

»WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT BUSINESS IS DONE ON A “HUMAN-TO-HUMAN” RELATIONSHIP BASIS AND THAT WE NEED TO BE RESPECTFUL TOWARDS EACH OTHER. ONE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THE CULTURE, THE BACKGROUND, NEEDS AND GOALS OF THE OTHER PARTNER.« **JURE MARJANOVIČ**



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*Interviewed by Vera Pasyukova, photos provided by Jure Marjanovič*

**Congratulations for the new job position and all the success at BTC d.d. Shall we mention, they must be lucky to have you? Jokes aside, how did it happen you joined their great team and what are you going to cover now in your role?**

In June 2020, after 19 years of work at Gorenje, my previous employer, where I really gained vast experience in different fields of business and life, I

took a short career break. I had one of the greatest privileges, opportunities and moments to spend time with my one-year old son Anže. Since my wife needed to go back to work after her maternity leave, I took care of Anže and also introduced him to our local kindergarten. I think it was in October when I got a call from one of the Slovene headhunting agencies, if I was interested to work for the BTC. I knew a bit about the company but of course not all the details.

I was thrilled to get the call and of course immediately grabbed the opportunity and went for an interview. One month later, I started to work at BTC as a Deputy Director of Corporate and Legal Affairs. Now, after two years, I am more than



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satisfied to be here. People here are great, the work is very dynamic and the business has been very challenging in the Covid and post-Covid era. I am responsible for the whole real estate business (managing one of the largest shopping, business and leisure centers in Europe) – BTC City (Ljubljana, Murska Sobota and Novo mesto, Vodno mesto Atlantis) and the Legal Department. My background is legal and with the combination of business knowledge and experience, I think this can be a very good combination to lead the BTC City Business Unit.

**Before joining BTC, you worked for 19 years in Gorenje, starting as a Legal Advisor, serving as a Secretary to Management and Supervisory Boards, later also moving to cover HR and Corporate Services issues and serving also as an Executive Director for Corporate Support. Somewhat “midterm” in Gorenje, in 2012, you started the Executive MBA program at IEDC. Did EMBA help you look at the issues at work differently? Was there something that you could say was applicable immediately/in the long run?**

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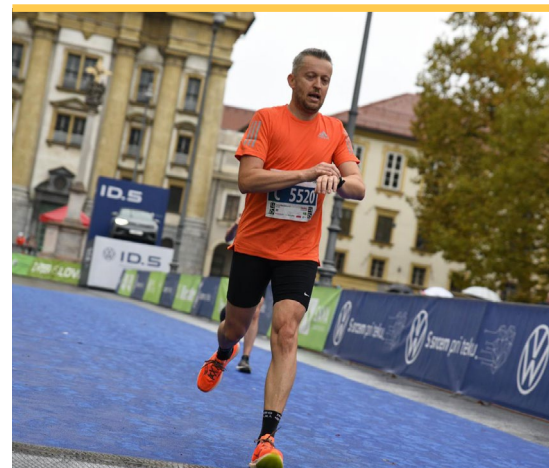
The Executive MBA program at IEDC is something I will never forget. To be honest, I didn't know about the IEDC too much before joining the Executive MBA program. From the first lesson of professor Randy Kudar until the very last day, on one hand, I really tried to do my best at the program and on the other hand, I enjoyed each minute of the program. The professors are great, the case studies are something that I never encountered before, the colleagues I met are fantastic, with some of them we still keep in touch and try to see each other at least once per year. The knowledge I got at the IEDC is priceless. Both “ordinary subjects” such as accounting, marketing, finance etc., and “soft skills” lectures. The latter “shocked” me the most. I was able to look at various things from a totally different perspective that I used to before. In the past, I didn't really see myself as a real leader and I was rather a quiet than a talkative person. When I received a written feedback from one of the professors saying something like: “The group would benefit more, if you talked more”, I started thinking that people, perhaps, share my opinions and views and, perhaps, if I speak up, my opinion could be recognized as a valuable one. From that moment on I tried to be more active and somehow “woke up the lion in me”, which I think is hidden in all of us and just needs to be awoken and used at work and in everyday life.

**Would you recall, why did you decide to go for an EMBA and why your choice fell on IEDC and not on any**

**other school? Have you considered other options?**

When one has only a legal background, an EMBA is the best possible choice in order to make the next step in the business career. I got some very good recommendations from my ex-coworkers about the IEDC and luckily, Gorenje decided to send me to the IEDC. I never really considered other options, even today I think that the IEDC is really a benchmark for the EMBA study in the region.

