a skeptical opinion. Reasons mentioned include the high-priced certification process, the intransparency of the procedure and the certification being a product certification not comprising a whole value chain or industry sector. A major obstacle for companies is the requirement to disclose the full composition of their products, not only because the company has to involve all its suppliers but also this often interferes with the intellectual property and USP of a company.

2.4. Link for the accessibility to the interview

- English version

<https://www.alpine-space.eu/project-news/cradle-to-cradle-often-involves-challenging-the-prevailing-belief-systems-that-have-been-ingrained-in-our-practices-interview-with-dr-jan->

von-der-lancken-epea-gmbh/

- German version (republished on Oct 26th 2023)

<https://chemiecluster-bayern.de/news/hot-seat-dr-jan-christoph-von-der-lancken/>

2.5. Dissemination

- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7123350128391806976/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7123616310927708161?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ur%C5%A1ka-spitzer-877a48235_interviewdr-jan-chr-von-der-lancken-activity-7123575971810607104-wwzU?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/dr-jan-von-der-lancken-6302451b3_interviewdr-jan-chr-von-der-lancken-activity-7123561530809344000-HFuK?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7123380095632719872?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

3. Austria

3.1. Data about the interviewed

Name and Family name	Immo Sander
Institution represented	Werner & Mertz Group
Web-site of the institution	https://wmprof.com/
Position of the interviewed	Head of Packaging Development
Date of the interview	20. 12. 2023
Mode chosen for the interview (online/onsite interview; written interview)	Written interview
Other information	Interview conducted by Ashna Mudaffer, Business Upper Austria.

3.2. Consistency of the interviewed with the project topic

The interview with Immo Sander from Werner & Mertz Group is highly consistent with the Cradle to Cradle topic, covering various aspects of the company's commitment to this

sustainability framework. It begins by exploring the motivation behind adopting the C2C approach, emphasizing the company's dedication to sustainability and a circular economy, setting a tone that aligns with the core principles of C2C, which focus on creating systems that are not only efficient but also waste-free.

Specific examples of products designed according to C2C principles, such as the recyclable monomaterial stand-up pouch and the C2C-certified printing ink systems, demonstrate the practical application of C2C in product development. This detail shows a concrete implementation of C2C in their product line. The interview also addresses the company's measures to promote a closed-loop circular economy, including project teams, expert discussions, and collaborations with stakeholders. These efforts are central to C2C, which seeks to create closed-loop systems where products are reused, recycled, or biodegraded in a sustainable manner.

Emphasizing transparency about the origin of materials and production processes aligns with C2C's emphasis on transparency and accountability in the supply chain, which is crucial for maintaining the integrity of sustainable practices. Continuous innovation in sustainable products and processes, along with raising awareness among customers and trade partners, highlights the proactive stance Werner & Mertz takes towards C2C. Their initiatives, such as the Frosch initiative, exemplify efforts to educate and engage the public on the importance of sustainability and C2C principles.

The role of partnerships in achieving sustainable business practices is a recurring theme in the interview. This is consistent with C2C's collaborative approach, which often involves working with various stakeholders to achieve holistic sustainability goals. Addressing the challenges faced in implementing C2C principles, particularly regarding transparency in the supply chain for plastic packaging, adds a realistic perspective and reflects the ongoing efforts and learning processes necessary to overcome obstacles in achieving C2C goals.

The company's vision for C2C in the coming years, while not specific, reaffirms its commitment to sustainability and C2C principles. The advice to other companies to engage with the C2C community and seek expert advice underscores the importance of collective effort and knowledge sharing in advancing sustainable practices. Overall, the interview effectively covers the main facets of Cradle to Cradle principles, illustrating how Werner & Mertz incorporates these into their business strategy, product design, operations, and stakeholder engagement. The consistency in addressing various elements of C2C – from motivation and

implementation to challenges and future goals – demonstrates a thorough understanding and commitment to this sustainability framework.

3.3. Main conclusions from the interview

The interview with Immo Sander, Head of Packaging Development at Werner & Mertz, underscores the company's unwavering commitment to sustainability and the principles of a circular economy, which are integral to their business strategy and operations. Werner & Mertz has successfully integrated Cradle to Cradle (C2C) principles into their products and packaging, with practical applications such as fully recyclable packaging solutions and sustainable printing inks. The company actively promotes a closed-loop circular economy by establishing project teams, engaging in expert discussions, and collaborating with stakeholders to influence policy and industry practices.

Transparency is a core value for Werner & Mertz, particularly regarding the origin of materials and production processes, which helps build trust among customers and within the industry. Continuous innovation in sustainable products and processes is fostered through ongoing dialogues with experts and stakeholders, generating new ideas and projects that benefit the broader industry. Customer awareness and education about the importance of the C2C approach and sustainability are prioritized, exemplified by initiatives like the Frosch initiative.

