

2022



WHO IS ALMANAC WHO

OUR PATRON MEMBERS

abbvie

accenture

ADIENT

asreco

AT&T

CEMM THOME
a member of Amphenol

CISCO

citi

CLARIOS

THE
Coca-Cola
COMPANY

CORWIN

DELL
Technologies

Deloitte.

Dentsply
Sirona

DEUTSCHE TELEKOM IT SOLUTIONS

hbreavis

Hewlett Packard
Enterprise

IBM

Johnson & Johnson

Johnson
Controls

KB

KPMG

Lenovo

McDonald's

Medtronic

MSD

MetLife

MICROCOMP

Microsoft

NOVARTIS

O₂

orange

Pfizer

PHILIP MORRIS
SLOVAKIA

pwc

Roche

T

SLOVENSKÁ
sportelňa

SPP

SQUIRE
PATTON BOGGS

SWAN

Swiss Re

TB
TATRA BANKA

U.S. Steel Košice

VISA

Whirlpool
CORPORATION

ZURICH

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JURAJ ADAMICA

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER
SPP



He has been working at SPP since 2010 in the areas of energy law, regulation and public affairs. Since 2021, he has been the Deputy Director of the Regulation and Compliance Department and the Sustainability Manager. As the Sustainability Manager, he identifies areas to increase the sustainability of SPP's business and internal processes and coordinates the implementation of ESG principles across the company. He studied law at Comenius University in Bratislava.

TOGETHER WE ARE MORE RESILIENT

LONG-TERM TRUST AND SATISFACTION OF OUR CUSTOMERS AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL IS OUR PRIORITY.

We are aware of the urgency of the challenges posed to our economy by the EU and Slovakia's climate and environmental goals. We are committed to reduce greenhouse gases emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality, not only internally, but also by helping to reduce emissions of our customers. In 2020, we adopted the SPP's Vision and Strategy 2030, which sets out the priority areas for the development of our business for the future. Our key areas for such business development are, in line with greenhouse gas emissions reducing goals, energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources.

That's why SPP has been designated buyer of energy produced from renewable sources since 2020. As such, we provide services to more than 2,000 small producers of electricity from renewable sources and we supply such electricity to our customers. In 2021, together with our partner, ČEZ, we established the company ESCO Slovensko, a.s., which provides both corporate and public sector customers with ESCO services through tailor-made projects aimed to increase their energy efficiency.

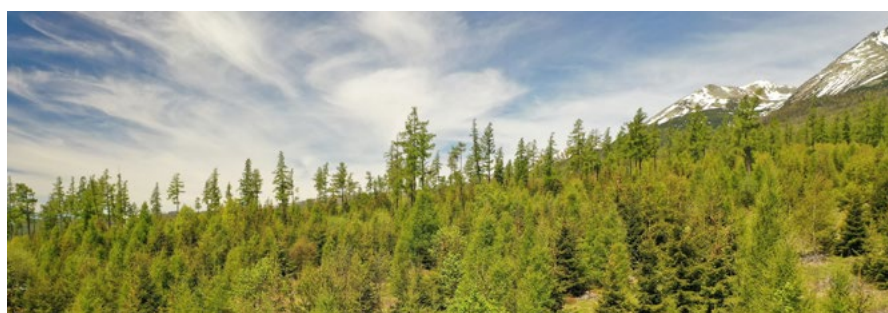
In 2021, together with another business partner, we presented the projects of the Centers for Energy and Biological Waste Recovery. Their purpose is to use biodegradable waste in accordance with the principles of circular economy and to produce renewable gas and biocompost. Our project will enable Slovakia to increase waste recovery and reduce the amount of waste in landfills.

Increasing energy efficiency and the development of renewable sources is our goal not only in terms of projects for customers, but also in terms of improving

the SPP's internal energy consumption. We want to lead by example, which is why at the beginning of 2022 we installed solar power plants on the roofs of the SPP buildings in Bratislava and Košice. In 2022 we will also start building solar power plants on the roofs of ten primary schools in the Bratislava region. Solar energy will provide schools with clean, emission-free electricity produced from the sun at minimal cost. In addition, the renovation of the roof will help to improve the indoor climate of the school, which will promote a healthier indoor environment for students. Most importantly, the schools will save almost 30% of current electricity costs.

SPP perceives environmental protection comprehensively, not only as a business development responsibility, but also as an area for ESG activities. For two years now, we have been offering our customers the product Uhlíková stopka by SPP, thanks to which they will not only get advice on how to save energy and to behave more sustainably, but for each customer we also contribute to planting of young trees in protected forests in Slovakia. In 2020 and 2021, we, together with our customers, helped to plant a total of more than 115,000 young trees and in 2022 we plan to plant more than 200,000 new ones. It is crucial for the SPP to support planting in protected areas, where trees have a guarantee that they will not be cut down. We helped to plant the trees in areas of European importance NATURA 2000 or in protected bird areas, where nest species such as mountain eagle and other protected bird species.

In addition, Ekofond SPP, following up the already existing cooperation with the TANAP Administration in 2021, will increase the number of protected fir trees in Kežmarské Žľaby from 107 trees to 300. Thanks to the protection of these up to 26 meters high fir trees, the forest can ensure the natural regeneration of the forests of TANAP.





