

AmCham Talents 2024 Speakers' Biographies

Speakers are listed in alphabetical order



Vedran Bajer Country Manager Microsoft Croatia

Vedran Bajer is the Country Manager for Microsoft Croatia. His focus is on implementing the company's strategy that puts an accent on the acceleration of digital transformation of businesses, the public sector, and society, helped by an ecosystem of partners and the application of Microsoft business solutions. He believes that supporting the digital development of Croatia and empowering technical talents are crucial in achieving the country's ambition to become a regional Digital Hotspot.

Vedran Bajer was born in Zagreb, where he graduated at the Faculty of Graphic Arts. He brings 20+ years of experience in business development, finance, marketing and management gained through different roles in international companies and tech startups on a global level. He believes in continuous improvement and learning, loves challenges and is an avid reader.

Vedran loves working with start-ups, scale-ups and invests his time in mentoring and coaching young leaders. His passions outside of work are spending time with his family, food, travel and sports, namely Karate and Skiing and he's a Pilot in training.



Domagoj Borščak
Chief Operating Officer
Bomark Pak

Domagoj Borščak is presently serving as the COO at Bomark Pak d.o.o., where he has been driving operational and strategic initiatives focused on compliance and security. During his tenure the company achieved ISO 27001 certification. Furthermore, Bomark Pak became the first cast stretch film producer in Europe to have a CO2 surplus. This environmental milestone was accomplished through the installation of Croatia's largest solar farm for company use, with a capacity of 15MW, underlining Bomark Pak's

commitment to sustainability and innovation.

His journey in the business world took a significant turn with his role as Chief Strategist for Proceptio - custom BI solution provider – role that enabled him to experience world of startups.

Domagoj's academic credentials include a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Management from the Zagreb School of Economics and Management, with further academic pursuits at EDHEC Business School and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

His personal interests in photography, cars, and IT mirror his innovative approach to both his professional and personal life enabling him to usually connect unconnectable.



Simon Franko
CEO
BASF Croatia

Simon Franko (53), born in Ljubljana, is a chemical engineer by profession, with more than 28 years of leadership experience in an international environment. His 25 years long career in German BASF, the largest chemical company in the world, is related to various positions within the Coatings Division, including Managing Director roles of BASF Coatings Services in Slovenia (Novo mesto, Revoz site) and Romania (Dacia site). Account Manager of Renault for EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) was Franko's position before he took a position of Managing Director in three countries - BASF Slovenija, BASF Croatia and BASF

Srbija in 2016.

Simon Franko is the first Slovene who took on the Managing Director role of BASF's representation in the country. Early in his career, he worked three years for the company Helios. Alongside the Slovene and Serbo-Croatian languages, Franko is in command of French, English, German and Spanish.

Simon believes that management, and business in general, is much more than just profit or GDP growth - living by the values we believe in will create wellbeing and more optimistic workplaces for all. Sustainability in business is one of his first priorities and is important to him at a very deep and personal level, as well. It is one of his long-term focuses, whether it is about sustaining resources, business growth or the planet that sustains us. He believes that we must strive to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Simon is very curious, believing in lifelong learning and growth mindset, especially interested in the fields of natural sciences, AI and sci-fiction.

He occasionally lectures about sustainability at IEDC Business school of Bled, Gea College and Pegasus foundation, as well as many business conferences.

Solving complex challenges and developing new business ideas in diverse environments is his true passion. He successfully developed new businesses and oversaw their implementation in various countries, such as Slovenia, Romania, Iran, Russia, Morocco, and many more.



Dino Mileta, PhD
Managing Director and Founder
Uprise

Dino Mileta, PhD is Managing Director and Founder of Uprise, a consultancy and IT company that blends together expertise from software development, electrical power engineering, mathematical optimization and AI. He additionally acts as Managing Director and Founder of Project42 Technologies, an established digital agency specializing in web and mobile solutions, custom software development, and cutting-edge technologies such as 3D/2D animation, CGI, VR, and AR.

Abovementioned companies perfectly reflect Dinos' interests and his educational and career path. Dino received a PhD in power engineering from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb. During his college days Dino as well studied physics, economy and, interestingly, Japanese language.

After graduation, Dino started working at the Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar, followed by Hrvatski Telekom and Ericsson Nikola Tesla.

Dino has always been at the forefront of various entrepreneurial and research activities throughout his career, be it in the companies he worked at, or as part of the private endeavors. Interestingly, one of his previous companies was the first Croatian electricity supplier company.

Throughout his leadership, Uprise has become identified with innovation and excellence, providing cutting-edge software solutions to clients throughout Europe, notably operational tools crucial for European electricity markets operation and European power system security on a daily basis.

Uprise is as well very active in the field of research by closely collaborating with different innovative companies, research institutes and faculties all over Europe, and participating in different European innovation programs that deal with research topics such as quantum computing, e-mobility, energy management of smart buildings, etc.

