


We do not just wait for changes — we implement them and achieve results

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Dual Education in Slovakia was launched in September 2015. The press pointed out the initial limited success or perhaps the partial failure of the concept. The number of interested employers dropped from 170 to 89 companies joining the scheme, which meant that of the original 1448 students, only 444 were offered a place. However, this academic year, the number of employers has increased to 142 and the number of trainees increased to 1121.

On the one hand, this clearly suggests great interest of companies but it also points to the lack of qualified manpower on the labor market. Many companies realize that the education system will not change quickly. If they don't implement changes themselves, the difficulties in recruiting skilled labor will only increase.

Many employers worry there will be no young experts to replace those who retire. It is not only about the experience which is vital to every employer. Another big question mark is the interest of young people in different types of jobs and their will and motivation to continue their education and remain working in their chosen field.

In 2013, our company started a new project of implementing the elements of dual education into teaching. Other companies were intrigued and asked about our reasons, as the general understanding is that it is the role of schools to deliver skilled employees to the labor market. We made a decision that year which meant a giant leap for our company and all the young people willing to qualify and be more employable on the job market.

I don't think we need to go into IT recruitment in detail. We all know that demand is much higher than the labor market can currently supply. Statistics show there are less and less students in primary and

secondary schools. We could go deeper into the facts and figures, but the only way out is to roll up our sleeves and start working on changes which will bear fruit.

We decided to educate and develop future employees and show them what it takes to get an IT job. The first years were very difficult for us and for the school, trainees and lecturers. We are still at the beginning, even though we have already had our first graduates. At T-Systems Slovakia, we believe that cooperation between a secondary school and a company on vocational education and training is possible and can be very effective, bring the desired results for all parties.

Business needs experts, this is how WE do it

We rolled up our sleeves and went out to the market. We visited 17 vocational schools (and addressed approx. 560 students) with presentations on education and training followed by work opportunities at TSSK. We organized 21 Open Door Days where we showed approx. 450 students why they should study IT. Our doors are open to young people and they are taking notice.

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Most of our current trainees (currently 68 on board) in our three-year higher vocational education applied as they wanted to see the reality behind IT work and they found it interesting. We are always looking to get closer to our target audience. We established close cooperation with school management. We also established collaboration on information and good exchanges between our company experts in the role of instructors in the dual system and school teachers. Both parties see the importance of the role they play and the high added value that is created.

We concentrate on hard IT skills, i.e. "hands-on" training on site in our labs and in a real production environment. However, we



notice a huge lack of soft skills competence which is required in every industry and we see that many of the trainees are not fully prepared to enter the labor market because of this. Therefore, we put a big emphasis on customer orientation and business management subjects which are also part of our curricula. Some trainees are barely able to speak up, ask questions, handle confrontation, or negotiate. Via interactive sessions they learn how to handle their emotions, how to present and we also encourage them to be creative. Last but not least, our aim is to develop young people capable of resolving problems and finding solutions using long-life learning methodology from our parent company in Germany that has been applying this method successfully for over 20 years.

Mr. Daniel Giebel, Managing Director of TSSK, gave out the official certificates to 22 trainees — the first graduates in the field of Information and Communication Technologies in Slovakia. These 22 young talents, who are now all employees of T-Systems Slovakia, graduated in style; 17 of them also successfully passed the German part of the exam. They were the first to complete the course based on the successful German model and obtain a specialization certificate of competence from the Slovak-German Chamber of Industry and Commerce, equivalent to the German "Fachinformatiker" (computer system specialist) certificate.

"We built this concept based on 40 years of experience in Germany, and 20 years within the Deutsche Telekom Group. And I am very proud that we have, in a true partnership, brought

together our experience in teaching future-proof subjects with the ambition of the young people in the region, within a strong and reliable legislative framework, and the dedication of our people to make this happen in SPŠE in Košice and T-Systems Slovakia," said Daniel Giebel, Managing Director of T-Systems Slovakia.

The three-year higher vocational education course with elements of dual VET was initiated by the Secondary School of Electrical Engineering in Košice in cooperation with T-Systems Slovakia and the Košice Self-governing Region as the founder of the school, in September 2013. Theoretical education and acquisition of knowledge is complemented by extensive practical training at T-Systems to develop hard and soft skills. Vocational training comprised 70% of the total learning time

and during the three-year study program, the trainees undertook 1600 hours of practical work and 1050 hours of professional training at the company.

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The First Dual Education ICT graduates in Slovakia

In April this year, the third-year trainees took their final written exams covering technical, project, economic and labor law areas. The exams lasted 240 minutes (25% of the questions were adapted to a Slovak context from German exams). In June, the testing continued with an oral exam which included a defense of the final thesis. The hard work preceding the exams was soon replaced by words of praise, votes of thanks, smiles and even tears of happiness. All this could be seen during the very first graduation ceremony in June 2016.

Štefan Kmec, now part of the Unix/Linux Operational Team, explains how he benefited from the program:



I use the knowledge and skills I gained in Dual Education in my daily work. For example, I apply my communication skills I acquired in many areas where my team operates. With regards to the technical abilities, "Dual" also set the grounds for technical knowledge which I can now deepen as an employee. It is much easier for me to get familiar with different types of environments. This increases my work perspective and opens new doors for my future company activities.

Lukáš Podracký from the GDU CCS team is so convinced by the Dual Education program that he recommends it to his friends.



The practical training I received has enabled me to rapidly become one of the key players in my department. The program helped me with my professional journey. As a trainee, I had time and opportunities to develop skills in many different areas. My aim is to continue with personal development focusing on automation.