Ness
Digital
Engineering

MARTIN ADAMKA

HEAD OF MARKETING
NESS SLOVAKIA



Martin has more than twelve years of experience in marketing. After graduating, he worked as an Online Marketing Specialist and later was promoted to senior positions. He worked and designed some creative campaigns for many advertising agencies. Before, he became director's marketing positions at Swiss Life Select and MATADOR Group, he participated in building a brand at Aliter Technologies – ICT Slovak company. Currently, he has been leading marketing at Ness Slovensko that is part of the global company Ness Digital Engineering. He is a former tennis player and technology geek.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

As the technological world and digitalization permeate all sectors and aspects of life, we see several innovations. Currently, the main motto of Ness Slovakia is the acceleration of digital transformation. We see it as a great challenge in many companies in Slovakia, which have understood that without effective digitalization they will not be able to grow in a long term and be effective. If you meant the Big Data and data processing innovation, the Salesforce digital package is a very innovative and popular platform. Ness Slovakia is one of few integrators of this smart digital platform on our market. Salesforce offers several great modules, such as the Consumer Goods Cloud, which is ideal for the retail segment and better connects merchants with customers. Many production companies are dealing with acute sustainability and carbon footprint. Salesforce has Net Zero Cloud in its portfolio, which is a perfect tool for such a hot topic and has already been integrated with leading global brands. Formula 1 uses it, for example. Innovations do not necessarily have to be perpetuum mobile, yet the right tool used for an actual issue. And Salesforce is the right tool, which we are able to integrate.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

I think that the Slovak economy has been set for the industry and the automotive sector for a long time. Global pandemic and the ongoing Fourth Industrial Revolution has been transforming the automotive sector, it brings it closer to IT companies and creates new challenges in the global mobility. The sector will look completely differently in five, ten years, with mostly technological companies with the ability to integrate surviving. That is why I believe that the Slovak economy has to be built on technological companies having innovation potential, being able to create a product and being able to be regionally or globally successful with it. This is the only way how they can grow in a long-term and be able to employ Slovak talents and remunerate them appropriately, of course.

I would like to mention one more sector, which I believe Slovakia can be globally successful in. It is the gaming sector. With new technologies, such as metaverse, NFT or Unreal Engine 5, there is a great growth coming for this segment. The game industry already accounts for 200 billion market and 340 billion is expected for 2027. Certain Slovak companies have

already been successful in the business and the segment is able to absorb many talented and creative people. I strongly believe that this segment will be noticed by competent people in politics and they will take it not only as a toy for children but something that can generate revenues to the Slovak economy in a long term.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

One of the key issues is to finally properly reform our education system. Children cannot be taught what ten or twenty years ago was taught. It is a completely different world now. So is the labour market. You need people with completely different skills and we are unable to reflect those challenges in the education system. For several years Ness Slovakia has been operating in the IT sector, which is permanently looking for tenths, hundreds of people on the labour market, which is extremely difficult.

The second key issue is the support for startups and development of innovative possibilities in companies. We cannot be a country that only receives innovations and products from abroad. We have to make those. That is why need to build the environment, technological background and set the mindset in the entire society. Estonia is a great example for us. It is a country that throws new young companies to the market, which are about to regionally and globally establish. If were to look for the future "European Spotify", I would look for it in Estonia.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

In Ness Slovakia, we see AmCham as one of the most active chambers of commerce in Slovakia. As our headquarters is located in the USA and our business partnership includes cooperation with many US companies, then AmCham is a logical path for us. In addition, we appreciate a professional approach of AmCham and a large networking potential for the business.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

As I have been operating in marketing and brand building for more than thirteen years, it is the result of my work. You see how a brand is evolving and people respond to it nicely, that is the greatest motivation for the marketer. We are currently building the Ness Slovakia brand power as a long-term and successful player on the Slovak IT market, which is a proof of our stable and ever evolving win-win cooperation with our customers.

WWW.NESS.SK

JOZEF BARDÍK

CEO CF GROUP,
MANAGING DIRECTOR
FOODTECH VENTURES



Jozef Bardík is an entrepreneur and investor with experience in financial advisory (Deloitte), consulting (McKinsey&Company) and private equity (Advent International). After coming back to Slovakia, Jozef invested into several food businesses including Regal Burger which he co-founded as well as various technology startups (JobAngels, Tracware, Trifft, Eatster). Currently, Jozef manages FoodTech Ventures - an investment group focused on merging F&B and technology and actively serves as CEO of CF Group, its F&B franchising portfolio company with brands including Regal Burger, banh-mi-ba, La Garnacha, Poke Bistro, CuppaJoe and others. Jozef still serves as an external advisor to the McKinsey & Company and is actively supporting various non profit organizations active in education space including Provida Foundation, "Tvoj Buddy" programme or "Detstvo detom".

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Covid-19 changed the industry and made the focus on delivery much more important. We were ready, as we became one of the first chains in Slovakia having all our stores doing delivery, launching our own ordering site (with free delivery to doctors, policemen, firemen and other most important helpers in the first wave of COVID), connecting our POS system to delivery platforms etc. Therefore, some of our stores actually had higher sales during covid than before.

Another important innovation is digitalization in general - and once again expedited due to the impact of COVID. It is starting with digital marketing, digital ordering, quality POS system integrating everything, other ordering options (app, QR codes, self-service kiosks), connected loyalty system etc. To be at the forefront of this development, we created our own tech stack with our sister company TracwarePOS (part of FoodTech Ventures, our mother company), which is covering all these aspects, and which helps us a lot in our growth.

Actually, this summer we are opening our own food hall in Digital Park, where some of our AmCham members are located, and this will be a place where all these digitizing tools will be combined. Our customers will be ordering primarily via self-service kiosks, or they can order from their office through a mobile app (with an integrated loyalty tool) where the whole food hall will serve as one large cloud kitchen, so they can order from various concept in one go. Finally, having a burger with spring rolls instead of fries, or ordering a burger for yourself and Poke for your colleague would not require them to stand in 2 lines :) Actually, when ordering via mobile as they leave their offices, - their food will already be waiting for them by the time they arrive at the restaurant.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Well, not a business sector per se, but I believe that the future of Slovakia is dependent on education. That's the reason why we were supporting various education-focused initiatives in Slovakia, including Detstvo Detom, Tvoj buddy, Nexteria or Leaf. All of these are tackling the challenge from different perspectives, sometimes still in a pilot

phase, but I believe that these initiatives will be the ones having a bigger impact on our long-term future than most of the companies.

