



STANTONCHASE  
INTERNATIONAL

**Women in Management,  
Challenges to a  
Successful Career 2009**

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## **Women in Management, Challenges to a Successful Career**

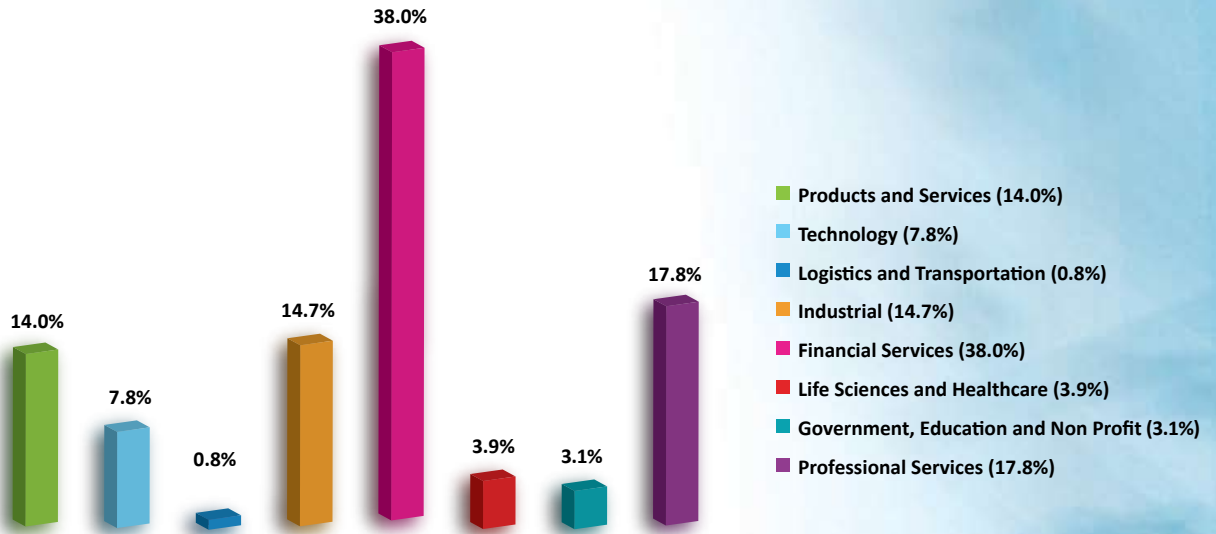
Why is it that a great majority of managerial positions in companies all around the world are held by men? Is it harder for a woman to fulfill her career goals? Does she make decisions in a different way or is she completely equal and is faced by the same challenges, but is by nature less ambitious on the career front than men? Are women here, and to what extent, hindered by the traditional views of their role in society and does that have an effect on their careers?

In search of the answers to these and some other questions, and in the desire to review what women in managerial positions in Serbia wish to say about their own career challenges, we asked 300 women managers what they think and how they feel. We hope that this analysis will help us determine what is it that motivates a woman and what worries her? As well as which factors, in this analysis, will help in achieving equality in the professional environment.

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## In which industry do you work?

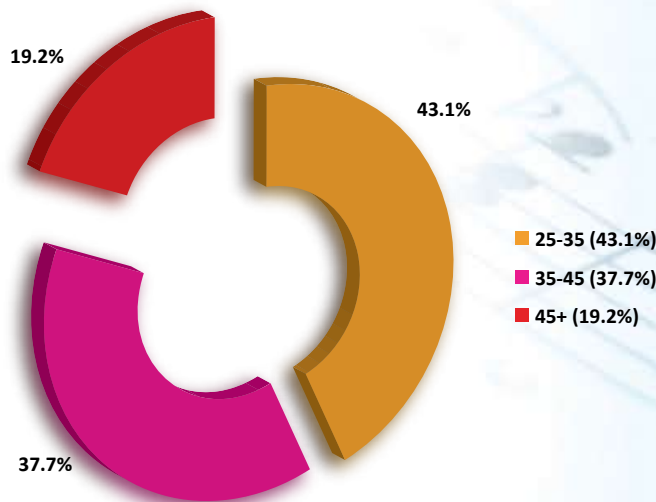
The financial sector is most widespread, followed by the sector for professional services, industrial sector and the sector for consumer products.



