

SWAN

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Roman Vavřík studied Strategic Management at Comenius University in Bratislava and Business at Webster University in Vienna. He began his career in 2007 as a Strategy Consultant at Slovak Telekom, later leading the Corporate Strategy team and advising top management on major projects, including acquisitions. In 2012, he became Head of B2B Marketing, overseeing corporate customer activities. Two years later, he was appointed Marketing and Sales Director at Digi Slovakia, where he shaped and executed commercial strategy for residential TV and internet services. At SWAN, he first served as Board Advisor before being named Chief Executive Officer in February 2019. Under his leadership, SWAN continues to grow as a leading Slovak-owned telecommunications provider.

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IN THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE, WHAT SHOULD SLOVAKIA FOCUS ON TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE WITHIN THE EU AND GLOBALLY?

Today, Slovakia should primarily invest in three areas: digital infrastructure, energy stability, and the quality of human capital. If we want to remain competitive within the EU and globally, it is not enough to be cheaper. We must be faster, more reliable, and technologically prepared. In practice, this means supporting networks, data centers, cloud solutions, cybersecurity, and creating an environment where companies can innovate without unnecessary delays. The economy of the future will be built on data, connectivity, and the ability to turn technology into concrete, value-added services.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IS RESHAPING LABOR MARKETS ACROSS EUROPE. HOW SHOULD SLOVAKIA RESPOND TO AN AGING POPULATION, TALENT SHORTAGES, AND WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION?

Demographic change is a hard reality, not a topic for conference presentations. Slovakia must respond through a combination of higher productivity, reskilling, and smarter integration of people across generations. Where the number of people is not increasing, efficiency must. This means more automation, AI tools, more flexible work models, and an environment where both graduates and experienced senior professionals have a place. It is also crucial that companies can attract and retain talent more effectively, because in a competitive environment, it is no longer just about salary, but also about purpose, culture, and growth opportunities.

IF YOU COULD DEFINE ONE BOLD REFORM OR STRATEGIC SHIFT THAT WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN SLOVAKIA, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

If I had to name one bold reform, it would be a radical improvement in the speed of the state. Slovakia does not need more strategies sitting in drawers, but faster permitting processes, a more predictable regulatory environment, and less administrative friction. In business, it is often not just the quality of the idea that matters, but how quickly you can bring it to market. Countries that can make decisions quickly and consistently will win. The others will watch investments and talent move elsewhere. This principle applies equally to telecommunications, IT, and the overall business environment.

WHAT ACHIEVEMENT FROM 2025 ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF, AND WHY?

That we confirmed our ability to be not only a price challenger, but also an innovator. 4ka has long been reshaping the market's price levels while also introducing new types of services, from shared unlimited plans to digital solutions built on AI. At the same time, SWAN continues to develop strong B2B capabilities in data centers, cloud, and security. What matters is that we are not building these as marketing labels, but as real services that simplify life for people and businesses.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST STRATEGIC CHALLENGE YOUR COMPANY IS CURRENTLY FACING?

The biggest strategic challenge we are addressing today is growth without losing flexibility. We operate in a market where we compete with strong multinational players with greater capital, while also needing to make the right decisions in infrastructure, security, and new digital services. A major topic is how to further scale our network independence and how to expand our portfolio toward higher value-added areas such as cybersecurity and telemedicine.

HOW DO YOU FOSTER INNOVATION WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION—THROUGH TECHNOLOGY, PEOPLE, OR BUSINESS MODELS?

Innovation in our company does not happen by writing it into a presentation once a year. It is created through the combination of technology, people, and business discipline. We are used to looking for models that make economic sense while also improving the customer experience. In the consumer segment, this means simpler and smarter digital interactions; in the business segment, it is about cloud, managed networks, and security solutions. For us, innovation is not an end in itself; it must simplify a service, accelerate a process, or reduce costs.

HOW IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CHANGING YOUR INDUSTRY, AND HOW ARE YOU RESPONDING?

AI and digital transformation are already fundamentally changing the telecommunications sector. In customer service, they speed up request handling; in internal operations, they make working with documents, data, and development more efficient. We approach this pragmatically: we do not implement AI because it is a buzzword, but where it has measurable impact. Examples include the new generation of the My 4ka app with the AI assistant Hugo, as well as the use of AI in document management and development, where it significantly increases efficiency.