

What skills do BSC employees need?

by  **Radka Minarechová**,
Staff writer,
The Slovak Spectator



Changes in business service centers operations require a new skill set. When they started arriving in Slovakia in the 1990s, most business service centers (BSCs) could be described as call centers. Even though some activities are still purely transactional, the centers have developed and many processes have become automated in order to eliminate repetitive tasks.

As a result, BSCs require a specific skill set, which includes advanced analytical and communication skills, along with good judgment, from their potential employees, Christian Schulz, President of Henkel Slovensko and Head of SSC Bratislava, said at the December 2018 conference in Bratislava, organized by the Business Service Center Forum (BSCF), which runs under the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia.

His company has managed to adapt to the changes, but there are still some problems they have to tackle. "I see an increasing gap of the entry qualification of fresh graduates we are hiring and the effort we have to put in to get them ready for the position," Schulz said, adding that what once took three or four months now takes one year. This also requires additional funds for increasing one's qualification.

Language skills still required
Wolfgang Fischer, CEO of the Zurich Insurance Company, agrees that people often lack critical skills. "We expect people to not only do their job, but also understand the whole process and the needs of the business partners," Fischer said at the conference.

As a result, communication skills, presentation skills and the ability to build trust are important. "You have to build trust and a relationship with business partners to get the job done, to create more jobs," Fischer stressed. Despite the increasing need of soft skills, there are

still some hard skills, mostly IT and languages, required from potential job candidates, said Schulz.

This has been confirmed by BSCs addressed by The Slovak Spectator. Most of them are currently filling various positions in IT, accounting and administration. One of their main requirements is that jobseekers speak certain foreign languages, mentioning mostly English and German, but also French.

A mixture of skills
So what kind of people are BSCs currently looking for? "We are searching particularly for employees who are linked to our region and speak languages," Jana Kosdiová, HR department head at Nitra-based UNIQA

Group Service Center Slovakia, told The Slovak Spectator.

Apart from languages, people seeking jobs at Henkel Slovensko can take advantage of their previous job experience. Other positive qualities include IT affinity, a proactive approach, ownership and responsibility, customer orientation and strong interpersonal skills, according to Zuzana Kaňuchová, company spokesperson and Cluster Head Corporate Communications.

In Dell Bratislava Global Business Center, they also take into consideration analytical thinking and specialized knowledge in finance, marketing or technologies connected with the 4th industrial revolution, said Zdenka Hrubešová, the

company's Legal Director.

As for Košice-based T-Systems Slovakia, the company has a very wide portfolio, said Alena Rondošová, Head of HR Business Partners, Staffing & Resource Management. They are currently seeking people to fill positions as engineers, ICT architects, developers and project managers, but they offer other positions too. For example, they hire senior controllers who serve different T-Systems entities from Košice, she added.

Even though a survey carried out by BSCF suggests that the average age of a BSC employee is 33 years, several companies also said they hire older candidates as long as they fulfill the same criteria as the other candidates.

"It is challenging to find the right level of talent for our team," Ivana Latečková, Senior HR Manager at Johnson Controls, told The Slovak Spectator. "We hold ourselves to high standards and are always on the lookout for new team members."

