

Bringing top business minds and students together



MARTIN KARDOŠ
Managing Director Central
and Eastern Europe,
CSI Leasing, Inc.

The Mentor Network Program already has a long tradition and hundreds of young people as well as dozens of distinguished mentors have passed through the program. It is a great example of how a good idea in the right hands can develop into a fruitful long-term cooperation and influence the lives of many young people. We talked to Martin Kardoš, Managing Director CEE, CSI Leasing, Inc., the man behind this idea.

You were the one who brought the idea which led to the creation of the Mentor Network Program in Bratislava. Today it is in its 12th year, it has expanded to Košice and has involved hundreds of students and CEOs. How do you perceive the evolution of the program and the stage it has reached?
When we organized our first reception I had no idea it would still be here in 12 years and that we would expand to Košice and be in our 9th year there. We are also very proud that the US Embassy has been an enduring supporter of this program all years throughout, and the acting US Ambassadors have also been very involved. I think we have reached a stage where we can say it's a high-value professionally organized event, and the feedback we receive each year from our students and CEOs only confirms this statement.

Why do you think that a program like this is still relevant even today, when students have much wider possibilities when it comes to finding inspiration and career advice online?
I think it's relevant for two main reasons. First, it brings top business minds in our country into one room, and that creates a lot of energy during the event that students can use to power their careers. And second, students get to ask questions and receive answers to their personal queries that are dear to their heart, and not just general ideas floating on the web.

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Where do you see the biggest added value of this type of mentoring? What can it offer the students and does it also give something to the mentors?
One of the main goals of this program is to show young perspective students that there are great possibilities to start their careers in Slovakia. They don't have to look elsewhere, or even leave Slovakia to find challenging and meaningful work, and who better to tell the

story than the CEOs themselves. For the mentors it can also be very refreshing to speak with young individuals that are bringing a completely different perspective to the workforce.

Do you follow the progress of some of the young people who went through the program as mentees in the previous years? One of them - Michal Krčmery, is AmCham's current Director of Government Affairs.
Yes, I mentor students each year as well, so I mostly keep in touch with them, and since our first reception was 12 years ago, some have climbed pretty high and still speak highly of the program, which brings us a lot of joy.

What are the plans for the Mentor Network Program for this season and in the years to come?
We would like to keep our recent standard and graduate around 80 students from the program this year, and if we could get this number to 100 in the upcoming years, I would consider that a great achievement.



BIOGRAPHY

WORKING EXPERIENCE

- Managing Director for CEE, CSI Leasing, Inc. (2008-present)
- International Management Associate, CSI Leasing, Inc. (2005-2007)

EDUCATION

- M.B.A. in Management, University of Missouri, St. Louis, United States (2005)
- B.S.B.A. in International Business, University of Missouri, St. Louis, United States (2003)

