

## How we work today reimagined with Bogdan Tindeche and Vladimir Markovic

### - Part 2

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SETH CLIFFORD (SC): Alright. Welcome back to the Tech Reimagined podcast. I have Bogdan Tindeche and Vladimir Markovic with me. In part one, we had a lively discussion about distributed ways of working and keeping teams and ourselves motivated and productive in these trying times. My name is Seth Clifford. I'm your host for today. I want to make things a little more personal with our guests right now, so I want to get to know them a little bit better and hear a little bit more about where they came from and how they arrived at the place that they're in right now and in the positions that they're in. So, let's take a little trip down memory lane with them and hear some of their background. So, Bogdan, we'll start with you. You studied computer science in Bucharest and then had a host of technical roles before moving into the role that you're in now as a delivery manager. So, tell us a little bit more about your journey and how you got to where you are.

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BOGDAN TINDECHE (BT): Yeah, I started in 2000 as a C++ developer and moved to various roles looking for database in Java. But yeah, were early days, especially in Romania where I work most of the time. I was what we are calling today a full stack developer. Everybody was doing this, so everybody was looking for end-to-end. Of course, we didn't have the complexity of the delivery environment that we have today—the high number of technologies and tools that could bring some complexity to the overall delivery, but also if you master them can increase and boost productivity. So definitely there were different challenges back then. I've moved through couple of companies, not many—from small teams to medium teams. Then I joined a startup that wanted to build a development team in Bucharest. That was the first time when I was able to be involved in building a team—that was my first experience in understanding and working with people to build a good team. So, through six, seven years, while we were working on that startup, we built a very strong team of 20 people in Bucharest and we were like a family. The level of trust and the level of commitment was really high, and we were spending time with our families. So, really was a good feeling on that.

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BT: Then Endava acquired that company. So, now we ended up a larger community, but we were quite well received and I'm still keeping in touch with the old guys from the previous company. The majority are still working in Endava after seven, eight years and everybody got quite a key role in Endava, like head of development, head of architecture, DU manager. So yeah, it was quite a good team. Once in Endava and looking for projects, I start to bring the same experience and building the same kind of teams with this family brand. Everybody knows each other and having that same goal. Five years back, I've started to look for an account. So basically, a client running the business in relationship with a customer. We started from scratch. Basically, myself and a UK based architect, Gareth. The last five years was a quite interesting journey. We started from zero and we are now about 115 people in this account. In this period of time we created a very strong team of delivery leads and, yeah, we are feeling like a family. The level of trust and openness is extraordinary with this team and I'm feeling like home with them.

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SC: [Laughter] That's excellent. Thank you. That was really good. Vlada, how about you? You were an important part of building up our Serbian business to work remotely with the US, so can you talk about your journey as well and where you started and how you manage that?

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VLADIMIR MARKOVIC (VM): So, I just realised while I was listening to Bogdan that we both had a very similar career path, and actually I just learned that we both started in 2000. And then a few weeks ago I realised that it's my 20th working anniversary.

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SC: Hey! Happy anniversary.

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VM: Yeah. Thanks, man. I started in March 2000, just a few days after I graduated and actually just before dot com bubble exploded. So, the first six to 10 months of my career were pretty hectic and excited. And during my career, I changed like three or four companies. And I spent most of my career in a local Serbian coal company called—it used to be called PSTech. And similarly, again, as with Bogdan, we got acquired by Endava, I believe five years ago, and I'm still here. During my career, I've been lucky to work with some of the best technology companies in the world and I learned a lot from working with those guys. And like 20 years ago, it was very exotic to work with someone from the other side of the world. Now, these days, that's a very common scenario. And when we started, we had one large and important US client. We didn't have any sales in the US and we purely relied on the recommendations and that's how we grow our business. And if you want to do that, you have to provide an exceptional service and an exceptional quality, which was, I believe, one of the main reasons why Endava acquired that company. So after that happened in 2015, the US technology group was made around our clients. And at the time, I was taking care about our delivery and our business for the few US clients. And a few years later, I'm now running the UST, and my job is pretty much the same as it used to be before. We are doing things obviously on a much larger scale, and the size of the business that I'm currently running is, I believe, twice of the size of the business that we had as a company when we got acquired.

