

CASE STUDY

Delivering Workforce Readiness for the Largest Sporting Event in the Country's History

A 3.5-year high-stakes project delivery case covering organization setup, workforce deployment, compliance, motivation, and ramp-down for one of the largest international sporting events by UEFA hosted under fixed deadlines, global media visibility, and government scrutiny.

CLIENT	SCALE	GEOGRAPHY	MY ROLE
Local Organizing Committee for a major UEFA international football championship	450+ roles 600+ volunteers 3.5-year delivery horizon Event revenue: \$1.7B+ USD	Ukraine across 4 host cities; co-hosted with Poland and UEFA headquarters in Switzerland	Head of HR, Local Organizing Committee, reporting to LOC leadership, and UEFA authorities

I was brought in to design and deliver the people side of a high-stakes international event with a non-negotiable deadline, the first in the country's history at this scale, visibility, and political significance. The scope covered organization setup, staffing, workforce deployment, motivation, compliance, event-time people operations, and full legal ramp-down.

This was not a transformation case. It was a high-visibility project delivery case where failure would have been public, political, operational, and reputational.

The project ran for 3.5 years, across four host cities, with millions of fans expected in the country and senior government leaders attending the final match. The organizing committee had to build a professional workforce almost from zero in a market with no prior experience of events at this scale. The deadline could not move, the operations had to run without scandal or labor-law exposure, and the team had to earn trust from international stakeholders who initially had low confidence in the local delivery environment.

The Project Delivery System

01 Organization Setup & Ramp-Down Architecture	02 People operations, Motivation, and Compliance	03 Intercultural Leadership & Stakeholder Trust
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Organization Setup & Ramp-Down Architecture

CHALLENGE

The local organizing committee had to be built for a one-time event with a fixed end date, a fixed public deadline, and no room for operational failure. More than 450 roles had to be designed, staffed, managed, and later closed in full compliance with labor legislation. Over 600 volunteers had to be additionally recruited, trained and coordinated during the event.

There was no existing template for an organization of this kind in the country. No domestic experts existed with experience in large-scale international event. Every hire, every role design decision, and every deployment plan had to be developed without precedent — against a deadline that could not move by a single day.

The challenge was not only to hire people, but to create a temporary organization strong enough to deliver a world-class event and disciplined enough to shut down cleanly after the tournament.

SOLUTION

- Designed the full organization setup and ramp-down model, mapping headcount requirements across all four host cities by phase, function, and timeline from initial build through event delivery to complete closure.
- Built role architecture, staffing logic, compensation ranges, and workforce deployment plans across four host cities.
- Created recruitment delivery plans that linked time-to-fill commitments to event milestones and operational readiness. Executed end-to-end recruitment for 450+ roles within budgeted compensation ranges, sourcing candidates with no local benchmark for the skills required.
- Structured the closure and ramp-down process to protect compliance, budget discipline, employee relations, and audit readiness.

BUSINESS RESULT

100% time-to-fill commitments met across 450+ roles	100% roles filled within budgeted compensation ranges	600+ volunteers recruited, trained, and deployed	1% employee turnover across 3.5 years
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Every role was filled on time and within budget across four cities, under a fixed deadline, with no domestic talent pool to draw from. This outcome required building sourcing capability and compensation benchmarks from scratch.

Employee turnover of 1% over 3.5 years in a temporary project organization (where attrition is typically high and continuity is chronically at risk) reflects both the quality of the hiring decisions and the effectiveness of the motivation and retention design.

The 600+ volunteer operation was recruited, trained, and deployed entirely in-house, adding a second major workforce track that ran in parallel with the permanent organization.

OUTCOME

A workforce infrastructure was built where none had existed, against conditions that had no precedent in the country. The organization scaled from zero to full operational strength across four cities, delivered the event without a single staffing failure, and was then closed completely with no legal, financial, or operational residue.

People Operations, Motivation & Compliance

CHALLENGE

Running a temporary organization across four cities under full government scrutiny, with every state labor authority watching, left no margin for process error, compliance gaps, or documentation failures. A single fine or formal comment from a labor auditor would have been a public incident under global media visibility.

During the three event weeks, workforce failure would have had immediate operational consequences. Staff had to show up, perform under pressure, work across cities, and coordinate with multicultural teams while millions of fans, media, sponsors, football authorities, and government stakeholders were watching.

The workforce was motivated primarily by the unique nature of the project rather than financial incentives alone. Sustaining engagement, performance, and commitment across 3.5 years (through the build phase, the high-pressure event weeks, and the ramp-down) required motivation design that went well beyond compensation.

SOLUTION

- Designed and executed monetary and non-monetary motivation programs calibrated to the different workforce populations, sustaining commitment across all phases of the project.
- Designed a performance-linked bonus structure for the core project team, with achievement tied directly to project milestones and individual contribution.
- Ensured full compliance with Ukrainian labor legislation across the entire organizational lifecycle: from initial contracts through event operations to complete organization closure.
- Supported project leads in managing all people operations during the three event weeks: 100% staff show-up, real-time workforce management, and seamless operational continuity under peak pressure.
- Executed full organization closure with zero labor law violations, zero fines, and zero auditor comments, achieving a clean legal close on a complex, multi-year, multi-city operation.

