



INTERVIEW

INTENTIONS ARE NO LONGER ENOUGH, COMPANIES HAVE TO PROVE A POSITIVE IMPACT WITHIN THE COMMUNITIES

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1. Garanti BBVA is doing business in Romania for more than 20 years. How would you characterize the company's experience in Romania?

Garanti BBVA is active for more than two decades on the Romanian market. We focused from the start on a healthy growth and customer-centered approach. We put great emphasis on the way we connect with our clients and we encourage all our team members to embrace a morality of care, making sure that our customers' needs come first. In this regard, we focus on bringing the best financial solutions on the market. Balance is, at the same time, a keyword for us. We aim to keep a level-headed portfolio and have a sustainable development path.

At the same time, we permanently aim to diversify our products and services for all market segments, in line with our clients' changing and evolving needs and to always be by their side, as a trustworthy financial partner. As a universal bank and financial integrated Group, our strategic focus is on sustainable

growth and development, maximizing customer satisfaction and the digital upgrading of our services.

2. What do you think are the most important challenges for banking in Romania, in 2020?

In Romania, I would say banking faces challenges similar to the ones in other countries. There are some technological, legislative and economic challenges, and, therefore, the banking industry needs a strategy that is prudent and uses small, calculated steps.

Above all, 2020 was an unpredictable year and the biggest challenges are related to the coronavirus pandemic. This pandemic is maybe the most serious challenge to the world's economy in nearly a century. Its impact will likely take some time to overcome, as almost all businesses are struggling to find a path forward, banks included. The financial sector is, however, in a unique position to play a pivotal role in supporting the communities and customers.

Many people and many companies are still affected by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and, in the

first instance, we need to make sure that people know that our products are specially designed to give them protection in this time of uncertainty. For example, when getting a personal needs loan, our clients benefit free of charge from the Credit Reimbursement Protection Insurance, which covers, among other things, involuntary job loss. I want to stress that ensuring easy access to finance is the way we support efforts to recover our economy and society.

Secondly, during this period, we focus on developing a prudent lending strategy and we are very careful to whom we grant loans, because we do not want our clients to end up in the situation of not being able to pay their monthly installments. We have highly centralized operations, which bring efficient processes and the best customer experience. We are constantly increasing the operational efficiency of the bank and we have been focused on improving the asset quality of the bank.

3. Companies have great responsibilities to communities and society. How do you see these new responsibilities for Garanti?

In Garanti BBVA, we are aware that we have these responsibilities. Regarding the customers, we always make sure that the relationship we create with them is a long-term one, but we do not speculate on their desire or need to take loans.

In our bank, we also believe it is important to get involved in actions that have a positive effect on the economic, social, and cultural environment in Romania. Therefore, we support projects that encourage the development of the Romanian entrepreneurship, environmental issues, as well as other initiatives impacting the community. The fact that we have always worked together, as one team, for a common goal is what made us a reliable financial group and a valued, trustworthy partner for our clients.

Over the years, Garanti BBVA has also developed a multidirectional social responsibility strategy, through numerous initiatives, aiming to bring a contribution to the well-being of the society. The main directions the bank has invested in are the following: protecting natural habitats, supporting the development of the local businesses, and facilitating access to financial education tools. All these projects have been developed and sustained by the bank on the long-term.

The reality is that sustainability has become a matter of widespread public interest for some time now. Young people, our future customers, especially, have higher expectations from the business environment

to act ethically and to take on a broader role to serve society and help shape a cleaner and a more sustainable and prosperous future. Just stating a commitment to environmental or societal causes will not do anymore. We have entered an era where good intentions are no longer enough. Companies are called to action to prove that they can have a positive impact on the communities in which they operate.

4. Which would be the project you would like everyone to know about?

The first that comes to my mind is, for example, our long-term collaboration with Worldwide Fund for Nature Organization (WWF Romania), which dates back to 2010, when we launched WWF Bonus Card, the first eco affinity card in Romania. Through WWF Bonus Card, Garanti BBVA redirects 0.3% of the total value of transactions made by cardholders to WWF Romania, to support the development and implementation of its local environmental projects. Thus, employees and customers have the opportunity to get involved in protecting natural habitats.

Since 2010, RON 1.68 million have been directed by Garanti BBVA to WWF, for funding its programs. Garanti BBVA has also contributed to the increase of WWF visibility by promoting its causes via social media. WWF Bonus Card is very popular among the bank's clients, who find the eco-affinity card useful due to its benefits and importance for preserving the environment. This is proof that Garanti BBVA is not just talking about environmental protection, but the bank is also taking action. The funds directed to WWF are making a difference for endangered species, virgin forests and local communities.

5. What are your plans for the near future?

Although there is still much uncertainty regarding the economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic, our customers are still making plans and we must support them. According to an IRES survey released recently, one out of ten Romanians intends to apply for a loan in the next year. Most of them are interested in accessing a consumer credit or a mortgage and we are ready to assist them in this journey, as a trustworthy financial partner.

Therefore, we can help our clients make plans and offer them the financial support they need to overcome these challenging times. We will always be there for our clients and we will offer them transparent solutions, exceptional customer service, and we will always be next to them, in order to choose the most suitable offer.