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WORK AND LIFE CONNECTIONS

Achieving professional success often involves navigating many challenges. The responsibility towards their families and their employees makes business leaders carefully consider each minute of their day. We want to know how they like to spend their time out of work, what inspires them and motivates them.

What do you currently perceive as the biggest challenge or the biggest opportunity in your life?

(PL) The biggest challenge in my life right now is on the family front. With our children moving out to pursue their studies or careers, our home feels emptier after 20 years of bustling family life. This transition has allowed me to focus more on my relationship with my wife, who has been a constant source of support in our married life.

On the professional side, transitioning from a corporate environment to managing a successful and established family business in the field of process automation has been both a challenge and an opportunity. The shift demands adapting my routines and approaches to fit the dynamics of a family-run enterprise. With the advent of Industry 4.0 and the arrival of Volvo Car Košice, there is a significant opportunity to innovate and expand our operations in process automation.

(CGP) It sounds like a cliché, but I am truly a person who believes that it's possible to turn challenges into opportunities, and I have always tried to do so throughout my life. Talking about nowadays, I believe that, as for most people, the trickiest riddle to solve is finding a healthy balance between personal life and professional career. The days just simply seem not to be long enough! But, at the same time, when we are capable of setting our priorities right, then we

can be more efficient in everything we do.



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What achievement from the past 12 months are you proud of the most?

(PL) Over the past year, I am most proud of successfully managing the transition of company leadership after the founders' departure. This involved not only maintaining operational stability but also significantly enhancing the visibility of the Procont brand in the world of automation and within our local community. Through strategic promotion, participation in various events, and active engagement in industry-related actions, we have strengthened our market presence and reinforced

our reputation for innovation and excellence. Additionally, I am proud to be part of the great project organized by AmCham to develop our region - "Mapping the Potential of Eastern Slovakia."

(CGP) Since I joined the European Business Center of Holcim in Košice, all my efforts have focused on raising the profile of our big team there, more than 300 people. With that purpose, we managed to design and put into action a holistic plan so that we can ensure the maximum value for our internal customers while always keeping an inclusive work environment where everybody can fit in & thrive. And I am very proud to say that it seems to be working! In 2023, our company in Košice achieved record results in both areas: a great improvement in the customer satisfaction metric and very high levels in the employee engagement survey, one of the highest across the 70 countries where Holcim is operating worldwide.

What is the favorite part of your day and why?

(PL) My favorite part of the day is the morning when I enjoy a cup of tea with my wife. It reminds me of Johnny Cash's motto, "This morning, with her, having coffee." This quiet, shared moment helps us connect and start the day with a sense of togetherness and calm.

(CGP) Waking up! I am very much a morning person and almost every day I wake up in a good mood,

feeling optimistic about what the day will bring. To make the most of that energy, I usually do some physical exercise first and then I enjoy breakfast while reading the news. On the other hand, I like spending the last hours of the day in a relaxed environment, decompressing from the day and keeping some time for myself to read or think before going to sleep.



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What regular habit or routine has had the biggest positive impact on your life?

(PL) The routine that has had the most significant positive impact on my life is my morning ritual. It starts with a short exercise session to energize my body, followed by a nutritious fruit smoothie. This sets a positive tone

for the day. At the office, maintaining a disciplined and regular morning routine helps me stay focused and productive. In the afternoons and early evenings, I prioritize physical activity and spend quality time in the garden with my wife in the summer time. This balance of work, exercise, and personal time keeps me grounded and fulfilled.

(CGP) There are many, but since we already talked about setting priorities, I would definitely put the need to keep my loved ones always around me and spending quality time with them at the very top. It can be the small moments of cooking dinner together and watching a movie on the sofa, or sometimes planning to go on an adventurous trip. Laugh & Love is my winning combination.

What advice would you give to your 20-something-year old self?

(PL) Reflecting on the historical moments of Slovakia's transformation in 1991, when I was 20 years old and visited the United States for the first time, I would advise my younger self to fully embrace and seize every opportunity that comes your way. Appreciate the unique experiences and historical shifts you're witnessing. At the same time, be adaptable and open to new possibilities, much like the opportunities available to my children today. Stay curious, keep learning, and don't be afraid to take risks. These experiences will

shape your future in ways you can't yet imagine.

(CGP) I once read a quote that marked me: 'The way we spend our days is the way we live our life'. I think that's super powerful in its simplicity and it's the idea that I would kindly remind my younger self of. It's our daily habits that shape our lives and it's on each of us to make those small decisions and choices every day, which, when accumulated, will be our life.

What are the parts of your work that still excite you and give you motivation?

(PL) What excites and motivates me the most is having a day filled with diverse tasks and projects that require innovative solutions and collaboration with my colleagues. The process of tackling challenges and working together to find the best outcomes is incredibly fulfilling. When a project is completed on time, meets high-quality standards, and satisfies the client, it brings a profound sense of accomplishment. This success drives me to take on even more demanding tasks and challenges, continually pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve.

