

The AmCham of tomorrow

by **Todd Bradshaw**, President of AmCham Slovakia



BIOGRAPHY

WORKING EXPERIENCE

- Country Managing Partner, •
PricewaterhouseCoopers Slovensko, s.r.o. (2008-2014)
- Tax Partner, •
PricewaterhouseCoopers Tax, k.s. (2004-2008)
- Tax Senior Manager, •
PricewaterhouseCoopers Tax, k.s. (2000-2004)
- Tax Manager, Ernst & Young –
Perth, Australia (1994-2000)

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor of Business (Edith Cowan •
University, Australia; Major in
Accounting; Sub-Major Public
Accounting & Taxation)
- Chartered Accountant (Institute of •
Chartered Accountants Australia)

I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on how AmCham Slovakia can play an important role in helping Slovakia achieve her ambitions.

Slovakia is a young country with huge potential. Its largest asset is its people. It is important that we do not let lack of ambition hold us back as a country. Success does not simply fall from the sky, we need to constantly strive and fight for positive change.

AmCham Slovakia represents the voice of a large part of the business community in Slovakia. It has been engaged in many initiatives which have a positive impact in making Slovakia a better place to live and do business. The Rule of Law initiative is a good example as is the work AmCham has done developing a Slovak FDI strategy. I think it is vitally important that we are able to articulate what we are doing and communicate this with our stakeholders. The key to this is reshaping our communication strategy and vastly improving our use of social media. This is one of my key objectives as President of AmCham Slovakia as we must embrace the digital economy and adapt like any other organization.

One of the first things I noticed in Slovakia when I arrived nearly sixteen years ago was how the generation gap was much more narrow than I had seen before. In this context, I mean how one generation thinks quite radically different to those in another generation. I used to think of the generation gap as being typically forty years, but in Slovakia I could see critical differences in thinking between

people who were born say seven years apart. I have not fully explored this, but I assumed it was somehow linked to those who grew up under the older socialist regime and those who did not.

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Young Slovaks play an important part in shaping the future because they tend to have bolder ambitions and are much more willing to take risks and embrace innovative change. It is just like Jack Ma said “trust the young people, young generation”, it is “this young generation (that) is changing the company”. Likewise in Slovakia it is the young people who have the most at stake in the future of the country and can embrace real change and innovation. For this reason, AmCham needs to have a much stronger focus on this group of stakeholders.

We have been engaging more and more with students in recent years through various initiatives including the Mentor Network Program, however, we need a more coordinated strategic approach to this important group of stakeholders. This is important not only for the future success of AmCham so we do not become obsolete in a dynamic rapidly changing world, but so that we can work together on key initiatives that will help shape the future of the country.

Another of my goals as President of AmCham is to better leverage the influence and experience we have within the Board of Directors. We have many talented, experienced and influential CEOs sitting on the Board of Directors, including many actively working in the digital sphere. AmCham can better tap these skills by creating a stronger team at the top. The Board meets several times each year, but otherwise does not have a lot of direct contact with each other. I have started to organize some informal meetings of Board members to get to know each other better and to improve team work.

AmCham Slovakia, just like any other organization, has to adapt and innovate to stay relevant and meet the needs of its members and stakeholders. This is not an option but is essential to stay relevant in today's digital world. I trust you will enjoy this issue on the Digital Economy, which will provide some valuable insight into many of the drivers of change.