



Demonstrating the potential of dual education in Slovakia

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International companies that have established themselves in Slovakia will increasingly need an educated workforce, said US Ambassador to Slovakia, Theodore Sedgwick, at the first annual conference, Business Service Center Forum, which was held last month in Bratislava.

T-Systems

According to a survey undertaken by The Business Service Center Forum, business service centers (BSCs) in Slovakia currently employ around 23,250 people. In the past year, their headcount has increased by 10% and the majority of them are planning to further expand. Value-added services in the IT services sector are provided by 68% of BSCs in Slovakia. Companies focusing on IT Services in the Kosice region, such as T-Systems Slovakia, face a similar situation. Like most service centers, we are experiencing a lack of well-educated employees; even though many are university graduates, their knowledge is often too general. There are serious gaps as their knowledge is often not up-to-date and they may not have acquired any practical experience during their studies. The main issue to be solved is that education is not currently directly linked to the needs of the labor market. Teachers do not have enough practical experience and knowledge and the curricula do not match real business requirements. Despite the fact that knowledge, and analytical and soft skills are vital for present and future graduates to have a successful career, they are not a part of university or vocational school curricula. It would be more beneficial for both the educational institutions and future employers if students could work or have practical training at companies during their studies, as often happens in other EU countries, especially in Germany.

T-Systems Slovakia is the biggest employer in the ICT field in eastern Slovakia and is the first company to provide a three-year-long higher vocational

education program based on the successful German dual education model with a standard Slovak (DiS) degree, but with a non-standard and unique German certification.

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The second year of the three-year-long daily study program is over. The fruits are slowly beginning to mature. With 50 trainees on board, two of who are women, the program is running well and it is slowly meeting all the desired company goals. We were able to maintain and improve some of the implemented processes which have taken the project to a higher level with regards to the curricula, the number of hours needed for the study of theory and practice, and other matters.

A pioneer in IT qualifications for young people

Our successful graduates will have the opportunity to gain a certificate from the German-Slovak Chamber of Commerce, which is equivalent to that received by students in Germany after a successful completion of studies. The initial steps towards this certification took place on April 27th. Twenty-five of the 26 trainees successfully passed the exam. For the first time in history, the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Germany authorized the Slovak-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry to organize the mid-term IT exam.

T-Systems trainees took the same exam as trainees in Germany, with only minor adjustments. Twenty percent of the exam questions were defined by a closed exam committee due to Slovak regulations. This means that our trainees passed the same exam in our mother tongue (Slovak) with very good results for the company. Twenty-six students from the second year of study sat a two-hour written examination. The written test consists of multiple choice questions divided into four sections. Two sections are dedicated solely to IT, one section deals with economic and social studies, i.e. soft skills, and the fourth part relates to health and safety regulations and rules. The uniqueness of the exam lies in its focus on solving real-life situations; it is demanding test. The trainee has to consider many aspects and take into account all the given information in the situation before choosing the right answer. These kinds of tasks prepare the trainees for problem solving. The exam was organized by the Slovak-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry and assessed by a three-member evaluation committee, composed of a representative of a vocational high school, an





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ICT company in Slovakia, we have received a certification authorizing T-Systems Slovakia to provide practical education under the umbrella of the new dual education system legislation starting from September 2015. The program, Computing systems 2695Q, is now officially acknowledged. T-Systems Slovakia received the certificate on May 12th. The Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry independent committee verified T-Systems' ability to provide practical training within this program. As a fast-growing business, it has an increasing need to have the right employees with the right set of skills in the company. The above-stated education program is designed for potential employees at T-Systems Slovakia and at the same time it significantly contributes to regional development. It also ensures a new generation of pre-qualified IT experts for T-Systems, which is critical for long-term sustainability.

independent representative of the IT sector and a representative of T-Systems Slovakia. There will be final oral and written exams in June 2016 in Slovak and English. At the end of this program, the graduates will have the opportunity to enter the company pre-qualified with a complete portfolio of the desired skills.

On the path to a nationwide dual education program

The mutual agreement is now in the phase of changing from a company project level to a nationwide dual education program. We are proud to announce that, as the first

In Slovakia, the program represents one of the first lighthouse projects both for Deutsche Telekom AG and for the Slovak-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It will contribute to fulfilling the vision of the Kosice IT Valley cluster, where the goal is to create 4,000 new jobs in the ICT industry by 2020. Furthermore, T-Systems Slovakia is responding to the EU and the Ministry of Finance's initiative to create a broad coalition for digital skills and digital job vacancies.

In TSSK there is a high demand on studying and practice. On the other hand, this approach pushes me forward and helps me to become a renowned expert in the field of IT.



DÁVID PETRO



Dual education is not always easy. Even though I only had a few technical subjects at secondary school, I take my studies seriously. If someone enjoys working with computers, he or she can pull off even this demanding study program. I don't mind studying in a mostly male environment; we get on well because we have similar interests.



MARTINA MALÍKOVÁ



One of the advantages of dual education is that I gain practical experience, not only theoretical knowledge. I'm looking forward to working at TSSK. At the beginning I was surprised by the friendly and relaxed environment. My biggest challenge in the near future is the final exam.



LUKÁŠ PODRACKÝ