In any case - we will be moving to the knowledge economy as salaries in the country are growing and overall environment is developing, therefore I am very glad that a start-up ecosystem is finally emerging. We are still far behind some of the other CEE countries, but I hope that this will receive continuous support from both the business ecosystem as well as the government. And I am very glad that AmCham also focused on initiatives like AI in this direction

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Education, as I already mentioned - we need to move our school system forward. Ease of doing business - we have fallen in Ease of doing business ranking, and being a small and open economy, we will really be able to move up once again. Further, digitalization of economy with the aim to also simplify state bureaucracy - digital tools can be our huge advantage, but of course not in the way as it was done for the past 10 years.

Otherwise in sector orientation - I don't think there shall be too many goals for this. Economy is a living organism and what the government and 3rd sector can do is to prepare the ecosystem and make the life of entrepreneurs easier - not set goals per se.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Amazing network of people and companies, eager to dedicate their time to shape the entrepreneurial ecosystem of this country.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Being able to do new things and move us forward. Therefore, also in the F&B space, we are trying not to do just a simple local food chain, but we are expanding internationally, adding new concepts to the group (even though Regal Burger is still our core brand, the group includes also brands banh-mi-ba, Poke Bistro, La Garnacha, CuppaJoe cafe, 204 roastery and others) and play with digital and new trends in general.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Teacher development is being enhanced by both technology and psychology. One of the major changes we face is that of the teacher's role; they are no longer just providers of resources; they are now facilitators of the learning process. Not only has the pandemic accelerated the need for autonomous and motivated learners in our workforce, in the teaching world, it has also accelerated the need for English language trainers capable of guiding and motivating our students to reach their full potential when speaking English.

This shift requires the reskilling and upskilling of teachers so that they are equipped to meet the needs of busy, stressed, but demanding students who need to be confident in their use of English.

I believe that language training that doesn't deliver an immediate impact on work performance is a thing of the past. We need a workforce operating at its full potential when interacting in English to keep up with a fast-changing economy.

Language training needs to deliver results and not just be a company benefit to be attended.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

That's an easy one for me - I strongly believe it is education. The current mismatch between our educational reality and the needs of our economy has become impossible to ignore. First of all, we need to get the best people into schools, teams of professionals with the experience and skills to innovate. Teachers are the main asset of our education and assets need to be taken care of. We can no longer ignore the fact that psychology has clearly shown the crucial importance of role models in education and training. To build effective teams and to implement change requires schools to have well-functioning HR departments and experienced HR professionals. Teachers are the backbone of a successful and adaptable education system and their wider needs should be recognised and supported. I am convinced that a successful future Slovak economy has its foundations in our education system. We are a small country with practically zero potential to be industrially or agriculturally significant, let alone to be able to do so in a sustainable way.

We need to keep our brain trust at home to make innovations happen and to form a solid base for our economy to grow. If we plant nothing, we will grow nothing.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

First of all, to support adult education businesses in order to keep our workforce cognitively fit and able to face our fast changing and demanding business world. We need to nurture knowledge-based ventures, support the IT industry, sport, the arts, sustainable tourism and last but not least, develop green solutions in each one of those fields.

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WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF AMCHAM?

The networking opportunities that give us all a chance not just to meet new people, but also to foster our relationships. Also, there is the range and variety of topics AmCham covers and the knowledge base that we can all turn to. It has always been important to facilitate meetings and educational events, but at times like these, when the pace of life is more of a gallop than a trot, to meet people, to chat and to learn from each other has become more important than ever.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

To have my own school gives me a chance to work with people I respect as professionals and like as human beings. It is my space in which to experiment and try out new approaches. I have a dream that one day our approach to language training will be followed by others and we will make our own little mark on educational history. Education is my passion and this century, being the century of information and education, is the century to live in.

The Bridge

KLAUDIA BEDNÁROVÁ

DIRECTOR
THE BRIDGE - ENGLISH
LANGUAGE CENTRE, S.R.O.



Klaudia graduated from the PF UKF in Nitra and in 2009 she founded a private language school the Bridge - English Language Centre. The Bridge is now the only internationally recognized and EAQUALS accredited language school in Slovakia. She is a founding member of both the Slovak Association of Language School and the Slovak Chamber of English Language Teachers. Klaudia established and runs projects such as Eltforum.sk - an annual international conference for teachers of English and the Bridge re-boot camp for teachers - a unique summer school with a holistic approach to learning and teacher wellbeing. Her passion and professional interest is in effective learning strategies and the impact of language training on work performance.

WWW.THEBRIDGE.SK

FIPRA

TOMÁŠ BERETA

PARTNER
FIPRA SLOVAKIA



Prior to joining FIPRA Slovakia, a leading government relations and public affairs firm, Tomáš worked as an executive assistant at Cassidy & Associates in Washington, DC, where he was responsible for business development and international accounts. He also worked as an assistant to the Member of the German Bundestag. Since joining FIPRA Slovakia Tomáš has been primarily responsible for management of accounts in Defense & Security, ICT, New Technologies, Transportation & Logistics and Finance. Tomáš has a strong grounding in international political and economic relations. He is a member of several expert committees and advisory boards. He holds a M.A. in Political Sciences from the University of Vienna in Austria as well as Master's degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from Slovakia.

COVID-19 HAS STRESS-TESTED THE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS INDUSTRY

The pandemic has affected all industries, but it has had a bigger impact on some firms and sectors than on others. The risks of infection from different activities, the ability of businesses to operate remotely, and the policies to contain the spread of the virus have each played a role and affected current business, and expectations about the future.