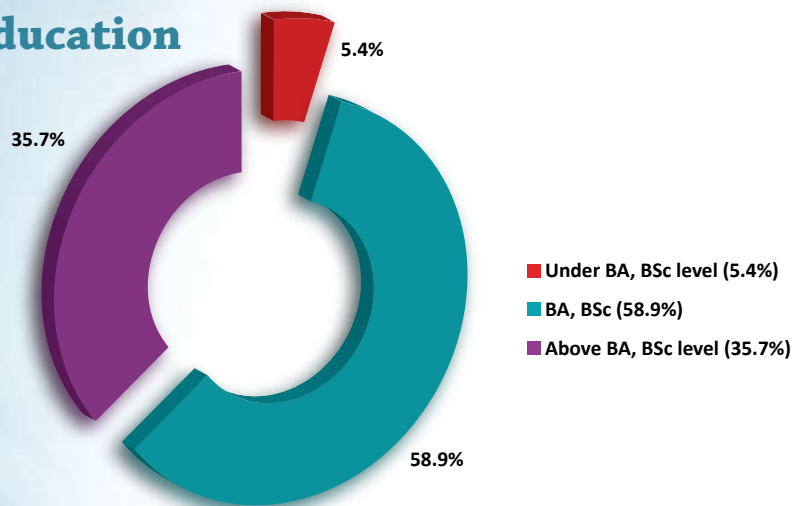
## Demographic Structure

A majority of women in managerial positions hold a university degree and are in the most productive time of their life (30 – 45 years of age). Usually they have held a managerial position for over 5 years, are ready to change their job if this will bring them a promotion and new challenges, and they have proved themselves professionally in a number of different companies. Besides holding a highly responsible position, a good deal of female managers have also taken on roles in business associations, on the Board of Directors, etc.

