



TALENT MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

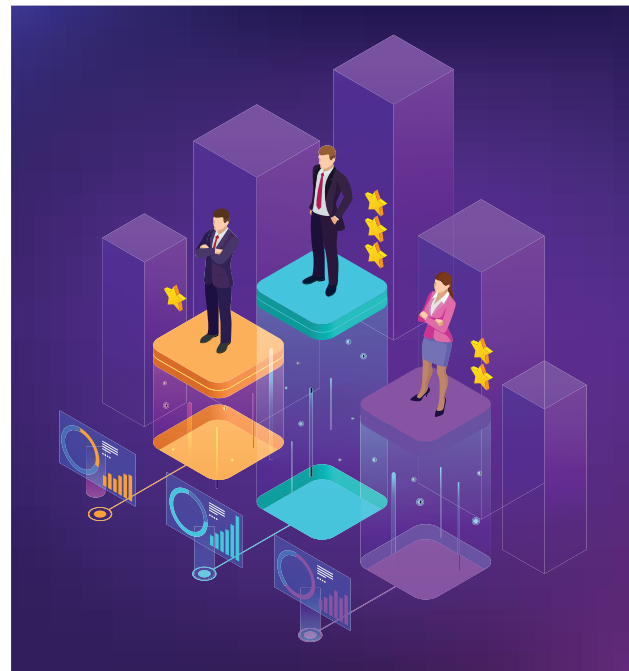
RETAINING TALENT IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY

Founded in 2005, Bizkaia Talent is a non-profit organisation that was established with a very clear objective. That objective was to help foster an environment where the very best talent in Biscay, its capital city Bilbao, and the wider Basque Country would find the necessary conditions to thrive and to showcase their unique talents and characteristics on a global stage. The organisation has made quite a name for itself and there have been some very significant milestones on the journey. In this article we look into the reasons why the company has made such an impact and at the values that have underpinned the success it has achieved.

From the outset, the team has worked closely with the Department for Economic Development of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, whose support through every step of the journey has been one of the foundations upon which their success has been built. Biscay, Bilbao and the Basque Country in general has always been well known for the unique character and tenacity of its people. Sadly few, but some of the region's talent has left the Basque Country over the years in the pursuit of a platform that could help them fulfill their ambitions and replacing that talent with people from outside the region has been difficult. One of the objectives for Bizkaia Talent was to help facilitate the implementation of the necessary conditions for attracting, connecting and retaining highly qualified people in the areas of knowledge and innovation.

This is something the company has had great success in achieving, as more of the Basque Country's brightest and best are now choosing to achieve their professional objectives within the region. It has therefore received some well deserved recognition, winning the impressive accolade of being the Best Talent Management Organisation in the prestigious 2020 Small Business Awards. In June 2020, Bizkaia Talent was also given the international Place Marketing Award from the A&NMT Foundation in the category of Economic Development for excellence in innovation, performance and outstanding achievements. It gives some tangible reward to the team at Bizkaia Talent for the incredible service they provide with such consistency and further cements their reputation as an organisation that is helping to change the economic landscape in the region.

We were lucky enough to have caught up with their MD, Ivan Jimenez who gave us a fascinating insight into the work that they do, their achievements so far and their aspirations for the future. "The awards confirm that we are on the right track in our commitment to the Be Basque integration concept, together with the strategy of combining



digitalisation and personal contact with the professionals, which is allowing us to become one of the world leaders in the regional management of talent and giving us the impetus to continue moving forward. I would also like to add that this would not be possible without the hard work of an outstanding team and the support of our partners, among them the Provincial Council of Biscay who, from the very beginning, encouraged this project."



Characterised by openness, collaboration and innovation, Bizkaia Talent are a company with a global outlook but a local heart. The organisation works for the local interest of the region, ensuring the local economy is stacked full of perfectly managed talent. Talent attraction is by its nature a deeply competitive industry and the team at Bizkaia Talent often find themselves having to compete with global business hubs like London and Paris for the best talent. In general terms, they operate in what is essentially a tier two area so competing with the larger cities can be a real challenge. They often use a more innovative approach by demonstrating something different to what a big city can offer. For many people, quality of life, combined with the right professional project and environment are more important factors. Rather than focus on trying to accomplish the impossible, they have focused their efforts elsewhere. Working primarily with SME's, they have created an innovative new concept called, 'Be Basque' which has had a real impact on their success and the prosperity of the region.

In many ways the Be Basque concept has been a game changer and a real catalyst for the achievements of Bizkaia Talent. Having come up with the notion of being able to 'Basqueise' any professional living and working anywhere, no matter where they are from, Bizkaia Talent has successfully been able to attract more talent to the region than ever before. It started with a combination of digital tools along with a series



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of presented events around the world, called Be Basque Talent Meetings and Conferences. These events has taken the organisation around the world in their search for the best talent and they are often accompanied by the Basque region's leading companies as they work collaboratively in pursuit of the same goal.



Currently, they have a network of more than 15,000 highly qualified professionals in more than 100 different countries, located on a Basque Talent Map. This has proven to be an invaluable resource for organisations in the Basque region to gain access to some of the very best people across a wide range of industries. The mix of the digital tools that Bizkaia Talent uses along with personal contact has been a big part of their success. Another major factor is the close relationship they have with the companies they work with. Close collaboration has been one of the key factors and Bizkaia Talent's database currently has five hundred companies on record.

The collaboration also extends to working with other organisations in the talent management field from across Europe and the world. This highly regarded standing within the industry means they were one of the founding members of the European Talent Mobility Forum along with Berlin Partner, Brainport Eindhoven, Copenhagen Capacity, Move to Gothenburg, Talent Scotland, Turku Business Region and Work in Estonia. Like Bizkaia Talent, these organisations are leaders in the field of talent attraction within their region and working closely with such institutions allows all involved to swap ideas and to embrace any emerging trends within the industry. The flexible approach of the team allows them to continually evolve and they are constantly striving to improve on the industry leading levels of service that they offer.

One of the things that the management team at Bizkaia Talent deserve immense credit for is their steadfast determination to stick to their beliefs and core values. Those values include things like openness, collaboration and innovation which have played a fundamental part in the success story. Openness comes in the form of the culture that they've managed to cultivate. Languages, different international cultures, points of view, and willingness to try new challenges all fall under the umbrella. We've already touched upon the collaboration aspect in some detail but along with innovation it is central to what Bizkaia Talent does. The team spends lots of time designing new projects and services, improving current ones and sharing information on projects they are already working on.

In terms of their aspirations for the future, the company remains as ambitious and as determined as ever to promote the Basque Region on a global stage and reverse the alarming trend of the area's brightest and best leaving the region. Working closely with public institutions and the local business community the organisation plans to lead a campaign to attract some of the world's best talent to the region so that Biscay, Bilbao and the Basque Country can achieve their potential. If the success of the last few years is any sort of barometer of what the future holds then we think there are many chapters yet to be written in the Bizkaia Talent story and they are a name you'll be hearing much more of in the years to come.

For more information, please visit www.bizkaiaalent.eus

