

STEERING SLOVAKIA'S LARGEST IT COMPANY



ĽUBOR ŽATKO
Managing Director Deutsche Telekom IT Solutions Slovakia

Since 2009, Ľubor has been with Deutsche Telekom Group, specifically Slovak Telekom, a.s., leading Technology strategy and architecture, where his team designed and implemented numerous strategic projects. In 2016, he became Director of Network Development and Construction at Slovak Telekom and T-Mobile Czech Republic, overseeing development and innovations in mobile and fixed networks. Since 2019, he has been Chief Technology and IT Officer at Magyar Telekom, Hungary's largest mobile operator, responsible for strategy, efficiency, and new product innovations. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of Makedonski Telekom AD. Ľubor has held senior roles in major telecommunications and banking companies like First Data, Vodafone, and Barclays Bank UK.



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You transitioned from CTIO at Magyar Telekom to Managing Director of the largest IT company in Slovakia. How has this move challenged you?

I do believe that my previous positions have given me a lot of preparation for my current role, especially executive roles, as CTIO require excellent knowledge in multiple business areas; still, as a CTIO, my primary focus was on technology topics—driving innovation, ensuring operational efficiency, ensuring the quality of our services for customers, aligning and executing IT and technology strategies with business needs. The CEO role enables me to utilize all collected know-how and experience in business strategy, finance, operations, and, most importantly, people, but it requires a broader and encompassing perspective.

One of the most significant adjustments was moving from the executive role that enables business transformation to one that defines and drives it. Decision-making as a CEO involves a broader set of considerations, balancing multiple aspects of business and market situation with financial and HR sustainability and abilities, adapting it to our strategy and long-term vision. At the same time, my previous roles gave me a strong foundation in execution of business transformation, strong focus on customer needs, quality and stability, understanding how technology can be leveraged to create value,

define strategies, and drive efficiency.

Another aspect is that we are part of a strong Deutsche Telekom group. Working for multiple DT subsidiaries over the past 16 years has given me a good understanding of how to deliver the best value for our stakeholders efficiently. I've come to appreciate the power of leadership beyond technology—building strong teams, adapting to new ways of working, challenging the status quo, fostering a shared vision, and ensuring that every part of the organization moves forward together.



In Košice, strong collaboration between IT companies and universities has already transformed the region, and this synergy remains key to future growth.

Looking back at Deutsche Telekom ITSO SK's 2024 as an outsider, how would you assess the year?

The year 2024 was full of challenges, mainly due to external factors affecting

Deutsche Telekom IT Solutions Slovakia (DT ITSO SK) has transformed Košice into a thriving IT hub, attracting investors and talent. Since 2006, the company has grown to 4,000 employees and remains committed to innovation and top-tier services. It collaborates with academia and the local startup scene, contributing to regional development. We spoke with Ľubor Žatko, who became Managing Director in January.



the IT sector. Despite this, we consider it a success. While many companies had to reduce staff significantly, we managed to keep our team stable, primarily due to our ability to attract new business to compensate for efficiency-driven adjustments.

At the same time, we achieved solid revenue growth, driven by increasing demand for software development, digital solutions, and successful projects in our Telekom Business Customers division. A key part of this growth also came from our outsourcing services in finance and controlling and new business intelligence solutions for financial and personnel management.

Last year, we also delivered high-impact digital and digitalization projects for major clients. Our solutions have supported European institutions and leading manufacturers in their e-mobility, smart mobility, and digitalization strategies. Additionally, we have strengthened our expertise in software development, particularly in artificial intelligence and customer solutions.

What key factors do you believe contributed to winning the Najzamestnávateľ award in IT and Telecommunications?

Since taking on the CEO role in January, I have had the opportunity to look back and appreciate the hard work of our team. Their dedication and expertise were key in overcoming challenges and turning them into opportunities for growth. I am incredibly proud that our commitment to our people and workplace culture has been recognized with the Najzamestnávateľ award. This achievement reflects the strength of our team and our ongoing efforts to create an inspiring and supportive work environment. I am proud of what we have achieved together and excited about what lies ahead.