### Age



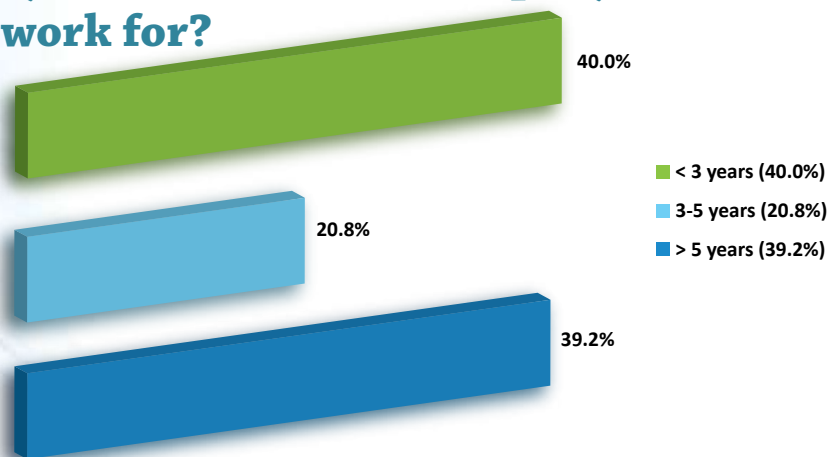
## Level of Education



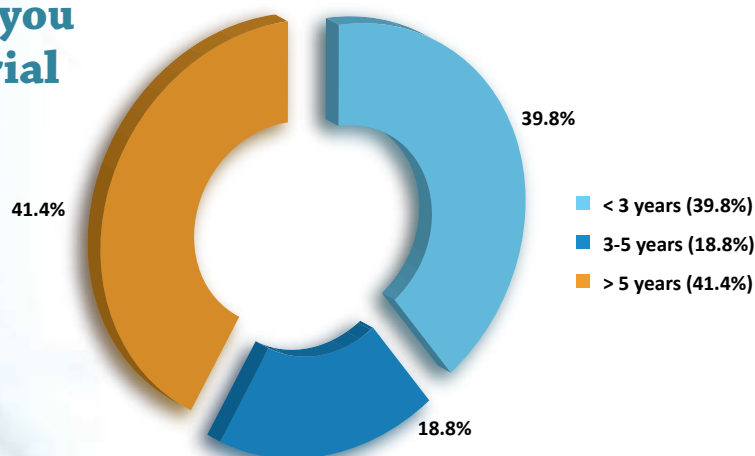
## Career Structure

The majority of our participants have held a managerial position for five and more years. In the company that they currently work for, they have spent less than three years. Therefore, in the desire to develop and advance in their careers women are less conservative than before, and are ready to face new challenges and change their jobs.

## How long have you been with the company you currently work for?



## How long have you held a managerial position?

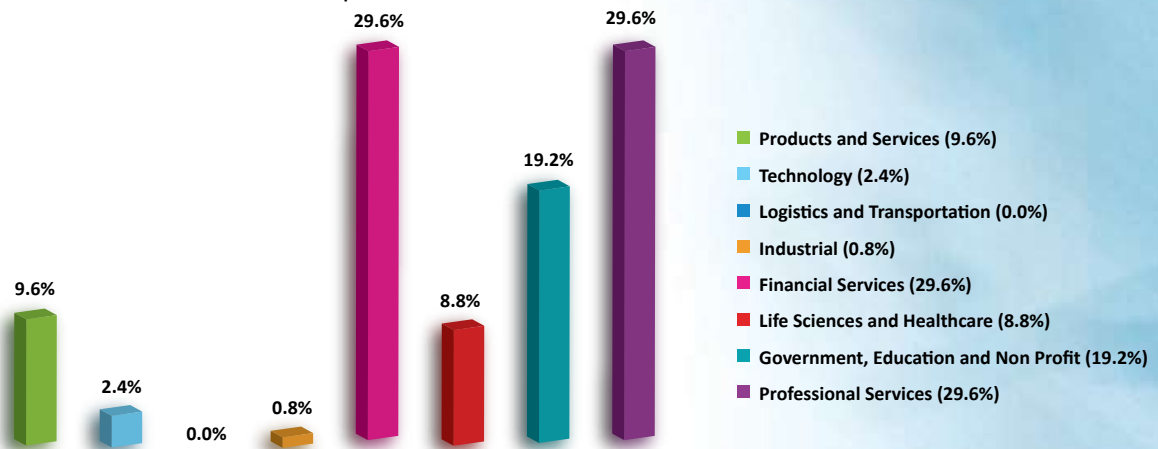


From the previous answers we can conclude that women in our country advance to their first managerial position at least 7-8 years after they have started their first job, that is, in their early thirties.

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## In your opinion, which sector provides the best possibilities for a woman to develop her career?

Our participants consider the professional services sector and financial sector the most challenging environments for the development of their career.



## Limitations for Career Advancement

### Do you think that the decision to start a family can be a limiting factor for the development of a career?

For a certain number of questions we asked the participants to give a more detailed answer, if they wanted to, which resulted in number of strong comments. Regardless of the different family status and age, female managers were unanimous in their view that the natural decision to start a family is the basic limiting factor, primarily due to pregnancy leave and the later care of the young offspring. If a woman before she brings this decision has advanced to a managerial position, the nature of her job does not allow her to be absent for a longer period, as when she returns this can result in the loss of her position. On the other hand, if she is still advancing in her career, absence from work will significantly slow down her professional development and advancement.