Partnerships are crucial for the company's success in implementing sustainable practices and driving innovation. However, challenges remain, particularly in obtaining comprehensive data from suppliers in the field of plastic packaging. Werner & Mertz is working to educate and build conviction among suppliers about the importance of transparency for C2C certification. Looking ahead, the company is committed to embedding C2C principles in future developments, maintaining a strong vision for continued innovation and sustainability, though specific future plans were not disclosed. Werner & Mertz advises other companies to engage with the C2C community, absorb its spirit, and seek expert advice to promote sustainable business practices and clean material cycles. These insights highlight Werner & Mertz's comprehensive and proactive approach to implementing Cradle to Cradle principles and fostering a sustainable circular economy.

3.4. Link for the accessibility to the interview

- English version: <https://www.alpine-space.eu/project-news/50914/>

3.5. Dissemination

- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7152624755647406080/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/kunststoff-cluster_sustainability-alpinespace-greenfuture-activity-7152992048734732288-xIp4?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7152629922799267841?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

4. Slovenia

4.1. Data about the interviewed

Name and Family name	Jaka Jelenc
Institution represented	Danfoss
Web-site of the institution	https://www.danfoss.com/en/
Position of the interviewed	Lead LCA expert in the ESG department of Danfoss Climate Solutions segment
Date of the interview	23. 1. 2024
Mode chosen for the interview (online/onsite interview; written interview)	Onsite at GZS premises, published as written interview.
Other information	Interview conducted by Urška Spitzer, CCIS.

4.2. Consistency of the interviewed with the project topic

The interview with Jaka Jelenc aligns closely with the principles of Cradle to Cradle and provides valuable insights into implementing and promoting sustainability and circular economy practices across various industries. Jelenc's extensive background in sustainable development, particularly his focus on life cycle assessment (LCA) and circular practices, underpins the discussion, making it highly relevant to the C2C framework.

Jelenc's lifelong dedication to sustainability and his professional roles in companies like AquafilSLO and Danfoss highlight a strong alignment with C2C principles. His work in implementing LCA in the ESG department at Danfoss directly supports the C2C ethos of creating closed-loop systems. He emphasizes the importance of support from top management in driving sustainability initiatives, reflecting the C2C philosophy that significant transformation requires leadership commitment and can inspire broader organizational and industry-wide change.

The interview also addresses the inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in sustainability practices. By obtaining Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), SMEs can access new markets and public procurement opportunities, aligning with C2C's goal of integrating sustainability across all business sizes and sectors. Jelenc's focus on life cycle assessment is fundamental to C2C, which evaluates the environmental impact of products throughout their entire lifecycle. He highlights the importance of assessing whether products can be reintegrated into the production cycle, a core aspect of the C2C approach.

The discussion of challenges in supply chain transparency and the need for comprehensive data from suppliers is consistent with C2C principles. Jelenc addresses the difficulties faced by companies, particularly SMEs, in accessing and utilizing LCA software and data, which is crucial for implementing C2C effectively. The interview underscores the importance of environmental certifications like third-party-verified EPDs and C2C certifications. These certifications provide proof of a company's sustainable practices and support the C2C goal of ensuring that products are safe for people and the environment throughout their lifecycle.

Jelenc shares examples of successful sustainability initiatives, such as AquafilSLO's collaboration with Healthy Seas to repurpose discarded fishing nets. These examples illustrate practical applications of C2C principles, where waste materials are transformed into valuable products, benefiting both the environment and the economy. His personal motivation and guiding principles, rooted in environmental stewardship and inspired by past successes like the resolution of the ozone hole issue, resonate with the C2C philosophy. His belief that sustainable development is a marathon requiring collective effort aligns with the long-term, systemic approach advocated by C2C.

Overall, the interview with Jaka Jelenc is highly consistent with the Cradle to Cradle topic. It

covers key aspects of sustainable development, life cycle assessment, the role of leadership and SMEs, the importance of certifications, and the practical implementation of circular economy practices. This comprehensive discussion reinforces the principles of C2C and highlights the challenges and opportunities in pursuing a sustainable future.

4.3. Main conclusions from the interview

Jaka Jelenc's professional journey reflects a strong dedication to sustainability and circular economy principles, evident in his roles at companies like AquafilSLO and Danfoss. Leadership commitment to environmental goals is crucial for driving sustainability initiatives within organizations and inspiring broader change. Small and medium-sized enterprises play a significant role in advancing sustainability. Obtaining Environmental Product Declarations enables SMEs to access new markets and opportunities. Evaluating the environmental impact of products throughout their lifecycle, through practices like life cycle assessment, is essential for implementing Cradle to Cradle principles. Transparency in the supply chain poses challenges for implementing C2C principles, particularly in obtaining comprehensive data from suppliers. Environmental certifications, such as third-party-verified EPDs and C2C certifications, validate a company's sustainable practices and are increasingly sought after by customers and stakeholders. Practical applications of C2C principles, such as repurposing discarded materials like fishing nets, demonstrate the benefits of transforming waste into valuable products. Jaka Jelenc's personal motivation for sustainability aligns with the long-term, collective effort inherent in the C2C philosophy.