Industries that rely on personal interactions have suffered the hardest hit. This includes a variety of recreational services, such as gyms, accommodation, and food services (pubs, cafes, and restaurants), that recorded a sales drop of over 50%. However, the pandemic has also influenced many consulting services, whose nature of work requires face-to-face contact with clients and partners.

The government relations industry has not been an exception in this regard, on the contrary. After more than two years, it is safe to say that many government and public affairs professionals have finally adapted to the new reality and have found new ways of working and collaborating. This applies at least to the ones who have survived the unprecedented stress test of their services and (more importantly) their relationships.

Among the biggest challenges for public affairs firms was not only spending extra hours monitoring, analysing and navigating a new influx of pandemic-related rules, but also ensuring that clients keep receiving the best possible advisory they are used to, no matter how uncertain or changing the political, regulatory, or business environments suddenly became. Firms generally differ in their ability to withstand the disruption, and in the decisions they take in the face of the considerable uncertainty about future business conditions. Many firms offering public affairs services have tried to endure this difficult time by hoping everything goes back to normal sooner than later. However, this approach was proved wrong, and they are no longer in business.

What is more, the pandemic has tested the very core of all firms active in the government relations industry – i.e., the quality of their working relationships. While many firms offering public affairs services used to boast about their extensive network of valuable contacts across all spheres of our society, the pandemic has revealed the naked truth. Strict lockdown rules and social distancing have made it impossible to meet in person and exchange sensitive pieces of information on various important matters. As a result, many firms on the market have been forced to improvise and undertake alternative risky solutions since they could not get ahold of their assets to consult matters in real time. Such strategies backfired, and many firms have significantly cut down their services portfolio, leaving out the public affairs and government relations services completely.

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The pandemic has tested the very core of all firms active in the government relations industry – the quality of their working relationships.”

There is no doubt that the dust will settle, and the situation on the market will stabilize at some point. Many firms will give in to temptation and start offering public affairs services again. However, looking onwards and upwards, the biggest lesson for all firms active in the government relations industry in the post-pandemic era should be to constantly invest in growing and protecting their network at all costs and building high-quality working relationships that last!

MARIA BIELIKOVA

DIRECTOR-GENERAL
KEMPELEN INSTITUTE
OF INTELLIGENT
TECHNOLOGIES (KInIT)



Maria developed the long-term vision and strategy for KInIT. She also conducts research focusing on user modeling and personalization. Recently, she has been working on data analysis and modeling of antisocial behavior on the Web. Maria is active in discussions on trustworthy AI at the national and European levels. She is the chairwoman of the Permanent Committee for Ethics and Regulation of AI established by the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization. She was a member of the European Commission Joint Research Center Board of Governors and High Level Expert Group on AI. Before her work at KInIT, Maria was a full professor at the Slovak University of Technology, former dean and a lead of the PeWe research group (pewe.sk).

WE AT KEMPELEN INSTITUTE OF INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGIES (KInIT) DEVELOP AND CIRCULATE AI TALENT. WE ARE COMMITTED TO CONNECT EXCELLENT SCIENCE WITH INNOVATIVE COMPANIES, THEIR NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES.

Institutes similar to KInIT can be found practically in all Western countries and they generally function as public-private partnerships. They create a bridge between academia, business and industry, thus supporting their deeper interconnectedness.

KInIT's biggest potential lies in connecting business with research, both basic and applied. Basic research is very important in this context, as it is the driving force of innovation, especially in connection with applied research and knowledge transfer for commercial benefit. Until now, there has been no direct support for basic research in the private sector in Slovakia.

KInIT can be perceived as a catalyst for the Slovak innovation ecosystem in the area of intelligent technologies. We are piloting processes based on best practices from abroad. It's about finding common ground with our partners from the business world. They teach us to perceive the world through the business lens; we are looking for research opportunities in their business – it's about finding the right mindset.

KInIT is a project with a well chosen field of activity – excellent research in topics related to AI and other areas of computer science, with connections to other disciplines. Artificial intelligence has amazing potential. I believe that with support from the private and public sectors, KInIT project will be successful and replicable. If not, we'll still manage to learn a lot. That much is already evident – I have learned more in the past year and a half than over previous decades.

My personal mission is to contribute to the personal growth of as many principled, committed and entrepreneurial experts as possible. It can no longer be doubted that people are the key, not only to innovation. It's not enough to be an expert and to be good at one's profession. Integrity, commitment and entrepreneurship are all of key importance.

There's still not enough engagement and entrepreneurial spirit in Slovakia, although I see tremendous progress. It is about the ratio – how many committed and entrepreneurial experts who are willing to respectfully follow a long-term vision will we have in Slovakia?

The innovation ecosystem in Slovakia is severely fragmented with weak links between the individual sectors (academia, business, government, NGOs) and even within the sectors. Interdisciplinary collaboration is also lacking. Here I appreciate the great role of AmCham in connecting all key players including collaboration with other associations. KInIT is a proud AmCham member.

KInIT has the potential to significantly support Slovakia's involvement in the EU initiative in building European centers of excellence for Artificial Intelligence.

KInIT's strategic goals are a combination of the intention to increase talent concentration in Central Europe and especially in Slovakia, to achieve excellence in basic and applied research based on responsibility, ethics and economic sustainability, supported by the intention aimed at team and individual growth and building a culture of trust, openness and respect.



Data Analysis
for Green
Energy

Web & User
Data
Processing

Ethics &
Human Values
in Technology

Information
Security

Natural
Language
Processing

DANA BLECHOVÁ

CEO
BLECHOVA MANAGEMENT
CONSULTING, S.R.O.