A worrying number of comments have to do with the reduced possibility of hiring women who have not yet made the decision to form a family and the open questioning of employers about their personal plans. Here is what they say:

„Sometimes that is solely a personal decision – you don't accept the challenges that may limit you in forming a family. “

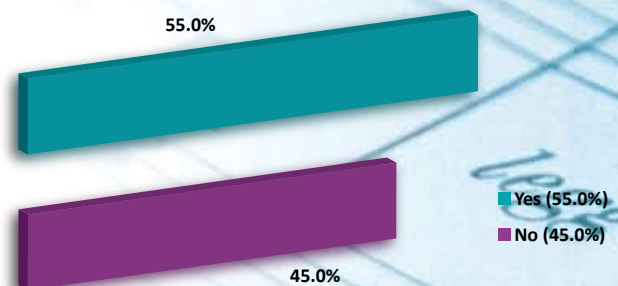
„For younger women this means a problem in taking care of the children, and this is not well organised. “

„If as a young adult you find yourself in the position to choose between a career and a family, I think this is a huge challenge for an ambitious, young person to miss out on, of course with the detriment to the family. Some decisions need to be brought only when you have formed a family, and this is hard to synchronize.“

„At every interview, women are asked about their marital and family status, while this is not the case with men.“

„This issues has not affected me much, as I began forming a family 18 years ago, but of course that through my younger female colleagues I can see that it is an issues.“

„It all depends on the views of the employer and the woman employed. “



## Are there any limitations for a professional advancement in Serbia?

As a fundamental limitation women state above all the decision to begin a family, and then gender and social biases. Generally they regard these biases to stem from the habits and norms of the traditional Serbian society that is slow in accepting change.

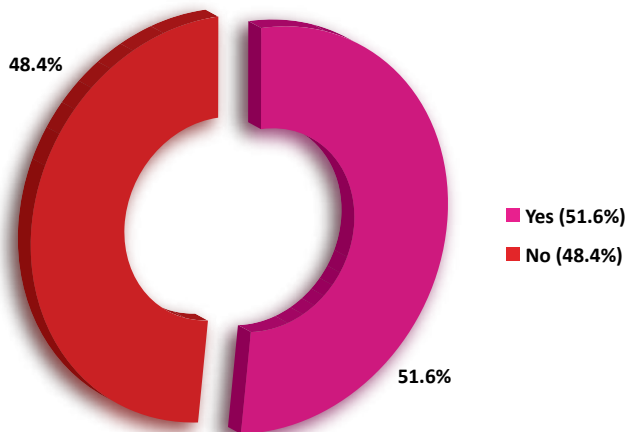
Here is what we've been told:

„The unemployment rate – the discrepancy between supply and demand of jobs. “

„Many companies, local and international, still prefer to have foreign staff to local in top positions, which I consider a frustrating factor for significant advancement.”

„There are many limitations in Serbia, the most visible are when the people in managerial positions don't have the ability to recognize existing potential, as well as a limiting possibility for professional development through practice.”

“It seems to me that the average company with Serbian capital is very open towards having women in leadership positions.”

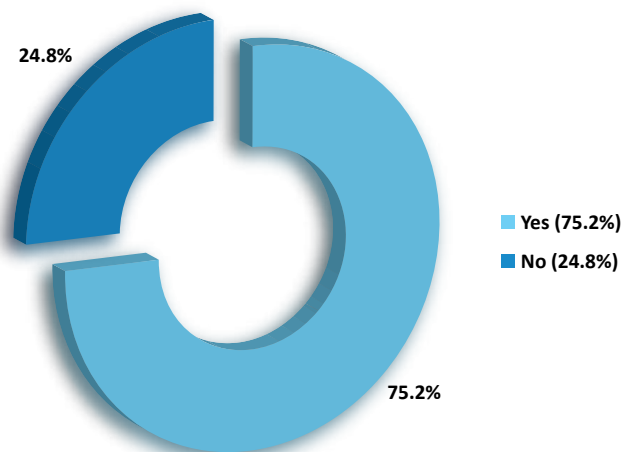


## Do you think that it is harder for women than for men to build a career?

Three quarters of participants believe that it is harder for women to build their career in the way they want to.