**It's an interesting observation that while the majority of EMBA participants in the class usually have economics/engineering or other “technical” background, there are always a couple of lawyers in the class, typically, dealing with the corporate law. What does EMBA bring them in your opinion?**



Economists, engineers, lawyers and others - all look at things and challenges from different perspectives. Some would make an immediate decision, some would need much more data to make a decision, some would try to explain why something cannot be done, etc. Firstly, in my opinion, we need to understand that

business is done on a “human-to-human” relationship basis and that we need to be respectful towards each other. One needs to understand the culture, the background, needs and goals of the other partner. By understanding all of the mentioned above, it is much easier to reach your own goal. The EMBA helped me vastly get all of the beforementioned. Of course, past experience, including failures, helped me even more. Secondly, one always needs to look at the dilemma from all possible angles before making a decision. You should never think or work within your own silo or be the guardian of it, meaning that only your point of view is important.

**Would you say, law background affects the way people approach managerial dilemmas? They say, lawyers have a more “pessimistic” view on everything and first focus on the problems while others tend to jump into solutions immediately. Does that statement stand in your opinion? Does it impede managerial work in any way, you think?**

I wouldn't fully agree with this statement. Like in any other professions, we know both lawyers that would seek and theoretically explain why something cannot be done, and those lawyers that would be much braver, and would support certain ideas, which cannot find an immediate implementation. It is, of course, a fact that lawyers always need to take care that decisions and actions that are against the law, cannot be taken. This needs to

be respected, no exceptions. When talking about running the business, I would say that in-house lawyers have here an advantage over the “ordinary lawyers” from a law office due to the fact that in-house lawyers are an integral part of the company's daily operations. They know the business in details and would be able to be more effective and act fast, if there is a legal question related to a managerial decision.

**If you recall those two years (it seems you have a 10-year anniversary to celebrate with your ex-classmates this year), what was the best takeaway for you? Do you still keep in touch with your group and meet up?**

With some of the group members we still keep in touch and try to meet once in a while. We all remember our “study days” with great pleasure and always discuss that it would be great to get back to the IEDC and relive those great times. The best takeaway for me was that at the IEDC I learned a lot about myself that I wouldn't dare to believe I was capable of. Professors and colleagues made me think differently, look through a broader lens and also made me braver, encouraging to act more proactively than in the past.

**Being a successful manager usually means a busy schedule, what are you support mechanisms? How do you manage work/family time?**

Spending time with my wife and son are the best battery chargers for me. I enjoy each

and every second with them and within a very short time, I am able to forget that my day was busy and that I spent more than two hours in the car, since I drive from home to work four days a week. Nevertheless, I think that time spent at work has to be devoted to work only, same as time at home should be spent on family, while only very urgent business matters may interfere. Simple or ordinary issues should wait until the next day. Sports has been an integral part of my life since I was a little child. Alpine skiing, tennis, mountain biking, road cycling, mountaineering, including climbing, and lately running (I am more than happy that I took part in the 2022 Ljubljana half marathon and achieved a good time) are the ones that make me able to keep up the good shape and enable me to get the stress out of my mind. I am, of course, not able to practice them all but it's fun and easy to have so many favorite sports and to alternate between them. And last but not least, since primary school playing a piano has been a passion of mine. When possible, I sit down at the piano and play some pieces I know and within a couple of seconds, I can easily clear my mind.



## MEET JURE IN EVERYDAY LIFE



EMBA 2012-13

### Jure Marjanovič

Director of BTC CITY Business Unit  
and Legal Department,  
BTC d.d.  
Slovenia

*My favourite free time activity is... cycling, mountain and road cycling.*

*A song I'd sign along while driving in my car if I hear it on a radio/Spotify... is one of the Queen's classics, perhaps, Breakthru. Otherwise, I prefer a more sophisticated music to everyday's music, Rachmaninoff and Chopin are quite often on my playlist.*

*Last TV series/movie I watched was...Stonehearst Asylum. I liked it because it raised so many questions and doubts in my mind until the end of the movie, where another big surprise occurred.*

*An advice I'd give to my children is...respect each and every person and don't waste your time with people that spread negative energy.*

*My last travel was to Munich for a family vacation and the best part of it was how my son felt very relaxed and familiar in a big city, including taking the subway, even though we live by the forest and had never had such a family experience before.*

*If I could turn back time and choose another career, I'd become a professional personal fitness trainer (though, I need to say that I am more than satisfied with my actual career).*