



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.

