



EDWARD TONCHEW
Managing Partner for West Balkans
Boyden

Boyden Serbia has a wide portfolio divided into several areas of consulting, such as: executive search, executive appraisal and assessment, board consulting, strategic and HR consulting. We spoke with Mr Edward Tonchew, Managing Partner for West Balkans Boyden about the company's expertise.

Which consultant services from your portfolio clients in the region seek the most?

— Our portfolio is wide and divided into several areas of consulting, such as: executive search, executive appraisal and assessment, board consulting, strategic and HR consulting.

Our clients are increasingly asking from us to support their operations with finding appropriate solutions in two aspects: firstly, how to keep and further motivate their best people (top talents) and, secondly, how to attract and recruit the same quality of professionals from the market. Therefore, talent

Hunting Talents with Digital Thinking

Most companies in the West Balkans are increasingly investing in talent management. We are here to support them in taking strategic actions to identify, recruit, develop, support and maintain talent, and to align it with company goals

management, how do you access a pull of talents in the area?

— Finding the right candidates is not easy, but we continuously search for them even when we don't have an open position to fill. We try to stay connected and engage with people, follow their career path and their professional aspirations over the years. We need to combine several approaches to get desired result and fulfill our client's expectations. Our personal network of contacts within the region proved to be invaluable in searching for top level professionals. However, social media is such an ingrained part of everyday life that companies are continually trying to augment their engagement strategies. We have seen this across all industries, even higher education. The ability to develop a digital experience to engage with your audience is crucial today. Our philosophy when we look for a talent on social media is not simply to find someone with the right education and experience,

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of the particular company so we can more effectively address its business goals in order to improve business performance in the long run. A talent management plan, usually supported by succession planning plan, will enable the business strategy through the company's employees.

Having in mind that you are responsible to provide your clients with HR solutions for the highest-level executives in senior

A good CRM enables us to develop a candidate pool, to be closer to the community and therefore to deliver more value to our clients.

How are your services complemented by the partnership with it "Boyden Global Executive Search"?

— Since 1946, when Boyden founded the business of international retained executive search, the firm has been delivering The Right Leaders worldwide. Boyden is recognized as one of world's premiere leadership solutions and talent advisory firms, led by Trina Gordon, CEO. In 2017, I joined Boyden as a Managing Partner for West Balkans, working closely with CEE office in Vienna (led by Andreas Landgrebe). Being part of the global Boyden network, I am in position to support clients even more, with Boyden's global experience, support of experts from every industry, market "know how", corporative digital marketing and global sophisticated IT platform. Our office has specific expertise driven by the regional and local economy and we are here to serve clients doing businesses in the growing economies of West Balkans.

Which organizational and market challenges companies which operate in your geographical area of coverage are usually facing?

— Our approach is very much to work in partnership with our clients, to understand where they are trying to get to and how they plan to do that. This will tell us what skillsets they need today and how those skillsets need to evolve over time. On the other hand, it is very crucial for managers to understand the importance of employee's motivation, their

further education, the coverage of critical roles and their complete performance in order to contribute to higher levels of business performance and results. A network of trade agreements and a strategic location have propelled Serbia into becoming a manufacturing hub which has attracted world-renowned corporations, but doing business can be challenging without the right help on board. Many multinational companies and foreign investors are hiring experts from around the world on the top management positions. But, we are here to advice companies to go local, since we know the market and we know that top managerial positions could be filled with local professionals. It's important to identify local talent early on, and then provide the mentoring, training, and support to keep those employees happy. Another challenge that companies are usually facing when looking for the right people to hire locally is the problem of "salary discrepancy", because the salaries vary for the same job title from company to company. We support companies in a really lot of ways and It's not an easy work, but our mission is to solve any problem.

To what extent are the prominent domestic companies in the region aware of the need to address corporate culture transformation and make use of HR development programs?

— In the past years, our company



OUR CLIENTS ARE AWARE THAT WE WILL DO OUR UTMOST TO FULFILL THEIR NEEDS AND WE ARE PROUD TO STATE THAT WE HAVE OVER 92% CLIENT RETENTION RATE

have faced the development of HR functions in many large and successful companies and we are proud to say that we have been included in the creation of their right strategy. The reason why the human resource strategy is important is because we are the ones that keep employee satisfaction, employment engagement and their proper education. But, not every company understands or values the human resource functions on the level it should, and we are here to help them to do so, making them aware of the market challenges, trends and innovations. Most companies consider employees as their most valuable asset, and, therefore, human resources strategies have extreme value. Moreover, if the company is about to change the organizational structure, HR department and HR consultants

must drive the wheels of that change, and that is where HR's true role comes into play. This is why particular attention in searching for right professional for our clients is paid on proper fit into the company's corporate culture.

How do you assess the future potentials of this market for the services offered by your company?

— War for talent will only get worse. But we are ready for it. As company under strict corporate guidance, we are already fully compliant with General Data Protection Regulation imposed by EU, which our clients appreciate a lot. It has been complemented by "File Finder", one of the best global CRM solutions for our industry. After almost two decades in supporting clients with top executive talent and other HR solutions, we will

continue to add on value to our clients. Consulting, after all, is the matter of trust and we are carefully building it and preserving it. Our clients are aware that we will do our utmost to fulfill their needs and we are proud to state that we have over 92% client retention rate.

Since Digitization is rapidly affecting businesses across industries, which changes it brings to the human capital market in the Balkans?

— Digitization is very important today, since it support better decision making, enable stronger performance tracking, and deliver deeper customer insights, so labor market in the Balkans has to respond adequately. It is very important to embrace the new trends and changes as a positive thing in order for a digital strategy to be successful in all business functions. Therefore, in order to successfully realize the benefits, it is important for companies to develop human capital strategies that guide the implementation of these capabilities, delegate tasks, and ensure seamless transitions into a more digital state. We are helping our clients in fundamental aspect of creating and implementing a digital strategy by identifying and recruiting talents with digital experience, relevant skills and, moreover, digital thinking. So, hunting talents with digital thinking is a challenge for which our team has expertise, knowledge and persistence.

"Resources are available to all companies. The great variable is the quality of leadership and management — it determines why some companies fail and others succeed."

Sidney Boyden

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Boyden West Balkans
Belgrade, Serbia
www.boyden.com