Dana Blechová started her HR consulting career in an international executive search firm in 1996 and in 2003 she was entrusted to build up together with Austrian colleagues a Slovak subsidiary of HR consulting company Iventa. In the position of a Country Manager she covered the Slovak market and for one year the Czech market until the end of the company's operation in CEE region. Since April 2014 she is representing her own company Blechova Management Consulting, s.r.o. specialized in executive search, direct search and outplacement in Slovakia but still cooperating with partners from Austria and CEE. She majored Computer Science from University of Economics, Bratislava and currently is attending Managerial Psychology, MBA program at European School of Business and Management in Prague.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Automation and digitalization is present everywhere, even in our sector. We changed off-line environment to online. The most of the interviews are conducted via technological platforms, such as MS Teams and Zoom. This makes our work more flexible and within health threats safer. The companies shifted to home office and currently the most preferred model is hybrid work. The labour market is developing, still new skills are needed, as well as new job positions are created. Employees are looking for a work-life balance, as well as values in the companies and meaning at work.

Some companies implement 4-day working week to motivate their present and future employees. Well-being and health of employees are becoming another important factor for present and future employment. Although there is a strong focus on automation and cost optimization, the personal aspect of hiring and personal interactions remains crucial.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

The last years have shown us how important digitalization and automation in all sectors and companies are, and also eased our work in the era of pandemics and lockdowns. Therefore IT and technology segments will play the crucial role in the Slovak economy. Not to have enough workforce on the market the companies have to invest more funds in automation and some activities performed by employees will be replaced by robots. We work with more data and information, and we need to filter and analyze it. We will need software solutions and other technology applications.

Furthermore our population is getting older what will require future focus on silver economy.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Critical thinking, education system and focus on value added industries. Very important is to attract talents to stay in Slovakia, or even to return from abroad. This is not only a task for

government and other organisations, but also families. Many times we do not realize, what home country can offer to their people. We have a possibility to improve country and life here. People are the main asset we have, therefore they should be educated, open-minded, ideally with international experience and with critical thinking. The last one shape our future, also our political environment and system in general. The special chapter is our education system which does not reflect on the needs of the Slovak market, is very old-fashioned and does not help economy to prepare qualified graduates. We can see the companies try to substitute schools having their own training programs, but also opening academic programs with vocational, secondary schools, as well as Universities to improve technical and soft skills of their future employees.

We still have many sectors with lower value-added, also big discrepancies among regions, therefore the regional development and long-term strategy with focus on knowledge-based economy should be another priority in Slovakia.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Since we are a micro-enterprise, we appreciate very much networking possibilities and access to information from valuable sources not only locally, but also worldwide. I am part of AmCham from 2004, I appreciate their professionalism but also human approach and support. We are a member of the biggest Chamber of Commerce on the Slovak market, can partially influence the system, legislation in this country, can express our opinions to current economic topics, which makes us very proud.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Always people and the results. I am happy to find the best possible job for the candidate and to help our clients to succeed on the market with the best possible employees. The clients and the candidates are usually talented, smart and decent people and the cooperation with them is very meaningful. To see the longlasting successful placements on the labor markets with people who develop their companies and shape Slovak economy is the main reason why I am doing this job for more than 20 years.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

The Gastro industry was one of the most affected industries during the pandemic in the past two years in Slovakia. Despite the tough environment, McDonald's survived the past months thanks to our hard-working people and relationship with our franchisees, along with effective channels such as McDrive and McDelivery which helped us to sell our products safely and remotely. Late last year, we were completing the rollout of the concept EOTF (experience of the future) in all restaurants in Slovakia with key attributes like kiosks, personal service, and McDelivery selling channel which has a great overview to grow within the near future. Later this year, McDonald's in Slovakia will introduce mobile order and pay, which guests can use to order and pay right from their car or their seat in the dining room. Many restaurants are beginning to offer these amenities. We will continue to lead in the technology space to offer the best quality products to our customers. We plan to continue to bring packaging alternatives to reduce the amount of plastic waste from our restaurants. We realize our leadership in the gastro industry is imperative, so we are committed to bringing to our customers the best shopping experience and positive approach to communities where we are established.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

The Slovak economy is recovering from a deep shock after the pandemic like in other affected countries. Even ongoing war in Ukraine is hard to predict shaping the economy. The impact of the crisis differed significantly over time and across sectors, firms and workers. We see a big need in the future and any sector regarding sustainably and it's the same in Slovakia too. We prefer this approach in the industry within operations, development and product packaging. Although the biggest sector is automotive and IT, sustainable industries are considered the most potential business in the future, and McDonald's will be part of a sustainable future.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

It's good to see that Slovakia has a strong Recovery and Resilience plan which is part of the common response of the EU countries to the steep economic decline as a consequence of the pandemic. Slovakia must rise to the long-term challenge of avoiding the risk of stagnation of living standards. A combination of investments, reforms and efficient public policies will allow the country to start coming closer to the standard of living and achieve significant and sustainable improvement in the key areas affecting the quality of life in Slovakia. From our point of view it is important to produce food, promote sustainable agriculture, ensure access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy for all, build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation, and take action to combat climate change and its impacts and continue to work to achieve gender equality and diversity. We would like to see an innovative economy with an agile labour market connected to automation and digitalisation.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Membership of AmCham affords us to meet the leaders of the Slovak government and industry, foster new networks with many business people and sector peers and allowed us to contribute to thought-leadership and policy advocacy. AmCham has the ability to promote the value of US companies and the significant contribution we make to the Slovak economy and society. We appreciate the information, data and resources on issues affecting our business.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU AT WORK?

My motivation comes from seeing people from all backgrounds – men and women, people born locally or not, finding success in our system. And success looks different for different people. Some want the flexibility of a part-time job. Some want a full-time job offering a career of growth. And some want to run their own business. You can do all of that here at McDonald's.



