



POWERED BY IN-HOUSE EDUCATION

Clarios Slovakia, a local branch of one of the biggest producers of energy solutions, functions as a global business center, employing over 200 team members that are bound to serve as reliable business partners to dozens of plants across four continents. The company occupies two floors of Panorama Business Center near Eurovea, a commercial neighborhood that radiates with the dynamism of new high-rise buildings springing up all around.

A subtle murmur of the construction and towering cranes are obscuring panoramic views of the city that are available from the eighth floor. It's not intentional but it serves as a good background to all that is happening inside the office space, now, after long months of pandemics, again teeming with life and with workers buzzing around.

"We are powering batteries and energy solutions, our batteries are in every third car that passes that busy road down there," Gustafik points out of a window after proudly explaining all the brands of car batteries that are attached to the wall of honor at the entrance of Clarios.

"We are in a good neighborhood, you can spot growth and ambition here. We started recently, after splitting from Johnson Controls in May 2019. Our first goal, after acquiring this office space, was to assemble

a professional team worthy of global financial acumen. We soon realized that to rely on university education provided by local universities would result in serious underperformance," pointed out Gustafik.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that 40 percent of Clarios' workforce comes from a different background than accounting. Law, technical and humanity degrees are also represented. The local management team decided to fill the knowledge gap with a customized educational platform. Clarios Finance Academy is driven and running exclusively internally. The whole content, trainers, and exams are done by internal professionals in a particular area, mostly senior team members and management.

"Our Finance academy is based on specific finance areas that are connected to our internal regulations and mirror our business model. We are using a lot of examples from day-to-day work. The content is great for including fresh school graduates and we perceive it as a form of dual education we have in Slovakia. More than 70% of the syllabus is based on real-life examples. In this way we are able to prepare whole teams for situations that we have already experienced in the past," concluded Gustafik.



FILIP DURAJ
Clarios Slovakia

First trainee, and later trainer in the Clarios Finance Academy, the company's own state-of-art program to teach global financial essentials, explains what helps his teammates in Bratislava deliver global results.

Clarios Finance Academy (CFA) doesn't sound like another random company training. What makes it so special?

It starts with what we do in Clarios. We manufacture smart energy solutions around the globe but the site in Bratislava is literally a backbone in finance processes and accounting. Theoretical knowledge from my school or previous engagements is not sufficient to embrace the latitude and longitude of all finance operations across all departments on various continents. Global financial roles are not taught in schools but can be explained by experienced colleagues.

"Generally you have two options. You can either hire someone who is already skilled and ready or you can hire someone who is showing good promise and you equip him with all skills he needs to be a good business partner. I bet no one is getting very far with the first option," says Michal Gustafik, Finance Transformation Senior Manager of Clarios Slovakia.

What did you learn through CFA that was not available during your university studies?

University was great for providing theoretical fundamentals, but my first job after graduation was a frontal crash with reality. In Clarios Slovakia even the most junior roles are having an impact on the company's financials you need to be not only professional but self-confident in what you do in daily operations. Our tailor-made CFA comes to accelerate business understanding, connecting the dots between accounting, finance, procurement, internal controls, and what the strategic priorities for me and the company are.

The CFA differs from other common training in the way that it can be considered a workshop rather than a presentation and held in a more cooperative and interactive way than a teacher-student approach. The other positive is that each session is attended by a mix of colleagues from various departments, resulting in topics being discussed from different points of view which helps to understand the connection between different processes.

What can other companies and corporations learn from CFA?

The CFA concept is mainly designed for large-scale companies, we are a company with over 9 billion dollars in revenues. People across various cultures and jurisdictions need to learn to fly in formation, CFA comes in handy there though it requires a lot of effort to prepare the materials and run the training on a regular basis. So what can you get? Firstly, it is a consolidation of all the necessary information. That is a rational benefit. Secondly, an open discussion of employee issues and real-time clarification, and resolution. That is a cultural benefit. And last but not least, CFA nurtures loyalty. Only those who understand what they do and how important their work is for Clarios are loyal and motivated to progress.



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How fast you can apply what you learned at CFA in your daily work?

The possibility is there immediately once you start on the job. The CFA is a compilation of main processes, corporate policies, and business standards.