

# Making the connections between business and life

THIS TIME WITH



**Stephen Caulfield,**  
General Manager,  
DELL, s.r.o.



**Peter Gažík,**  
CEO,  
O2 Slovakia, s.r.o.

**Success comes at a price. Business leaders face difficult decisions regarding demands on their time on daily basis. The responsibility towards their families and their employees makes them carefully consider each minute of their day. We wanted to know how they like to spend their time out of work, what inspires them and motivates them.**

## **How has the recent Covid-19 crisis impacted your professional and personal life?**

(SC) Professionally it has been challenging adapting from face-to-face meetings and phone calls to Video calls, it took a little getting used to but now it is the "new normal". Personally I am enjoying spending more time at home, for the last number of years I have been clocking up 250k airmiles and when not flying I have a 200km daily commute to our Bratislava office so I am really appreciating the disappearance of all modes of travel!



(PG) Of course it has. Businesswise, it has been by far the most hectic period ever. Any crisis helps reveal the good and the rotten, it is an opportunity for the great to shine even more and a risk for the average to disappear. I am proud we managed the crisis period well and stand firm in how we want to pursue forward. Personally, it is a great professional experience to lead a company in these times.

## **Has it resulted in more free time? If so, how did you use it?**

(SC) My calendar seems to have gotten busier with more evening calls but I have slowly adapted my calendar to start later in the day. I leverage the free time in the morning to either go for a run or for a long walk with my wife in

the forests that we live close to in South Moravia.

(PG) Not really, though it is true that the online/remote mode did allow me to spend a bit more time with the family.

## **What is the favorite part of your day and why?**

(SC) The morning, as per above!!

(PG) Evenings. Kids are finally in bed and I have some spare time for myself to think.

## **What advice would you give to your 20-something-year old self?**

(SC) You can't short circuit experience and don't be afraid to take risks, before you know it you will be older with much more responsibility and you will be less likely to try new things.

(PG) Be more of yourself. Follow the mass less, think more of where you can excel and make a difference. Do not accept things, challenge them.

## **What are the parts of your work that still excite you and give you motivation?**

(SC) People, be it the people I work for, with and lead or our customers. I really get motivated by seeing how we can make our customers lives easier and seeing our team members develop and be successful in their careers.

(PG) There are plenty of them each day. Any time when I can help move something that would otherwise get stuck makes me feel happy. Seeing things we dreamt about becoming reality. Seeing things happening as I would love to, even without me asking for that. And my

colleagues, our spirit of a challenger and "doer".

## **If you had to make a career switch, in what other profession can you imagine yourself?**

(SC) Anything in the area of sports, I have always loved participating in sports and would have loved to have made a career in sports in some way. I could also see myself working a lot more in the area of Diversity and Inclusion which is a topic that I am very passionate about. Being the father of three daughters I have a particular interest in gender equality.

(PG) No specific idea. Any sector and/or role is relevant on condition one has the ability to change things for the better.



## **What book do you gift or recommend the most often and why?**

(SC) The Innovators by Walter Isaacson. It's a fantastic history of innovation through the years and how it is essential to human development.

(PG) At the moment, I rather buy books I want to read sometimes than having the time to read them. So most recently I bought Antifragile by Nassim Nicholas Taleb.

## **Can you name three sources you have recently learned from or**

## **have inspired you the most (e.g. people, books, websites...)?**

(SC) I follow Emmanuel Acho on Twitter and his series of "Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man" is incredibly powerful, a must listen for anyone trying to engage in a meaningful way with the current BLM movement.

"The David McWilliams Podcast" is a very interesting economics podcast that focuses in general on the current Global economic uncertainty and specifically how it impacts Ireland (my home country).

"The Blindboy Podcast" is a very uniquely Irish podcast that discusses everything from mental health, immunology & 70's disco music often at the same time!

(PG) Honestly, I get most inspired by the deeds. As such, I was truly pleased by 1/ ktopomoze initiative, 2/ all the teachers who were able to switch to online and/or adjust to the current situation without any preparation and/or support, and 3/ all my colleagues getting over this.

## **What is your biggest fear for the generation of your children? What about the biggest hope?**

(SC) The current polarization of people globally and the resulting lack of tolerance is deeply worrying. The rise of populist leaders is the fuel to this wildfire. My biggest hope is that the upcoming generation is smart enough to see beyond this and to steer us towards a more tolerant society.

(PG) I have to say I am indeed worried about things looking very differently in the post-Covid world. In a way, the Covid crisis has shown many things are far from certain: borders closed again; people deprived of their basic freedoms; citizens being subdued by their states. So first and foremost I wish for any nation and its citizens the strength to control the things (be it Covid or another plague); rather than the virus controlling our lives.