With the IT sector facing stagnation, what's your strategy not just for survival, but for thriving and driving growth?

Our two main priorities for 2025 are our customers and quality. These principles will guide everything we do. We aim to continue driving



digital transformation and expanding our products and services, always focusing on delivering the highest-quality solutions tailored to our customers' needs.

To maintain our momentum of success in the fast-paced IT market, we must constantly seek efficiency and transformation measures and pursue new business opportunities.

We plan to invest further in artificial intelligence, cloud, and digitalization solutions while strengthening our consulting capacity. Additionally, we will develop new technology solutions for the industry. Using our expertise and innovation, we aim to set new standards and strengthen our position in digital transformation.

Aside from our investment in technological and product innovations, we also focus on supporting our colleagues to achieve the highest possible level of skills and expertise, which is equally important.

Is artificial intelligence really making businesses more efficient, or is it just a clever way to replace human workers and cut costs?

Both. We see a massive shift from theoretical AI discussions to real-world implementations. Artificial intelligence is no longer just a buzzword - in the last year, it has become a key tool for automation in ICT and industry. Companies are no longer just looking for information about what AI can do but want

to integrate it directly into their operations to boost efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance decision-making.

What is important, though, is how we shall use such a boost in efficiency and freed-up resources, whether we take it as an opportunity or just a way to save resources.



I am convinced that strong teams are based on trust, support, and a shared vision, much like a family.

Beyond AI, we are also witnessing rapid advancements in IoT, edge computing, and software-defined solutions, which are transforming how IT infrastructures are managed. Cloud computing is no longer just a convenience but a necessity, enabling seamless digital transformation for businesses of all sizes. AI also creates additional demand for high-density Data Centers and high-bandwidth, reliable connectivity. Data sovereignty, security, and the whole concept of the sovereign cloud have

become other topics of focus.

AI technologies create opportunities to enhance our operations and offer better, more attractive customer services. Having implemented various technology solutions in my previous roles, I understand the challenges and opportunities of integrating these innovations into real business environments. At Deutsche Telekom IT Solutions Slovakia, we will focus on delivering practical AI-driven solutions that maximize value for our customers, ensuring they can harness the full potential of these technologies.

Do you plan to involve universities in AI-driven business innovation?

Collaboration with the academic sector plays a crucial role in building AI-driven customer experiences by bridging research and real-world applications. In Košice, strong collaboration between IT companies and universities has already transformed the region, and this synergy remains key to future growth.

We actively partner with the Technical University of Košice and P. J. Šafárik University to translate AI from theory into practice. Through these collaborations, we can experiment, innovate, and develop cutting-edge solutions that enhance customer experiences.

Beyond AI, we also focus on education. By establishing an eduScrum

hub for Slovak schools and teachers, we are fostering digital skills and modern learning methods, ensuring that the next generation is ready to shape the future of AI-driven solutions.

As a leader, what values guide your decisions?

My core values are family, progress, and integrity.

Family is essential to me—not just in my personal life but also in my leadership. I am convinced that strong teams are based on trust, support, and a shared vision, much like a family.

Progress drives me. I am motivated by seeing things move forward and learning and exploring new things, whether it's innovation, business growth, or my team's personal and professional development. I thrive in environments where change is embraced and always strive to push boundaries and explore new opportunities.

Integrity is non-negotiable. Decisions in leadership are not always easy, but I believe in transparency, honesty, and standing by my principles. In today's world, some people say that everything is negotiable, and it is just business. In my opinion,

though, trust and respect are the foundation of any successful company, and I aim to lead by example, ensuring that integrity is at the core of everything we do.

What excites you the most about the future of Deutsche Telekom IT Solutions?

What excites me the most is our potential as a team to shape the future of digital transformation. The ICT industry is very dynamic, and we must work hard to stay on top. We are not just following industry trends—we are actively driving them. Just imagine the power of more than 4000 well-educated professionals.

Our expertise in AI, cloud, and digitalization puts us in a strong position to create meaningful, high-impact solutions for our customers. At the same time, I am excited about the incredible talent we have within our company. Seeing our people grow, innovate, and push boundaries every day is what truly inspires me. The best is yet to come.



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