

# Evolution of the DNA of Slovak concierge clients

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**People's behavior as customers has always been influenced by variety of factors, in spite of them not realizing the change in their attitude. How do you think Slovak customers have changed and, more importantly, have they changed at all?**

The Slovak Republic is celebrating its twenty-fifth birthday. For most of us, it may not be as believable as it might seem, especially if you still remember standing with keys in your hand at one of the main squares. Since then, Slovakia has really gone through a lot. Many things have changed, many remain to be changed. One of the things that has evolved immensely over the last twenty-five years is business – the number of companies, either Slovak or international ones, that offer their services and products here, has grown significantly. However, they needed and still need to adapt to the changes in customers' behavior. This article will allow you to take a closer look at some of those changes, especially those that one may come across in the concierge business or in companies offering personal assistance.

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Slovaks are generally perceived as a family-oriented nation, particularly for European standards. One of the perks of this is that if someone's brother's tap is broken and you know how to repair it, you go and repair the tap; if your niece is struggling with math and you're good at it, you help her out – usually in exchange for some refreshments

or something else that you politely reject. Over the last few years this tendency is slowly diminishing. From the point of view of a concierge company, customers refrain from looking for unqualified help just because it is for free. They know that good service comes with a price. They feel they should hire someone who is skilled to solve the specific issue or someone who studied the subject.

Consequently, the variety of services that exist on the Slovak market is constantly increasing. With the increasing variety, it is not only necessary but absolutely inevitable to offer high quality services as it is easier than ever for customers to review the service they used. A number of people do so regularly and an even greater number of people rely on these reviews. There was no such option in the past. People could only rely on the recommendation of one of their acquaintances which is not comparable to the myriad of opinions that are just one click away. Easily-accessible customer reviews, one of the consequences of the internet revolution, frequently motivate people to approach foreign suppliers more. The language revolution undoubtedly came along with the internet revolution. Not long ago it was not a problem if no one at the company spoke proper English or another foreign language. Now, with more and more expats living in Slovakia, it is unimaginable not to be a multilingual company. The growing number of non-Slovak speakers forces companies to improve their language skills if they want to benefit from expats' purchasing power.

On the other hand, one of the advantages associated with

international clients is that they are usually more used to trusting people than Slovaks – at least in the area of concierge services. From the point of view of such companies, foreigners are keener on providing, for example, their credit card details, which is unheard – of for most Slovaks. As foreigners have been “handing over” their credit cards for much longer than Slovaks, they appreciate the transparency and convenience of doing so more than the natives.

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As mentioned before, Slovaks are not quite as trusting as foreigners; however they are definitely more trusting than they used to be. Considering concierge clients and their requests – it is much more natural for clients to ask for help when it comes to their families than before. Some ten years ago, people were more interested in organizing their free time than using concierge

services to book the doctor's appointment. These days it is not uncommon to entrust their children to a chauffeur who drives them to school or to have someone “house-sit” while the carpenters are installing their new floors.

When analyzing the Slovak economy and its development over the years, one of the facts that cannot be ignored is the increasing number of middle-class people who value their time and understand its importance. They do know the opportunity cost of time spent cleaning, queuing or browsing for reasonably-priced and good service. Nowadays it is quite common for people to try to get rid of what they recognize as a burden. They are willing to book a plumber who is available in the evening, when most plumbers are enjoying their free time, even though they spend a little more money. The advantage being, when it comes to this example, that they do not need to wait or be absent from work.

Generally, it is the fact that customers' cravings and tendencies are developing. It is hard to say what the future holds. However, when it comes to customers' behavior, it is probable that the trend which has started with the growing middle class and expat population here in Slovakia will not cease evolving. Slovak customers are expected to behave in a more “Western” manner – they will value the service itself more and will be willing to pay more for it. This will enable the companies to try new ways, to offer new services and to explore new opportunities which will definitely have positive impact on the Slovak economy as such.