

AmCham Talents 2021 Speakers' Biographies

Speakers are listed in alphabetical order



Vedran Boljat
CEO
Novo Nordisk Croatia

Vedran was born in Split in 1968. He graduated at the Medical University Zagreb in 1995 and worked as a medical doctor from 1996-2001 as a GP in Dalmatia region.

In 2001 Vedran started working in Novo Nordisk Croatia as a sales REP for Dalmatia and became Sales Manager in 2005.

He completed many international educations in pharma business, such as Harvard executive education and Cotrugli MBA executive school.

In 2011 Vedran became General Manager at Novo Nordisk Croatia and in 2013 General Manager Croatia/Slovenia. He is also a member of management team East Europe and a member of IFI (international pharma initiative). Since 2020 Vedran is Vice President Novo Nordisk Croatia.

In his free time Vedran enjoys his hobbies: playing tennis, diving and riding a motorcycle.



John Mathias Gašparac
Country Managing Partner
PwC Croatia

John has 30 years of professional experience. He started his professional career with EY in 1988 in Vancouver, Canada. In 1997, he joined Price Waterhouse which at that time established its operation in Croatia, becoming PwC in 1998. Over the years he has been responsible for a portfolio of clients consisting of some of the most prominent companies in the Croatian as well as other markets in the region.

In the period between 2004 to 2007, he was seconded to the Moscow office of PwC as a full time member of GACS (Global Accounting Consulting Services), specializing in

IFRS and gaining extensive international experience working with a large portfolio of companies in the Russian market. In July 2007, John was promoted to partner, later becoming Territory Assurance Leader for PwC Croatia.

John holds a degree in commerce from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada and he is a member of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. Along with his professional interests, he has for many years supported and has been actively involved in the corporate responsibility activities of PwC Croatia.



Mirsada Kudrić
General Manager for Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Robert Bosch

Mirsada has been working for Robert Bosch for 25 years. Her roles included logistics, HR, finance and controlling. In 2014 she was appointed general manager responsible for the coordination of company's activities in Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina and Slovenia.

Mirsada is a graduate of the Faculty of Maritime Studies in Rijeka. During her career she has also obtained a baccalaureus degree in Economy and an MBA degree.

Mirsada is the vice president of the board of the German Croatian Industry and Commerce Chamber and a member of the supervisory board Zaklada znanje na djelu – Wissen am Werk.

Mirsada is highly motivated and encouraging; her curiosity drives her to constantly seek new opportunities to learn and grow and take up various adventures in private and professional life.



Damir Lesničar
Founder and CEO
ETRANET Group

For more than 20 years Damir Lesničar has successfully founded and managed some of the top Croatian companies in the EFTPOS and cashless payment solutions sector, smartphone business and POS (Point Of Sale) / POI (Point Of Interaction) systems.

First company he founded as a student of Physics at the University of Zagreb, today Damir holds various industry certifications for EMV and related electronic payment areas, and is an experienced serial entrepreneur with proven track record in founding and growing both traditional companies and successful startups.

Members of ETRANET Group develop and provide innovative products and services to leading Croatian companies, Banks and Telecoms such as INA, Arriva, Čazmatrans, OTP, Addiko, PBZ and Raiffeisen bank, Hrvatski Telekom, Tele2, Billy, as well to leading international companies such as Uber, Deutsche Telekom, MTV and Ultra festivals...

Interestingly, first sales of car and real estate for cryptocurrency in Croatia was conducted through ETRANET Group's Billy POS platform.



Marin Tadić
Director
Oracle Hrvatska

In March 2002 Marin Tadić took over the leadership of Oracle Croatia office. Since then, he is continuously and persistently building a team of experts ready to respond to any demand of both large, and small and medium customers. Thanks to the clearly defined and consistently performed role of the local office and its director, Oracle Croatia, under the leadership of Marin Tadic records its continuous growth. Since 2018 he took over new role, Cluster Leader for Oracle Technology business for Hungary, Slovakia, Serbia and Croatia.

Marin is also investing in his own development, continuing his education at the Ecole Nationale de Ponts et Chaussées (ENPC) of International Management in Paris, and the University of Edinburgh Management School in Scotland, and in 2005 by completing the Executive MBA.

In 1989, Marin graduated from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the Department of Telecommunications and Information Technology, where he was the first one with the thesis referring to the TCP / IT (Internet) protocol. After graduation, Marin spent two years in Ericsson's development department of AXE digital exchange.

In Vienna he began working for Reuters GmbH, where shortly he received an opportunity to establish the Reuters offices in Zagreb, Ljubljana and Sarajevo.

Following four years (1998-2002) Marin spent at the head of Hewlett-Packard Zagreb office, during which time he was progressively developing all segments of HP's business activities.



Ruža Tomić Fontana
General Manager for Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina
and Slovenia
Coca-Cola HBC

Ruža Tomić Fontana is currently holding the position of General Manager of Coca-Cola HBC Adria business unit, in which capacity she is responsible for companies business operations in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia. Prior to assuming the role of General Manager, from 2002 onward Ruža has held various key commercial positions as Sales Manager for Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia, Commercial Manager, Regional Sales Manager, Marketing Manager and Product Development Manager for Croatia.

During her work Ruža has led various teams with great commitment and passion, and developed her leadership skills. As a part of Senior Lead Team of Coca-Cola HBC

Adria (Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia), she gained knowledge and expertise in developing and executing business strategies across different markets, business integration and organizational culture transformation.

Ruža Tomić Fontana holds a Master's degree in Finance from the Faculty of Economics, University of Zagreb. She values excellence, continuous learning and improvement and is strongly committed to innovation in business, people development and building high performing teams.



Katarzyna Turowski Paliwoda
Head of Emerging Markets CEE
Facebook

Katarzyna Turowski-Paliwoda joined Facebook 5 years ago, and she is now leading Emerging Markets in Central & Eastern Europe.

Previously Katarzyna worked at P&G, managing more than 15 brands in nine different markets in Central Europe.

Her professional career includes experience in the non-profit sector, as a Communication Consultant and volunteer at UNICEF as well as Polish organization Stowarzyszenie WIOSNA, where she is the on-going board advisor.



Arn Willems
Managing Director
GTC nekretnine Zagreb

Arn Willems has over 20 years of executive management experience and is currently responsible for a portfolio of real estate assets in Croatia and Serbia on behalf of Globe Trade Centre S.A. (GTC) a Warsaw Stock Exchange listed real estate investor and developer.

He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology as well as an MBA from IEDC School of Management. Over the years he has attended numerous professional development courses including Negotiation Mastery at Harvard Business School. He is a Chartered Management Consultancy Surveyor registered with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

A strong believer in the importance of conversation and "Leadership through Dialogue" he has over the past few years become increasingly intrigued by the topic of Negotiation which he claims to be of utmost importance in all of our lives, no matter what we do and regardless of whether we are negotiating with someone else, or with ourselves.

Arn strongly supports the work of multiple non-governmental organizations and is currently a member of the Croatia Green Building Council.

He is the proud father of two daughters who were both born in Croatia, a country he enjoys very much and where he intends to stay.