

20 years of experience to back excellent services in the future



MARTIN HRNKO
CEO, QBSW



BIOGRAPHY

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

- Chief Executive Director & Managing Partner, QBSW, a.s. (01/2012 – present)
- Executive Director, QBSW, a.s. (06/2005 – 12/2011)
- Project Manager, QBSW, a.s. (01/2002 – 05/2005)
- Analyst, pm, Asseco Central Europe, a.s. (06/2000 – 12/2001)

EDUCATION

- Nottingham Trent University, MBA (2013)
- Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Faculty of electrical engineering and information technology (1997)

QBSW celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2020, a more-than-respectable achievement given the rapidly evolving field of software development. During its first two decades, QBSW has prioritised innovation, quality, and reliability, and this strategy has paid off. Martin Hrnko, the company's CEO, outlines the biggest challenges the company has faced as well as its plans for the future.

What was the IT sector like in 2000 when QBSW first entered the market?

A lot has changed in the last twenty years in the IT world. Back in the early days, it was a huge step forward only to be able to provide our clients with web applications that could be accessed and used from any computer with an internet connection, thereby providing users with access from anywhere in Slovakia.

It was also a step forward that these applications could be user friendly, and at the same time, make work easier for our clients. We had to convince our customers that these types of applications brought added value and security—we also had to explain that the use of an application didn't have to be limited only to the computer where it had been installed!

How have the demands and expectations of customers evolved during the last 20 years?

Over this period, many completely new trends and technologies have emerged. Whether we are talking about cloud solutions, blockchain, practical applications of artificial intelligence (AI), smartphones, tablets, or the Internet of Things (IoT), the customers need to be able to use all of these innovations effectively.

Long gone are the days when applications were developed only to store data, such as software that was strictly targeted at accounting or warehouse management. Nowadays, it is not sufficient

for an app to only cover the operational needs of a business. Now it has to directly contribute to its overall success. This can be achieved by optimizing costs or by acquiring new customers and boosting sales. Today, we discuss the tangible benefits of each software project as it impacts on the client's business.

Of course, sometimes entrepreneurial opportunities arise in unanticipated areas. QBSW supports innovative endeavors by offering technological help to various start-up projects in the telemedicine or creative industry sectors.

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QBSW has survived the tech boom, a financial crisis, the switch to the euro, and now a global pandemic. What do you consider to be the biggest challenge you have had to face? Looking back, we have had to overcome numerous difficult periods during our 20-year existence. We have been able to prepare for some of them, such as the introduction of euro

or the implementation of SEPA (payment standards). However, some were almost impossible to prepare for, such as the financial crisis or this year's pandemic.

The pandemic has probably been the biggest challenge we've had to face so far, testing our ability to work remotely as a team. Because the core of our business—software application development—directly depends on customer demand from both private and public sectors we always have to maintain a certain degree of flexibility.

Our philosophy for success is based on the experience and skills of fantastic people, on the technological solutions they provide for our projects; and on our partners whose help enables us to react to the volatility of the market.

While you were originally focused mostly on the Slovak market, you've acquired more and more clients from countries like Belgium and Finland in recent years. Do you plan to expand beyond Europe?

Expanding beyond Slovakia has long been among our ambitions. Besides the opportunity to find new customers, we also perceive it to be an opportunity to expand our company's competencies. The same is true for our employees, as we often participate on projects realized by international teams using innovative approaches and technologies. This gives us the chance to benefit from this experience and directly apply to projects we work on for our Slovak customers.

We would like to expand our service offerings to customers in the United States. Our ambition has been delayed by the current pandemic, which makes our physical presence in the US impossible for the time being. We still consider personal contact with customers and partners to be a critically important part of software project implementation.