At Project42 Technologies, it is worth highlighting Cubosee project, a multiplatform brand for children that includes 3D animated series.



Boris Miljavac
Managing Director
Siemens Energy

Boris Miljavac has been leading Siemens Energy in Croatia since its establishment in 2019, bringing extensive experience in business development within the energy sector. His leadership style emphasizes empathy, empowerment, and talent development, reflecting Siemens Energy's values.

As Managing Director, Boris oversees a team that has delivered numerous successful energy projects in Croatia and the region, balancing the ownership of four Siemens Energy subsidiaries, and employing over eight hundred people.

A law graduate from the University of Zagreb, Boris is also a prominent ambassador for the EU Climate Pact, actively collaborating with committees, government groups, and associations to promote key policies. Through his involvement in Siemens Energy's Government Affairs department, he helped to position the company as an industry leader through engagements with political leaders across Europe.

Siemens Energy Croatia, part of the global Siemens Energy with nearly 100,000 employees worldwide, offers world-class technologies with local expertise, supporting customers and partners in transitioning to a more sustainable world.

Boris is deeply knowledgeable about process technology and business models, continuously upgrading his skills to adapt to Siemens Energy's portfolio evolution. His ability to define concrete concepts and business cases, coupled with his passion for the challenges of energy transition, positions him as a problem-solving conceptual thinker delivering decisive results.

Outside of work, Boris enjoys precious moments with his family—traveling, hiking, and cherishing every adventure with his wife and son. These moments are his secret ingredients for a happy heart and a balanced life.



Krešimir Mlinarić
Managing Director
BE-terna

Krešimir Mlinarić currently serves as the Managing Director and a member of the Regional Management Team at BE-terna, a prominent digital transformation partner and a globally recognized implementer of integrated business solutions within the Telefonica Group.

Throughout his career, Krešimir has accumulated extensive experience in both the private and academic sectors.

Commencing his professional journey at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing in Zagreb, he transitioned to Agrokor, the largest Croatian company at the time, where he worked as an ERP consultant and team lead.

Progressing further, he assumed the role of Project Manager at Adacta (later acquired by BE-terna), subsequently achieving elevation to the position of Managing Director and Partner. He has been successfully managing Croatian and regional BE-terna service lines and practices for more than 15 years. As an integral part of the Regional Management Team, Krešimir managed diverse teams and spearheaded business operations across the Adriatic region, contributing to BE-terna's status as one of the top 1% global Microsoft partners who have demonstrated excellence in delivering valuable solutions and help companies across various industries to digitalize and optimize their business and achieve sustained success.

In addition to his corporate responsibilities, Krešimir also shares his knowledge as an external lecturer at the Faculty of Applied Mathematics and Informatics in Osijek.

Furthermore, he is the co-founder of Meet Intelligent Innovation, a startup that reflects his commitment to entrepreneurship and creating environments in which talented people can grow and develop professionally.

Krešimir's academic journey began with his graduation from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing in Zagreb. Committed to continuous professional growth, he has pursued advanced learning opportunities, participating in various expert and management programs at renowned institutions such as IEDC Bled, the University of Essex, and more.



Sandra Velasco
Country President Adriatics
Novartis Hrvatska

Sandra Velasco serves as the President of the Adriatic Countries at Novartis and a member of the board of AmCham Croatia, roles that reflect her commitment to excellence in health and the sustainability of the healthcare system.

She is an industrial engineer with an MBA from IESE and training in leadership, finance, and digital transformation from prestigious universities such as Glasgow Caledonian University, Harvard Business School, and Stanford University.

At 32 years old, she stood out as the youngest director of Novartis Spain, bringing innovation to primary care, specialized treatments, and rare diseases. Sandra combines her expertise in key therapeutic areas with a strategic vision acquired from her consulting experience in various sectors across Europe and Latin America.

Her focus on gender equality and female empowerment, along with her active role in the startup ecosystem and participation in various mentoring programs, reflect her inclusive and future-oriented leadership. These qualities now enhance her management in the Adriatic Countries, where she seeks to make a difference in global health.



Zdenko Vrdoljak
Managing director
UMBOSS

Zdenko Vrdoljak is the Managing Director of UMBOSS, the software vendor of the Network and Service Assurance product that serves Croatian and international telecommunication companies and large enterprise ITs.

After graduating from FER, University of Zagreb, in 2000, he began his academic career as a research assistant. He received his Master of Science degree in Applied Mathematics for Teletraffic Management in 2003. In 2007, Zdenko joined Metronet Telekomunikacije, now part of A1 Croatia, where he worked as the Head of Residential Technical Operations, Director of IT since 2008, and Chief Technical Officer (CTO) from 2011 until 2018.

In 2018, he joined a startup project to create UMBOSS, a software product for Network and Service Assurance, based exclusively on the company's own intellectual property. Alongside his team of domain experts and software developers, he manages the company that has successfully surpassed its startup phase and is now expanding into European, North American, and Asian markets.