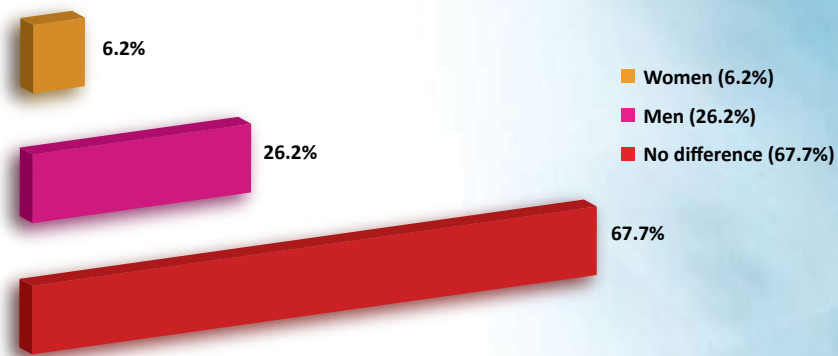
„Women are considered hardworking and useful associates, but it is quite rare to consider them (as candidates) for higher positions. “

„Many gender stereotypes exist when determining a successful career (men are suitable for some jobs, women are suitable for others...) and there is a considerable presence of patriarchal ways of thinking and behaving in the society itself.”



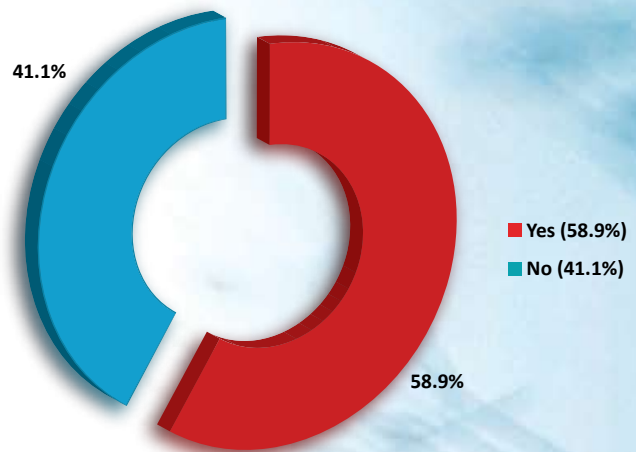
## Is it easier for you to cooperate with men or women?

Even though they believe that gender biases are present, it is rarely demonstrated publically in everyday business, thus the majority of women does not feel a difference in cooperation and communication.



## Do you think you are rewarded equally as men on similar positions?

Our women in managerial positions believe that women are rewarded equally as men on the same position.



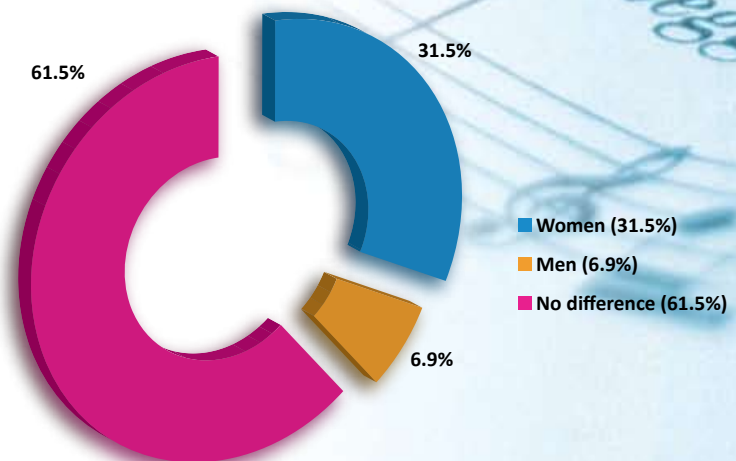
## Who do you think is more efficient in decision making, men or women?