DAN CAMP

MANAGING DIRECTOR,
CZECH REPUBLIC & SLOVAKIA
MCDONALD'S



Dan Camp has been with McDonald's for over 30 years, starting as a crew taking orders on the front line. Over the years, he worked his way from crew to management to supervision, and then into consulting to franchisees. He also led a team of professors teaching management curricula at Hamburger University in Chicago. He came through many leadership positions in Project Management and Operation teams. In September 2021, he replaced Tomasz Rogacz as the CEO of McDonald's CR and SK, making him the first American to hold the post.

RADOSLAV DANILÁK

CEO
TACHYUM S.R.O.



Dr. Radoslav Danilak, founder and CEO of Tachyum, has over 25 years of semiconductor industry experience and over 100 patents designing state-of-the-art processing systems. In 2016 he founded Tachyum to disrupt markets by solving the performance plateau of nanometer class processors. Dr. Danilak was founder and CEO of Skyera, a supplier of ultra-dense solid-state storage systems, acquired by HGST/WD. At Wave Computing, he architected the 10GHz Processing Element of their deep learning DPU. He was co-founder and CTO of SandForce, acquired by LSI, where he pioneered MLC flash controllers and solved MLC flash endurance limited by device physics. He was a chipset and GPU architect at nVidia, a CPU architect at Nishan Systems and Toshiba, and chief architect of their 64b x86 CPU at Gizmo Tech.

More than ever before, we are witnessing the world changing through digitalization. An economy focused on innovation is crucial. Artificial Intelligence (AI) should bring more than 20% growth to countries GDP, in the near future. PwC's global AI study predicts that AI's contribution to the global economy will exceed \$15.7 trillion by 2030.

Faster and sustainable computational speed is critical for the proliferation of AI-based solutions for advancement in all aspects of human life: for faster drug discovery and vaccine development, climate change impact assessment, weather forecasting, personalized medicine and much more. The Destination Earth (DestinE) initiative and its development of digital earth twins are key to predicting the effects and building resilience to climate change.

When it comes to Slovakia, the country needs to shift its economy to a higher level. Transformation of the economy under the influence of innovative technologies and global megatrends is one of Slovakia's priorities. The 2030 Strategy for Digital Transformation of Slovakia puts primary emphasis on innovative technologies such as AI and HPC (High-Performance Computing), which will become the new engines of economic growth, and will strengthen competitiveness.

And that's also the point where Tachyum can contribute. After we undertook our mission to conquer the processor performance plateau in nanometer-class chips and the systems they power, we succeeded in launching our first commercial product. Tachyum's Prodigy universal processor unifies the functionality of a CPU (Central Processing Unit) for general-purpose processing, a GPGPU (General-Purpose Graphics Processing Unit) for HPC and hardware acceleration of algorithms that process large blocks of data in parallel, and a TPU (Tensor Processing Unit) for accelerating AI applications, all into a single homogeneous processor architecture, which is poised to overcome the challenges of increasing data center power consumption, low server utilization and stalled performance scaling.

Prodigy's performance exceeds its conservative design targets. With its higher performance, performance per dollar, and performance per watt, it will enable Slovakia to procure and operate the world's fastest AI supercomputer, delivering up to 128 exaflops of AI computing performance.

A 128 AI exaflops machine (that's 128 billion, billion AI operations per second) based on Tachyum's Prodigy platform will enable Slovakia to deliver, for the first time in the history of humanity, a human brain-scale AI supercomputer.



We have long believed in our ability to overcome Moore's Law to transform hyperscale data centers into true universal computing centers. With the launch of Prodigy, we have begun the revolution. Prodigy's ability to enable human brain-scale AI while simultaneously reducing data center power consumption and lowering the TCO of hyperscale data centers and supercomputer systems, is a breakthrough for a projected \$100 billion industry. By launching Prodigy, we are advancing not only the state of technology but making the world a greener place as well.

The world's fastest AI supercomputer, built in Slovakia, is a chance for the country to join the world stage. Unless a country is a superpower, it's not easy to attract the world's attention. For a small country to get the support of other nations and peoples, it needs something unique, something that's the best in the world.

The EU consumes 30% of the world's compute resources but operates only 6% of the global compute resources. As much as 84% of data is processed outside the EU. European AI today is in the hands of other countries, misaligned with EU interests.

With the fastest AI supercomputer in the world, Slovakia and the entire EU will move from the back of the supercomputer race to the front and a world-leading position. With its computing capacity, energy efficiency, and cost, the Prodigy-based Slovakian supercomputer will democratize AI for good, and AI for all!

Artificial Intelligence is a disruptive technology, as many scientists say it is even more powerful than nuclear science. Like any technology, you can use AI for good or for bad. It is very important to use AI properly. Democratization of AI is very important and removes the monopoly of a very few rich nations who currently dominate this technology, and it allows equitable access to technology by everybody throughout the world.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

The energy industry is a sector that is currently undergoing a very dynamic development, the basis of which is innovation. For example, the introduction of renewable energy sources throughout the entire value chain – from production, distribution through to consumption. Conditions are being created to support the emergence of new actors in the market, such as so-called self-consumers or energy communities producing energy primarily for their own use from renewable sources. We, the “traditional” market players, are also ready to respond to these challenges and are preparing new business models based on the principles of the circular economy. For example, building new or upgrading existing infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of renewable gases, especially hydrogen, as well as creating cross-sectoral synergies will be a major challenge.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

The energy industry is undoubtedly one of the sectors that will have a major impact on the future shape of the Slovak economy. Meeting European and Slovak climate protection goals and reducing the dependence on fossil fuel imports will depend on how successful European countries will be in reducing the negative impacts of their activities and in sourcing and using renewable energy sources. The opportunity for Slovakia is to build European leadership in research and development, production and energy use of renewable and low-carbon gases – biomethane and hydrogen, based on locally available resources, where Slovakia has the ambition to play a significant role. Today, common goals in the field of climate protection unite us in the search for approaches that will bring breakthrough solutions.

