

# IEDC alumni Success Story



*A School with a View*

Date: 24. 1. 2018

Tomislav Čorak, MBA 2003, Generali AAA Winner 2017

## "CAREER IS A MARATHON"

*Tomislav Čorak is an IEDC MBA 2003 graduate and a winner of Generali Alumni Achievement Award 2017. In his professional life, Tomislav is Principal at The Boston Consulting Group and has profound experience working with privatized and publicly owned companies in CEE and SEE (Southeast Europe), particularly in the area of energy: oil and gas, electric utilities and telecommunications. Tomislav led multiple top management consulting engagements in the region that focused on growth strategy development, investments prioritization, portfolio diversification, operations improvement as well as organizational unbundling of power and gas incumbents, projects of transformation of complex corporate management models and other restructurings.*



*In his private life, Tomislav is a father to Petar, partner to Melanie and a great friend to many.*

*By Iva Eibel, Head of Corporate Communications, IEDC*

**You have graduated from the Executive MBA back in 2003. Why did you decide to do an MBA in the first place and how did it influence your professional and personal life and attitudes?**

At that time, I was pure engineer, started to deal with managerial issues. I felt that I miss so much knowledge in finance, marketing and general management. A friend of mine recommended me to visit an IEDC info day in Zagreb and then the whole journey begun. IEDC changed my professional life. I fell in love with management consulting at IEDC and

stayed in the industry ever since.

**What was the best takeaway for you from your studies at IEDC?**

The best takeaway from the school came out of marketing sessions with Prof. Joe Pons. His way of guiding us through case studies sharpened my thinking. Before IEDC, I was taught that there are no wrong questions, just wrong answers. So I was focused on providing right or wrong answers. That might be true in science where concrete frameworks or models are used in laboratory environment. But, in business, it is

all about asking the right questions, because they lead to right answers.

**Your colleagues from The Boston Consulting Group wrote in the nomination letter for your AAA award the following: "Tomislav is clearly an outstanding professional, mentor, teacher and colleague, but we believe he should be viewed first as an outstanding leader. He is and has been a leader of those of us in the profession and a leader for the profession itself. For over a decade, he has been among the most visible proponents of**

**management consulting in South Eastern Europe. He has been out in front, not only in the way he has led his own career in consulting, but publicly for the rest of us in the profession in SEE region.” What is the most precious lesson you got in your career as a team leader?**

In management consulting, we are always dealing with critical situations. In such situations people are always under stress because of client’s expectations, short time to deliver, complex and new topics, etc. I learned that leader has to spend more time on explaining the context of a given situation then to micro guiding the content development to solve a situation. If the context is understood well by the team members, they will come up with solution proposal alone and feel ownership for implementing it. This is much more powerful and engaging than pushing the content without context.

**You have been working in a multicultural environment and with foreign partners and clients. What would you say are benefits and challenges of cultural diversity in the workplace?**

If you live with diverse people, then you lose the bias of judging capability of people by their nationality, professional background, sexual orientation, etc. You judge them by their capability to provide a solution to the problem. Diversity helps us in focusing solving the problems by providing different views and not distorting the process with biased judgement that will not help at the end.

**What has changed in the field of management consulting in the last years?**



The philosophy of management consulting to look ahead and provide solutions did not change. What changed is the complexity of the businesses of our clients which also reflected the way how we work today. BCG has turned so much towards digitalization and cooperation with external partners that we can hardly work alone on a case. If before the client engaged strategy consultant to develop a plan that the client will implement, today more and more we need to implement it. I can hardly imagine a case today where we are working alone. It is always a combination of financial, legal, specialist, technology services, that clients need. So we as BCG are more open to collaboration with different types of service provider. We also build our own portfolio of new services like BCG Digital ventures for ideating new business ventures, or like Gamma for providing data analytics services, or like Platinion for Technology integration services, or Brighthouse for purpose driven marketing, or investing into own expert network, etc.

**What advice would you give to your younger-self?**

In professional life be more patient, because career is a marathon. In private life be more decisive because life does not take forever.

## MEET TOMISLAV PERSONALLY

**I achieve life-work balance by ...**

... using most of my weekends off work with closed laptop.

**I am inspired by ...**

... reading a cool book, currently going through *Why nations fail* by D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson.

**My favorite memory of IEDC studies is ...**

... singing loud "I can't get no contribution" at the very first class with Prof. Randy Kudar in the form of Rolling Stones hit.

**The best piece of advice I've been given is ...**

... in management never reinvent the wheel. Always check who has done it before.