These conclusions underscore the importance of leadership, lifecycle assessment, supply chain transparency, certifications, and practical examples in advancing sustainability and circular economy practices, as highlighted in the interview with Jaka Jelenc.

4.4. Link for the accessibility to the interview

- English version: <https://www.alpine-space.eu/project-news/there-is-no-waste-only-unsold-product-interview-with-jaka-jelenc-lead-lca-expert-in-the-esg-department-of-danfoss-climate-solutions-segment-and-a-green-transformation-enthusiast/>

4.5. Dissemination

- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7168570409464926209/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7170757495504715776?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/greeniumconsulting_there-is-no-waste-only-unsold-product-activity-7168878534306824192-BrTy?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jakajelenc_there-is-no-waste-only-unsold-product-activity-7168876888868777985-H7Ej?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

5. France

5.1. Data about the interviewed

Name and Family name	Sofiane Bekkal
Institution represented	Schneider Electric
Web-site of the institution	https://www.se.com/ww/en/
Position of the interviewed	Sustainability leader for the 'Home and Distribution' division in the Europe Region at Schneider Electric.
Date of the interview	27. 3. 2024
Mode chosen for the interview (online/onsite interview; written interview)	Online via MS TEAMS as the interviewee is based in Germany.
Other information	Interview conducted by Roxane Girard and Adrien Simon, Polymeris.

5.2. Consistency of the interviewed with the project topic

The interview with Sofiane Bekkal from Schneider Electric demonstrates a high level of consistency with the Cradle to Cradle topic. Throughout the conversation, Schneider Electric's commitment to sustainability is evident, with Bekkal emphasizing the company's focus on reducing CO2 emissions, embracing sustainable practices, and ensuring energy efficiency and sustainability across its products and solutions. Schneider Electric incorporates circularity into its business model by aiming for carbon-neutral operations, reducing waste through the use

of sustainable materials, and implementing end-to-end circularity programs like 'BLA' (Use Better, Use Longer, Use Again). The company demonstrates awareness of its product lifecycle, with efforts to increase the use of sustainable materials in products, ensure recyclability, and minimize waste through closed-loop initiatives. Schneider Electric's attainment of Cradle to Cradle certification for its wiring device portfolio in Europe indicates a tangible commitment to C2C principles. The company engages with customers and stakeholders through personalized brochures and digital channels to promote awareness and understanding of its C2C approach. Schneider Electric collaborates with suppliers to ensure alignment with C2C standards, emphasizing the integration of recycled content and adherence to social responsibility principles. Bekkal highlights key success criteria for a sustainable business model, including limiting environmental impact, delivering innovative products and services, and focusing on customer value. Overall, the interview demonstrates Schneider Electric's comprehensive approach to sustainability, integration of circular economy principles, engagement with stakeholders, and commitment to achieving Cradle to Cradle certification, making it highly consistent with the C2C topic.

5.3. Main conclusions from the interview

The main conclusions from the interview with Sofiane Bekkal from Schneider Electric are that Schneider Electric is committed to sustainability, with a focus on reducing CO2 emissions, embracing sustainable practices, and ensuring energy efficiency and sustainability across its products and solutions. Circular economy principles are integrated into Schneider Electric's business model, with initiatives aimed at achieving carbon-neutral operations, reducing waste through the use of sustainable materials, and implementing end-to-end circularity programs. The company demonstrates awareness of its product lifecycle, with efforts to increase the use of sustainable materials in products, ensure recyclability, and minimize waste through closed-loop initiatives. Schneider Electric has obtained Cradle to Cradle certification for its wiring device portfolio in Europe, highlighting its tangible commitment to C2C principles. The company engages with customers and stakeholders through personalized communication channels to promote awareness and understanding of its C2C approach. Schneider Electric collaborates with suppliers to ensure alignment with C2C standards, emphasizing the integration of recycled content and adherence to social responsibility principles. Key success

criteria for Schneider Electric's sustainable business model include limiting environmental impact, delivering innovative products and services, and focusing on customer value. Overall, the interview illustrates Schneider Electric's comprehensive approach to sustainability, emphasizing its commitment to C2C principles and its efforts to promote sustainability across its operations and value chain.

5.4. Link for the accessibility to the interview

- English version: <https://www.alpine-space.eu/project-news/use-better-use-longer-use-again-interview-with-sofiane-bekkal-from-schneider-electric/>

5.5. Dissemination

- <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7186332620522160129/>
- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7186354812874080256?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7187033338669387776?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
- https://www.linkedin.com/posts/ur%C5%A1ka-spitzer-877a48235_use-better-use-longer-use-again-interview-activity-7186361403128070144-QTAM?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop