

POWERTOHR: BIGGEST HR SUMMIT IN KOSOVO



Over three hundred Human Resources professionals and CEOs in Kosovo united for the dynamic Power to HR – The Global HR Summit by KosovaJob. International experts from Meta, LinkedIn, and the former director of BBC Academy provided cutting-edge insights on digital recruitment, talent acquisition, and employee retention. At the same time, local panels explored unique employer branding and recruitment challenges.

The EYE Project has been a valuable partner with KosovaJob for over a decade, proactively spearheading the ambitious initiative to elevate the discourse on investment in HR to a national level. The EYE Project has taken on various responsibilities, including co-financing the event, speaker selection, event promotion, panelist recommendations, business model suggestions, and event branding. The summit aimed to promote sustainable HR practices and create inclusive workplaces to benefit employers, employees, and society. PowertoHR will become an annual event with support from private sponsors to grow and evolve beyond EYE's involvement.

PowerToHR - The Global HR Summit by KosovaJob was a crucial step forward for the HR industry in Kosovo. The insightful perspectives of speakers and panelists gave an international and local perspective.

Anne Morrison, the former director of Bafta and BBC Academy, delivered a keynote speech on the importance of talent in a company. She emphasized that talent should be the top priority of any organization as it drives revenue and represents the brand. Morrison added that employees are the brand ambassadors and company mission carriers. Companies should market their unique selling points to attract top talent and differentiate themselves.

Morrison also highlighted the role of executive search, recruitment agencies, and social media in finding the right employees. Creating a talent pool may be necessary for areas with a fundamental skills shortage, and companies should focus on training programs to bridge the skill gap. Anne recommends hiring individuals with a "let's do things" mindset, transferable skills suitable for the job, and a willingness to learn and excel instead of those with similar educational backgrounds and experience related to the company they are applying for, emphasizing the importance of attitude over knowledge in hiring. For example, Morrison cited the BBC Academy's collaboration with its rivals in pooling their resources and talent to provide more relevant training to aspiring professionals.

Another speaker at the summit, **Serdzan Arnautovic, Global Recruiting Program Manager at Meta,** emphasized the importance of data analysis in developing forward-thinking recruiting strategies to boost talent attraction. He recommended conducting audits, analyzing the candidate and internal journey at the company, and measuring the quality of hires based on skillset rather than the educational background to understand the market. Arnautovic also stressed the need to create structured interviewing processes and measure the Employer Value Proposition (EVP), a company's core benefits that make up its employer brand. He discussed adapting to changes by utilizing data, including digging for data in unexpected places. Arnautovic highlighted the need for cognitive diversity in recruitment, looking for candidates with transferable skills and identifying core skills for success rather than relying solely on job descriptions, drawing from his experience at Meta measuring Time to Hire (TTH).

Arnautovic recommended proactive recruitment by creating candidate pools, regularly auditing job/skill requirements, defining HR and recruiting needs, and forecasting future needs. He stressed the need for cognitive diversity in hiring, creating structured interviewing processes, avoiding bias, and focusing on onboarding while assuming new hire needs. Arnautovic also emphasized the importance of HR as consultants with a seat at the decision-making table rather than just providing resumes to managers.





Senior Manager for Digital Marketing at LinkedIn, Hava Maloku, during her talk, emphasized the importance of employer branding and how it affects a company's reputation among potential job candidates and employers. She identified several factors that affect employer branding strategy, including a company's digital presence, culture, candidate experience, and employee experience. Maloku explained that employer branding manages and influences a company's reputation as an employer, which differs from traditional company branding focusing on sales and targeting clients. She also highlighted the role of employer branding in attracting and retaining talented professionals.

Hava Maloku emphasized the importance of creating an authentic employer brand that builds an emotional connection with potential candidates. She advised companies to base their employer brand on company culture and leverage employees as brand ambassadors. To do this, she recommended celebrating employee milestones, supporting employees during difficult times, and avoiding micromanagement.



During his presentation, **Arion Rizaj**, the CEO of KosovaJob and HumanPower, discussed recruitment's transformation in Kosovo, moving from print to digital, emphasizing technology and mobile design. He advised using digital software like an applicant tracking system instead of Excel for successful recruitment. Rizaj envisages the future of job announcements through KosovaJobs. The platform will filter and target job announcements, notify job seekers of relevant job ads from following companies, and facilitate interaction between job seekers and employers.

KosovaJob staff interviewed HR professionals from various companies in Kosovo during the summit. We have summarized their key points below.

Drenusha Imeri, an HR professional in the IT industry, expressed that recruitment and retention of talent is a challenging task due to fierce competition for highly skilled professionals. The focus should be on skills rather than education to find suitable candidates, with preference given to those who can perform the job well and clearly understand the work.

Albina Metaj Ajvazi, Head of the Human Resources and Training Department at ProCredit Bank, highlighted the importance of German values in their bank, such as open communication, appreciation of employees, and promotion based on merit and performance. As Kosovo is still in transition and the education system is underdeveloped, employers must prepare their employees through onboarding and managerial training and encourage self-improvement.

Donik Karaqi, Founder of Chameleon Print Kosova, emphasized the significance of professionalism and culture in the company's development, especially in a challenging environment where employees tend to leave the country for better opportunities. He said we need to provide the necessary training and skills development of employees for the job market.

Arben Abrashi, HR manager at Teleperformance, spoke about the challenges of managing many employees, stressing the importance of treating them equally and fairly and offering opportunities for growth and development. Educating employees on the company culture and valuing their opinions and ideas, regardless of rank, is essential.

Hana Gashi Salihu, Human Resources Director at FINCA, has been in HR for 16 years and noticed a significant shift in staff needs and wants. The pandemic has prompted a reevaluation of work-life balance, leading to a change in the perception of remote work and how to retain current employees. She emphasizes that HR should focus on understanding the potential of human capital and finding ways to enhance staff productivity through technology rather than simply managing personnel.

Arion Rizaj, the CEO of KosovaJob and Humanpower, emphasized HR's critical role in a company's development, recruitment, and employee well-being. He hopes the summit addressed Kosovo's HR industry issues and will remain a platform for constructive discussions and networking. Guided by the reverse engineering approach, Rizaj anticipates the conference will become an annual event.

Attendees used this networking opportunity to exchange experiences. Their participation demonstrated the private sector's willingness to learn and improve HR practices in Kosovo. The organizers aim for the summit to become an annual event to educate local companies on HR topics and work with youth.



SDC EYE Project is implemented by HELVETAS Kosovo and MDA.



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