Making quality business decisions, according to our participants, is not connected to gender but to the individual's character traits. Certainly, knowledge and experience are the crucial factors in effective decision making.

„Women are forced to make a number of decisions, in their professional and private lives. Men, on the other hand, are more ready to take risks.“

„It depends on the decisions, men are faster, women are more analytical, on average there is no difference. “

„It solely depends on personal competences.“



## Possibilities

The biggest percentage of women are satisfied with their current status in the companies they work in, but it seems that according to them in order to advance professionally to the level of top management positions it is crucial to belong to a certain society or political circles. They are open to consider changing their environment in order to further advance in their careers, they think that quality work is more recognized and rewarded abroad. Most would not have the courage to make such a move due to family obligations.

### Would you be ready to work abroad?

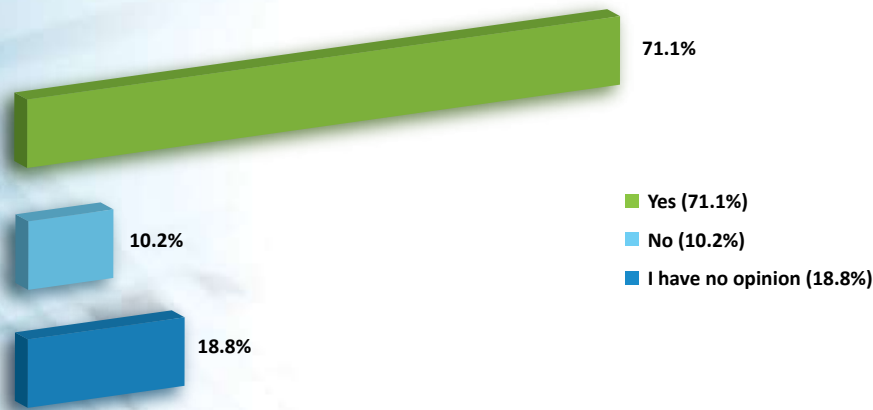
„I want to live and work in my own country.”

„Due to family commitments I am not ready to work abroad.”

„Having in mind the quality of my job, level of responsibility that I hold, and the general fulfilment with my private life, I do not consider changing anything at the moment.”

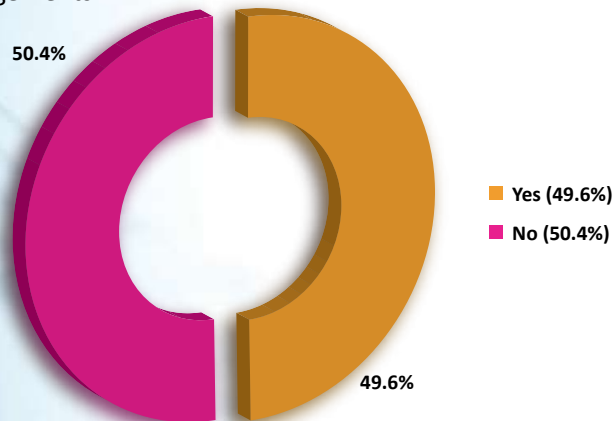
„Maybe. My decision would depend on a specific offer.”

„I work in an international organization and this possibility is always open.”