For a gasified country like Slovakia, with an established infrastructure and modernised gas production facilities, the path of gradually replacing natural gas with renewable gases is the most cost-effective solution.

This is where the role of large, staffed and capital-intensive companies such as Veolia is very important. By cooperating and partnering with other major players (stakeholders), including

research institutions, they are able to turn ecological transformation into concrete projects and at the same time help smaller companies or innovative start-ups. A nice example is our project for production of renewable and low-carbon gases in the region of central Slovakia, which could bring a significant amount of hydrogen to the market, over 5,000 tonnes per year, with applications in the energy sector as well as in transport or industry.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Veolia Energia Slovensko Group is a member of several chambers of commerce and professional associations, both at national and European level. Among the main benefits of these memberships is the opportunity to participate in professional discussions, to comment on legislative proposals and strategies, and to participate in discussions with public sector representatives, not only on energy issues. We have a number of experts working in the various sectors that make up our business lines in the energy industry, waste management and water management, and who are able to put their experience “at the service of the state”, if I may call it that. We see active involvement in shaping the business environment as our social responsibility. We have been a member of the American Chamber of Commerce for over 10 years. Naturally, we joined the Energy Committee, which we viewed as a pleasant cooperative body, bringing together representatives of companies from different sub-areas. Sometimes professional issues are easier to discuss on “neutral” ground, and AmCham is such a platform and provides a space for professional discussions also with the participation of government representatives.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

For me, working with people is a strong motivation. We have many smart people in our group who move us forward with their work and results and are often an inspiration for me. I am also motivated by the opportunity to work within the strong multinational Veolia Group, which provides us with important support, whether in terms of international know-how or funding for our new projects. The heating and energy sector is one of our strategic areas, and our joint effort is to reliably and safely provide our services to all our customers.



PETER DOBRÝ

CEO
VEOLIA ENERGIA
SLOVENSKO GROUP



Peter Dobrý has been with the Veolia Group since 2006. Among other things, he was responsible for the economic and financial area, and later he was also in charge of the commercial policy and business development of the Veolia division in Slovakia. Since October 2016, he has held the position of Chief Commercial Officer of the Veolia Energia Slovensko Group and since 2017 he has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Veolia Energia Slovensko Group. He is married and has two daughters.

WWW.VEOLIAENERGIA.SK

WOLFGANG H. FISCHER

CEO BRATISLAVA
COMPETENCE CENTER
ZURICH INSURANCE
COMPANY



I am a German citizen – born in Munich – and proud father of an 18 year old son. Before having started my professional career, I have studied law – with labour law as special subject – at Passau University and Würzburg University (both in Germany). Subsequently I have spent the biggest portion of my career in insurance or insurance related positions across Europe (Germany, Spain, UK, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Russia and Slovakia) – now 17 years with Zurich Insurance Company Ltd, including the current 6 years I am leading Zurich Bratislava Competence Center as CEO. During my career I have qualified as PMP and MBCI which supports my interest in project work and business resilience.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

I have decided to relocate to Slovakia exactly for the reasons which still motivate me in work every day: working with a great set of highly skilled and pragmatic colleagues which do not see problems but only challenges we can solve together. In addition, the chance to grow, onboard new services and design the local operation in Slovakia with quite some freedom – supported by dedicated local leadership team – is exciting to me and provides me with the energy I need to stay on top of the things. Furthermore, the straightforward size of our local business service center market allows me to know my colleagues running the other centers or business in the country personally as well as other key persons which easily supports exchange of experiences which is in favour of my collaborative workstyle. And finally, I love to work in a country rich of history, culture and great nature which supports my motivation a lot, too.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Firstly, AmCham and BSCF memberships offers to me what I mentioned above – personal contacts with other business leaders for exchange of experiences and ideas. The great value of this collaboration was extremely visible at the beginning of COVID when we met on a weekly basis to discuss measures – but it is also appreciated on a day-to-day basis.

Secondly AmCham and BSCF are orchestrating a lot of great initiatives – from improving our labour code via strengthening the education system to granting support for those who need it, 2022 blood donation and supporting Ukrainian refugees as the most recent examples.

So in a nutshell – creating a powerful business community and providing good advice is what I appreciate the most.



ZURICH

MARIÁN FRIDRICH

HEAD OF SLOVAKIA
CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD



Marián is Head of Slovakia since April 2020. He is representing the company on local and international markets and is responsible for the Slovak office business activity and is actively involved at the Capital Markets department.

Before that Marián was the Head of Transactions at IAD Investments. Before joining IAD, Marián held a position of Senior Real Estate Lending Manager for Tatra Banka. His career started in Cushman Wakefield's Prague office as a retail consultant.

Having over 15 years' experience in real estate market in Slovakia and across CEE Marián has concluded various deal structures transacting over €500 million in debt and commercial properties.

WHAT ARE TRENDS INFLUENCING COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SECTOR?

To support our future, the urban ecosystem needs to be at the heart of urban and development planning. While some might argue that's a constraint on development, it's actually an opportunity. Sustainable cities are a critical feature of a successful economic and social approach to how and where we live our lives and play a role in the health of our environment. Cushman & Wakefield is committed to a sustainable future, achieving a balance between environmental, technological, economic and social objectives.

WHAT IS SITUATION ON THE INVESTMENT MARKET?