BUSINESS RESULT

100% staff show-up during all 3 event weeks	100% core team received full project bonus; several above 100% for outstanding performance	0 labor law violations, fines, or auditor comments during full organization closure	0 operational incidents attributable to people or workforce management
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Workforce readiness translated directly into event-time continuity: 100% staff show-up during all three event weeks under conditions of maximum pressure and global visibility. Not a single absence compromised event delivery.

The core project team received 100% of the total project bonus; several individuals received above 100% for outstanding performance, which was notably better compared to the co-hosting county results. The difference reflected both the quality of performance and the effectiveness of the motivation framework that shaped it.

Organization closure was completed with zero labor law violations, zero fines, and zero auditor comments: a full clean close on a complex, years-long, multi-city operation reviewed by every state labor authority in the country.

OUTCOME

A temporary organization, inherently fragile, operating under political and media scrutiny, staffed with people from multiple nationalities and no common professional culture, delivered three weeks of flawless event operations and then closed without a single compliance incident - the workforce became a reliable delivery asset rather than an operational vulnerability.

That outcome required sustained people leadership across every phase of the project.

Intercultural Leadership & Stakeholder Trust

CHALLENGE

The workforce brought together multiple nationalities with fundamentally different professional cultures, expectations, and working styles - Swiss and Western European UEFA officials, Polish co-host counterparts, Ukrainian government representatives, and local business leaders. These groups had different standards for what professional looked like, different assumptions about authority and decision-making, and, in some cases, low initial expectations of the Ukrainian operation.

Managing stakeholder alignment across UEFA headquarters, the Ukrainian government, labor authorities, LOC leadership, and international staff simultaneously, in real time, throughout a 3.5-year project, was itself a full-time leadership challenge, entirely separate from the operational workforce work.

SOLUTION

- Built a cultural diversity approach that helped local and international teams work together across different business norms and communication styles.
- Built and sustained the employer brand for the LOC organization, managing the external and internal perception of the Ukrainian operation against initial low expectations from international partners.
- Maintained continuous alignment with organizing committee leadership, international stakeholders, government bodies, and labor authorities.
- Delivered all people operations to a standard that shifted the perception of the Ukrainian team from concern to confidence at UEFA headquarters, evidenced through direct recognition from UEFA senior management.

BUSINESS RESULT

<p>Over 15 nationalities working in a unified LOC workforce</p>	<p>Exceeded Ukrainian LOC recognized by UEFA HQ as outperforming co-host country benchmark</p>	<p>100% employer brand and compliance standards maintained under full government and media visibility</p>	<p>3.5 years sustained stakeholder trust with UEFA, government, and labor authorities</p>
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What began with low expectations and openly expressed concern about Ukraine's readiness ended with direct recognition from UEFA senior management. The local HR team became a trusted delivery partner for international headquarters, reversing early concerns about the local operating environment and building confidence in the Ukrainian team's professional capability.

A workforce of multiple nationalities, with significant cultural distance between groups, operated as a coherent organization through three years of build and three weeks of peak event pressure, without a single intercultural incident that disrupted operations.

OUTCOME

The narrative about the Ukrainian operation reversed completely. The project moved from low external confidence and high perceived local risk to trust, partnership, and clean compliance. The people operation became one of the reasons international stakeholders could rely on the Ukrainian organizing team during a globally visible event.

What This Work Created

This work created the people delivery architecture for a fixed-deadline, globally visible event where the organization had to be built, operated, and closed without failure. Three interdependent streams (workforce architecture, people operations and compliance, and intercultural leadership) combined to deliver a flawless people operation for the largest and most scrutinized event in the country's history. Every role was filled on time, every person showed up, and every compliance obligation was met. The result was a stable, fully staffed, legally clean, internationally trusted operation that supported the successful hosting of the championship.

Business Impact

The integrated business effect of the project delivery streams

- **100% time-to-fill across 450+ unique roles**, within budgeted compensation range.
- **1% turnover across 3.5 years** in a temporary project organization.
- **100% staff show-up during event weeks**; 600+ volunteers deployed without incident;
- **100% project bonus delivered**; multiple individuals above 100%.
- **100% labor legislation compliance achieved**, with zero fines and zero labor governance auditor comments during full organization closure.
- **International stakeholder confidence** in the Ukrainian LOC people operation strengthened materially during the project.

OUTCOME

A first-of-its-kind local organizing structure moved from high uncertainty and low external confidence to reliable project delivery under international scrutiny. The people operation became a controlled delivery system: roles were staffed on time, teams stayed stable, the workforce showed up when it mattered, compliance held through closure, and international stakeholders gained confidence in the Ukrainian team's professionalism. In a project where the deadline could not move and mistakes would have been visible, the people side of delivery held.