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SC: OK. So, another question. Thinking back through your careers, back to the beginning, what things stand out to you the most about how your jobs or your work or just work in general has changed, you know? I mean, 20 years is a long time, especially in the technology space. I can think of a tonne of things myself, but Vlada, let's let's start with you. What do you think has changed the most in that time?

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VM: Yeah, I think that the basic principles that we are using for software development are still the same and software development is still really complex. Obviously, as you said, we have plenty of new technologies available. We have new programming languages. We have new methodologies. Like 20 years ago, pretty much everyone were using some kind of a waterfall methodology. We didn't have the smartphones. I mean, the world itself was very much different place 20 years ago, let alone how we are approaching software development. And if I would have to pick one thing, I think like at least in our daily work, moving to cloud was probably what stands out the most. I mean, that definitely changed the way how we work and how we are basically approaching delivering software.

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SC: Alright. And Bogdan, how about you? What do you think has changed the most?

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BT: Yeah, I am aligned with Vlada. It's complexity. As engineers, we were able to grab and understand everything around the product that we are developing, from infrastructure to UI to backend to database. Now the complexity's exponential. It's very hard for an engineer to get the whole view. Those guys are really, really rare and they invest huge amount of time to get there. So, uh, yeah. Complexity changed, definitely.

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SC: Yeah, I would have to agree with that. I think just software in general has gotten so much more complex because of all the different, you know, user end points and the systems and all—everything, everything has just, I mean, exponentially changed. And you're absolutely right, maintaining a single view of an application is—it's impossible. And if you find somebody who can do it, I mean, grab them and don't let them go, right?

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BT: Yeah, also, what changed? The expectations. Customer expectations changed a lot in the last 20 years. Look on an application 20 years back. Look on an application now. What design? Yes, the demand is totally different. Yeah.

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SC: Absolutely. I mean, user experience alone is one of those things that I think has evolved in very, very interesting ways. And like you said, the expectations of individual users have completely gone through the roof. You know, everything is expected to be beautiful and work great. And, you know, we try to do it as much as possible, but it is a challenge. Okay. I want to ask a similar but slightly different question. So that was more about what parts of work have changed specifically. But I also want to kind of ask how we view work and how we think about work and work/life balance and all that kind of stuff—that's also changed, right? So, you know, Bogdan talking about expectations, the expectations around what work means and how we work has changed a lot, too, in that time. So, starting with you, Bogdan, what are your thoughts on that? How do you feel that the expectations around work and how we do things are different?

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BT: [Laughter] That is a hard question. So, I think there are two answers. One, that it's personal in the way what changed for me in the last 20 years—related work. And I must say, I can say that nothing changed from this. It's the same dedication and focus on doing the right stuff. What changed since in the last 20 years, related job and how it is perceived? Yes, definitely it changed. And I think it changed in a good way. People expect to get more flexibility and in the same time give back more productivity. We expect from the people to communicate more than in the past, to work in distributed ways, to work on a level of assumptions that in the past we didn't have. So, definitely the requirements and what we ask from the people as level of complexity changed. The motivation also changed. What motivate people to succeed changed. As Vlada said, to work for high tech companies, that was really motivated. Now things changed. People are looking to a starter mindset. They want to have a better visibility of an ownership of a small family, small delivery. So, yeah, it's a—things changed from this perspective.

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SC: Alright. Vlada, how about you?

