


# What does the labor market need in 2018?

by  **Katarína Bittalová**,  
Partner,  
Arthur Hunt Slovakia

ARTHUR HUNT  
EXECUTIVE SEARCH  
&  
HUMAN RESOURCES CONSULTING

**The Slovak labor market in many ways resembles the well-known story of entrepreneur Tomáš Baťa. When he was unable to decide which manager he should entrust to take his products to Africa, he sent the two most promising candidates there.**

After they returned, he asked them how they saw the situation. The first one answered – boss, it's not good, everyone goes barefoot there; the second answered – it's great, everyone goes barefoot there. I remembered this story during a stay in Kenya, where you encounter the Baťa logo everywhere.

Some top managers are perceived as well-paid "mercenaries" who succeed without a clear sense of belonging to the company. Moreover, frequent transfers from one company to another and corresponding salaries have rewarded this approach. Today, there is a surplus of such managers given the real needs of the market. The owners force the management to act resolutely realistically, but most of all they require effective managers. The mantra of efficiency dominates the contemporary business reality where everything boils down to numbers. But a significant change is the development of a company spirit. It is difficult to play with players who do not know the rules of the game.

Radical slimming (restructuring) of companies into efficient structures is interconnected with the search for candidates with a more universal profile, mature behavior and the ability to take personal risks. Sometimes a company internally transfers managers to completely different positions. Some years ago, this would be incomprehensible for us, e.g. financial managers become purchasing managers or purchasers become plant managers. This new radical approach brings new challenges and forces employees to look at things from a different point of view, though still at the same company. Today, the client and the employer know who they are looking for and what they want. They also dictate strict financial conditions, which would not be always acceptable in the past.

Today's labor market is marked by an enormously large

number of managers who remain after the mergers and organizational changes. There is also a significant number of managers at firms who are seen as potential trouble makers. Their over motivation for change is reflected in reality, for example, in an interview for an American company, a candidate freely states, that Italian products are the best in the world. Globalization is fine but only to the extent that it does not inherently affect our future employers. It is the same "sudden death" for the candidate as to say during an interview with a potential employer, "You know, I don't really have to work, but I do not want to lose my work habits."

the initial shock of the new and so far unchangeable situation, many managers still try to keep their "original price" without realizing that it is one of the contributors to their redundancy. Most surprising for them is the difference between their personal financial expectations and the reality, which the market offers today.

Therefore, questions about adequate evaluation are questions of justice for the employee – but also for the employer. It is necessary to weigh the chance of an overly expensive employee and to consider the risk of a well-paid manager without internal motivation.

Generally, instead of charts, tests and our various sophisticated evaluations, we should return to using our "common sense" and think lean. An example of a success story is Austrian Niki Lauda – you do not become a world champion if you win one or three races, instead you have to score during the whole season.

**Radical slimming (restructuring) of companies into efficient structures is interconnected with the search for candidates with a more universal profile, mature behavior and the ability to take personal risks.**

Due to their excellent marketing, and being one of the first companies with a strong vision for people management, Baťa succeeded in building a company where even a regular player becomes a cog with a strong sense of belonging to his team. Today, when the loyalty of a brand and the customer-oriented approach are common, it is time to review the details which often opens the way forward.