(CGP) My job as a whole still makes me excited every day and I am aware that this is a great privilege. I truly enjoy both the strategic decision-making and also the day-to-day routines. Particularly in Košice, I am surrounded by a big young team and it's their passion and willingness to learn that give me added motivation. I try my best to help them improve so that we can achieve our common goals together. And of course, I myself also keep learning from them every day. Each person has something to share and contribute and I believe in creating a work environment where that inclusivity flourishes.

If you had to make a career switch, in what other profession can you imagine yourself?

(PL) After a 30-year career in automotive and mechanical engineering, this is a very thought-provoking question. I would likely choose between two contrasting paths. On one hand, I am fascinated by

the technical direction, particularly fields related to Artificial Intelligence, where I see immense potential for innovation and impact. On the other hand, I could envision myself pursuing a completely different direction, such as garden architecture, where I could blend creativity with my love for nature and design.



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(CGP) A lot of my spare time goes into artistic hobbies that help me disconnect and keep my creative side alive. As a kid, I was always drawing everywhere and since then I've kept a very fond interest in design. I could imagine myself being happy in that area if the opportunity arises.

Can you name three sources you have recently learned from or have inspired you the most?

(PL) Recently, my inspiration has come from a mix of books on leadership and entrepreneurship, various events, and professional associations:

1. Events and Conferences: Attending SARIO Business Day and the Fanuc Robotics Fair in Prague has provided valuable insights and networking opportunities.
2. Lectures: Business secrets lectures by Peter Krištofovič offer practical advice on entrepreneurship and management.
3. Professional Associations:

Participation in events organized by AmCham and other chambers of commerce keeps me updated on industry trends and best practices.

These sources collectively enhance my knowledge and inspire continuous growth in my professional life.

(CGP) Since I need to travel often for my work, I try to take advantage of this time to read or listen to podcasts. My favorite is the series of National Geographic on world history. It's fascinating to realize the deep parallels between many historical events across different times and places. We can learn a lot from the past to improve our present. Along these lines, I also enjoy revisiting classic books and movies. I hope the younger generations are still enjoying wonders like 'One Hundred Years of Solitude' or 'Singing in the Rain'.



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What is your biggest fear for the generation of today's children? What about the biggest hope?

(PL) My biggest fear for today's generation is the pitfalls of the digital world, including the spread of misinformation, fake news, and online dangers like cyberbullying and privacy concerns. These issues can distort reality and affect mental health. Ensuring children can navigate these challenges requires a strong foundation of family, education, and critical thinking skills.

However, my greatest hope is that emerging technologies will provide our children with even greater opportunities for growth and a higher quality of life. Just as our generation has benefited from technological advancements, I believe new innovations will enable our children to live better and more exciting lives. With the right guidance, they can harness these technologies to create a more sustainable and prosperous world.

(CGP) We are living through times that look particularly challenging, from the climate change to the political tensions in many areas. My hope - and my belief - is that, collectively, we will find a way towards a sustainable future for everybody, without leaving anyone behind. Quoting the motto of Holcim, "together we can build progress for the people and the planet!"

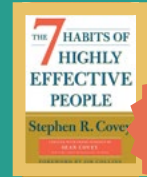
AmCham Slovakia celebrates its 30th anniversary this year - what wish comes to your mind for this occasion?

(PL) I first joined AmCham with Jake Slegers and renewed my membership with PROCONT last year. Over the years, I've experienced many wonderful and exciting moments, particularly here in the east of Slovakia. For AmCham's 30th anniversary, I wish for at least as many successful years as the past three decades, during which AmCham has significantly contributed to Slovakia's progress. I am confident that in the coming years, especially here in eastern Slovakia, AmCham will continue to play a crucial role in our growth and development.

(CGP) I think AmCham is passionately contributing to making Slovakia a better place to live and do business. In my three years in the country, I have often reached out to the AmCham team for support and I always found wise advice and deep professionalism. I am sure that the endless energy of my friends at AmCham will keep contributing to increasing the global competitiveness of Slovakia for many years.

To provide you with some bookish inspiration, this section of the *Connection* magazine features reading tips from various interesting people related to AmCham Slovakia. We have approached them with the following question:

What book has left the greatest impression on you recently and why?



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THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

by Stephen Covey

If we focus on business, my favorite book is "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey. It's a timeless guide to personal and professional effectiveness. Another favorite is "The One Minute Manager" by Ken Blanchard, which provides valuable insights into efficient management.



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THE LITTLE PRINCE

by Antone De Saint-Exupery

The book which I have most often bought and given in my life is "The Little Prince", the all-time classic. Its simple story is universal and conveys a beautiful philosophy of life that can make all of us a bit happier. There are many memorable sentences in the book, one that comes to my mind now refers to hope and resilience: "what makes the desert beautiful is that it always hides a well somewhere."