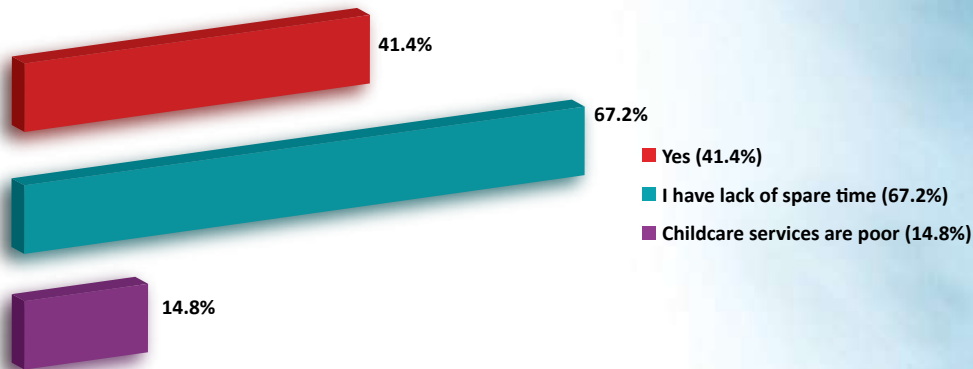
### Are you a member of a Business Association, Board of Directors, or do you hold more than one managerial positions?

Regardless of the amount of responsibilities, lack of free time and the challenges of maintaining a balance between professional and private responsibilities, women readily accept additional business engagements.



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## Do you think you have been able to balance your career with the obligations in your private life?



„Bad, overpriced and unreliable services. Old fashioned and inflexible working hours of public institutions for childcare, and expensive and/or unlicensed private services. Food services are underdeveloped and inadequate. (Half) illegal sectors for household services. “

„More effort is put into balancing your private and professional life, because the expectations of women within the family in our society are greater than in some other, more developed societies.”

## Conclusion

According to the opinions of our female managers the basic limiting factor for developing a career is the decision to start a family, i.e. family obligations that require additional time and energy that women need to balance together with their work obligations on a daily basis.

A large number of women think that they are less competitive than men of the same profession and level of education. They agree that for them to be able to properly fulfil their work obligations, to regularly professionally develop and take care of the family, they need more free time. They also highlight the inadequacy of childcare services (working hours of pre-schools and schools, transport services to afterschool activities etc.).

The other obstacle is the traditional Serbian society which has not fully accepted the role of a woman as a professional. Gender and age biases are readily present in the society and this is also a hindering factor for career development. On the other hand, if professional advancement is within a specialist area, they think that the educational system does not follow the changes in business.

## About Stanton Chase

Stanton Chase International is an internationally specialized *executive search* company, which by using the expertise of its consultants, provides its clients with the best services of finding and assessing the top managerial staff. What makes us different is our knowledge of international, regional and local movements on the workforce market, as well as the accessibility to candidates from all over the world. Stanton Chase International is a company which consists of 67 offices in 41 countries around the world. According to the most recent research in this industry, the company is ranked one of the top 10 leading international *executive search* consulting firms in terms of size, speed of development and reputation. Among its clients the company is especially valued for its exceptional quality of business, above all for its successful work assessment in the complicated process of finding and choosing top management staff.

**Stanton Chase Beograd** office was founded in 2002 and provides a full spectre of services in the area of human resources (HR) based on the multifaceted approach to the human resource needs of our clients. Such a multifaceted approach includes not only different services, but above all our ability to adapt to the needs of the client. Our complete activity during the selection of candidates or consulting is adapted to the specific needs of every client and is based on the type of industry that the client belongs to as well as their characteristic needs.

### **Today Stanton Chase Beograd is placed among the leading executive search companies in Serbia.**

**Our team** constitutes of consultants and researchers specialized for certain branches of industry. We particularly want to emphasise that our consultants have acquired their knowledge, skills and experience in leadership positions in the industries that they are specialized in.

#### **Our specialized fields**

We offer industry specializations in six dynamic fields:

- Consumer Products and Services
- Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare Industry
- Financial Services
- Information technology
- Logistics and transport

Using the latest methodology for the assessment of competences and personality profiles (online psychometric testing and strategic exercises in the form of business simulations) we provide a successful and fast assessment of the best staff relevant for project work.

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Bulevar oslobođenja 75, 11000 Beograd  
+381 11 3973676  
[www.stantonchase.com](http://www.stantonchase.com)

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