



CUSTOMER CARE FROM PREŠOV

In Prešov, SWAN has gradually built a technology-driven customer care center that employs almost one hundred people and combines expertise, data and AI. The goal is not to replace people with technology, but to create more advanced services and support the region where SWAN has established a strong presence. We spoke with Róbert Plonka, Director of Customer Care at SWAN.



RÓBERT PLONKA
Director of Customer Care SWAN

Róbert began his career in customer service in 2000 at Nextra, s.r.o. He participated in the implementation and management of part of the project focused on centralizing Nextra's international customer service centers in Bratislava, with the aim of providing multilingual customer support. From 2006 to 2013, he worked as a Customer Service Manager, contributing to the implementation of a new CRM system and establishing a department focused on complaint management and customer retention. Since 2013, he has held the position of Director of Customer Care, where his responsibilities have expanded to include the Network Operations Centre department as well as the Sales Administration Support department.

When people hear "customer care center", many still imagine a traditional call center. What does SWAN's center in Prešov actually represent today?
I believe the perception of customer care centers has changed significantly in recent years. It is no longer just about answering phone calls and responding to basic customer inquiries. Today, it is a much more complex service that connects people, technologies, data and the ability to respond quickly.

Our center in Prešov was established in 2018, when we decided to bring customer support, which had previously been provided externally, directly under SWAN. For us, this was a strategic decision.

Looking back, do you consider it the right decision to build your own customer care center instead of continuing exclusively with an external provider?
Telecommunication services are critical infrastructure, and customer experience is a very important part of them. That is why we wanted to have this area under our own control, not only from the perspective of service quality, but also future development. Today, we can say that it was the right decision. Over the years, we have built a center that is not only a point of contact for customers, but an important part of the entire company's operations.

Why did you choose Prešov?
There were several reasons. At that time, SWAN already had a network operations center in Prešov providing services for our business and corporate customers. This meant we already had a technological foundation and experience in the region.

The second factor was the region itself. Prešov has a good location and great potential when it comes to people. There are universities in the area and many talented individuals who are interested in working in the technology sector.



We have managed to create a strong team while bringing new job opportunities in modern technologies to the region.

We were also positively influenced by the character of the region itself, especially the openness, helpfulness and positive attitude of the people, which have become an

important part of why we have been able to build such a stable team here.

Looking back today, it proved to be the right combination. We have managed to create a strong team while bringing new job opportunities in modern technologies to the region.

How large is the team in Prešov today and what areas does it cover?
Today, we employ almost 100 people here. The center provides customer support for both residential and business customers of SWAN, while also covering more technical areas such as service monitoring.

It is important to say that this is not just a traditional first-level support line. In Prešov, we have built expertise, processes and technological capabilities that cover a much broader part of the customer experience.

We are gradually looking at how we can use this experience even more widely. Over the years, we have created a functional model combining people, technologies and efficient processes. This know-how has value not only internally within SWAN, but may also be interesting for other areas and partners facing similar challenges in customer care.

AI has become one of the biggest topics in recent years. How are you using AI in customer support?
Artificial intelligence is a natural continuation of the development we see

across almost all industries today. We did not want to remain just observers of this change, so we started testing its use directly within our processes.

One of the first steps was implementing a voicebot on our customer line. Currently, it can help customers with simpler requests, and we are gradually working on expanding its capabilities to handle more tasks that are still performed manually today.

However, it is important to say that our goal is not to replace people with technology. Quite the opposite. We want technology to help our employees reduce routine work and dedicate more time to situations where customers need an individual approach.

Where do you think customer care will move in the coming years?
I believe one of the biggest trends will be the shift from reactive to proactive support.

Today, the standard model is that customers experience a problem and then contact us. The future, however, lies in using technology to identify certain situations earlier and help customers before they significantly feel the impact of an issue.

That is, in my opinion, the real value of modern customer service. Not only responding quickly, but actively helping.