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VM: Yeah, I think that the technology definitely changed the way we all work. And like 20 years ago, the fully remote—the way that we approach work and the mobility that we have comparing to where we were is significantly improved. And I think all those tools and even processes—and by

the way, I'm not a process person either—but like for software, I think we made a lot of progress in terms of how we are approaching software development, how the engineering teams are collaborating with the business side. Like only up until seven or eight years ago, we had some processes for our technologies, but we had no processes for how we, if we want to make our business side more agile, how we want to do that? So overall, I think that we are much more efficient and much more productive and more mobile than comparing to those times from 10, 15, 20 years ago. And I guess the industry that we are all in at the same time is a very innovative industry, but we are all very early adapters of various tools that are created by the same people, which I believe is very helpful.

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SC: Yeah, that's very interesting. You know, in hearing you both talk about that, the thing that I think about is how developing software and how working on software has changed and how that, you know, the size and the scale and the complexity of it has driven entirely new ways of working—outside of, you know, which methodologies you subscribe to. But in, you know, Bogdan, to what you said, the expectations that individuals have, the flexibility that they need to be productive in the ways that we're asking them to be productive. And I struggle to see how some of the systems we have today could have been built with, you know, a top down command and control model, you know, 20 or more years ago. It just—I don't think it would have worked. So it's interesting to see how the output in the product has driven, you know, a cultural change in the way people think about doing things. And I think, you know, we're only going to see that trend line continue.

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BT: We see because we are heavily involved in replacing legacy systems. What we call legacy systems, system that was developed 20 years back. They got to the end of their lifecycle. Hard to maintain. Hard to change. They are not coping with the business changes. So now we are building new platforms. And I think you will have your answer to this question in 20 years' time when we will see if these platforms that we are building now are answering to the business needs in the future. And we will see if the current way of working is better than what we had 20 years back. So, just time will give us the right answer. Yeah.

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SC: Yeah. Very true. Very true. OK. So, one more question. Bogdan, you had said something earlier about motivation and thinking about, you know, your goals now, your job now, your role, the people that you help, you know, develop things. Thinking about now and thinking about in the future, what are your sources of motivation? What keeps you motivated in your job and your career path, and just, you know, life in general?

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BT: In job, my teams motivates me. So really, I keep saying this, but it took me quite some time to build this team. It took me five years and I really enjoy working with them. Each of these people are managing one, two, three teams. I'm working with them. We get to a level of understanding and to a culture that resonates that—I think this is my biggest achievement, basically. This motivates me, working with these guys. I think this will keep motivating me in future. Yeah. I'm looking forward to get other guys in this team, but I'm picky. So nobody is getting in. [Laughter] So, yeah. Eight, nine hours per, 10 hours per day, they are my family. So, I'm investing a lot of time in them and they are investing a lot of time in our relationship. So, no matter what is happening or the path I take in my career, we will take it together. So, that is the most important thing for me.

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SC: Alright. Excellent answer. Alright, well, thank you both for joining me. This has been a great conversation. I really enjoyed talking to you both. And you know, you shared great insight today into your careers and into where you see the relationship between technology and work going in the future. I think we covered a lot of interesting ground. So, thanks again. I appreciate it. One other thing I'd like to mention: We are actually offering an opportunity for companies who are finding themselves having some challenges navigating distributed software delivery right now in the current situation—an opportunity to have a one-to-one session with one of our delivery experts. Now, this is not a sales pitch. This is not any expectation or obligation on your part. This is simply a discussion to have a conversation with somebody who has gone through the gauntlet on this stuff and can give you some insight and some answers. So, things like how to keep your people who are usually onsite motivated in this new and unfamiliar world of remote working, keeping up levels of productivity and engagement with teams suddenly being distributed, tools and processes—if you have questions on them, we can certainly answer them. And then, how to resolve specific problems in getting distributed working processes up and running. So, if that's something you're interested in, if you've enjoyed these discussions and you want to have a conversation, please reach out. You can email us at [contactus@endava.com](mailto:contactus@endava.com) and we can set that up for you. And again: No obligation, not a sales call, just a conversation. So, if that's something you're interested in and you think will help, please reach out. And if you enjoyed this show, don't forget to like the podcast and please subscribe to stay up to date with all of our shows.