Generally positive, we know there are currently several ongoing transactions in all asset classes, the majority of which we believe should close during the course of this year. This demonstrates the strong demand among investors after two years of increased uncertainty because of COVID-19. Although the pandemic measures have been already lifted and businesses are now operating without any restrictions, the ongoing war in Ukraine and its implications, raising inflation and interest rates may potentially have negative impact on investment activity.

What is important are underlying fundamentals such as construction and development activity, consumer spending, online retailing and usage of office space that impact overall leasing activity. Even though there are differences between individual segments of commercial real estate the overall activity is still well perceived by investors and that is one of the factors positively influencing investors' demand. Other key factor playing a vital role is overall market liquidity which thanks to the

capital capacity of local investors (e.g. regional mutual fund platforms) is being increasingly constant.

WHICH RE SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL?

This is a million Euro question :-). If we deep-dive into details of each segment of commercial real estate we find various answers to what is the opportunity and threat. I will give an example, retail has been hit hard by COVID therefore opportunity is recovery in consumer spending and footfall. On the other hand online retailing is growing rapidly which may or may not be a threat to traditional retail but presents an opportunity for logistics and specifically for last mile or so called city logistics. COVID has also influenced office segment and people learnt to work from home however companies and people realize need for interaction and socializing and need to provide an environment that has added value to firm's employees. This is now coming to the market in the form of new features, functions and amenities offices will offer to its tenants.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU AT WORK?

My ultimate motivation are people I work with. Having great team of people who share enthusiasm for what they do is an amazing driver to get up in the morning and come to work. I have worked in real estate all my professional career in various roles and have to say consulting is one of the most flexible and creative areas. Everyday is about gaining the most insight in the markets and knowledge of what is going on to help clients take informed decisions and to deliver solutions that create most added value. Last but not least is the fact we can often see outcome of our work in real world since beauty of real estate is that you can touch it.



MATEJ FTÁČNIK

CO-FOUNDER AND CEO
VACUUMLABS



Matej Ftáčnik co-founded Vacuumlabs in 2012 and became its CEO in 2021.

Today he leads a company of 400 people supporting its clients around the globe. In 2019, Matej was named EY Technology Entrepreneur of the Year. This was in recognition of his lengthy track record founding businesses and his significant contribution to the start-up ecosystem. In 2011 Matej co-founded the first Slovak cowork space and business accelerator, The Spot. Thanks to the continuous success of Vacuumlabs, Matej was able to help with co-founding the Fintech Hub Slovakia alongside MasterCard and Slovak Fintech Association. Matej's initiative and investment lies behind Daylight - the first LGBT+ digital banking platform in the United States.

Recently, he won the prestigious 'Crystal Wing' award in Slovakia and also became an ambassador of the initiative 'For Innovative Slovakia'.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

We are watching fintechs around the world start pushing their biggest resources into niche sectors to empower unbanked and financially underserved communities. This is a shift towards more personalized banking services that we've seen coming for some time now.

We believe that whatever products are created, their main purpose should be focused not on the few elite, but on those who have been deprived of their basic needs or very often don't have enough ways and means to understand how they can get the most of what they earn.

So to us, the most exciting and also most important innovation in our sector isn't the innumerable amount of crypto apps - on the contrary - it is creating products that are making finances more accessible and understandable for the marginal communities.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

First of all, we want to share that we are extremely proud of how many exceptional talents in Slovakia are creating world class services and products.

As a company focused on product development for the fintech industry, we have spent a lot of time analyzing this area. And given the fact that we want to provide our clients with the most innovative and sustainable solutions, we see the impact of software product development on society every day.

We wouldn't be far from the truth saying that Slovak flagship exports are banking services. As pioneers in this sector in many innovations - such as the use of biometrics while signing in to your banking app - we're confident that this sector will be continually searching for more secure and unconventional solutions.

Furthermore, we see potential in the online service industry. Slovakia has a few examples of successful startups that are helping to make our work and life easier and better.

We also can't forget to mention all the other sectors trying their hardest to stop the climate crisis by developing products and services with sustainability in mind.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Even after 18 years of being a member state of the EU and NATO, we still see Slovakia as a very conservative and rather closed country. What we hope to see in the upcoming years, and hopefully we will be able to take part in forming it, is an economy open to external investments and capital, innovation, digitalization, and with a better network to support startups and small businesses.

We believe that all of this is currently available in our country but blocked by the old systems, bureaucracy, and a ton of paperwork. We believe that all companies associated with the initiative 'For Innovative Slovakia' will be able to speed up the change required to move Slovakia forward. By coming together to support these changes, in 10 years we will have a fully digitalized society with equal access to information and financial tools.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Thanks to being a member of AmCham, we are given the unique opportunity to talk with representatives of both the public and private sector about the crucial issues our society is facing and promote our own initiatives in a space with other inspirational companies. We also appreciate the added value of strengthening the partnership between Slovakia and the US that is overarching the whole platform.

We feel confident that AmCham and its members will stand by our side when we co-found new initiatives to help young entrepreneurs succeed in their business. We always believe that only by supporting new ideas and exciting technologies will we be able to see groundbreaking projects to thrive.

We are one of the best companies to work for in the world and we work with some of the most interesting clients all around the globe. KPMG's position as a strong player on the Slovak market is a reflection of the trust that clients and partners have placed in our brand over 30 years. At the same time, it is a confirmation of the expertise of our people, the innovations we bring and the professionalism of our team. We are convinced that our success goes hand in hand with clients one.

We have always focused on client experience. The only difference is that today we are doing it with the help of technology. Our ability to see and foresee our clients' needs is key for delivering the client experience we are known for. **We always align our work across service lines based on our clients' needs as opposed to trying to fit those needs into some preexistent workflows.** This is only possible when topic experts with different personalities, different work styles, different backgrounds can work together as one firm. This is our differentiator.

Our Partners have all been raised within KPMG. Some of them joined us right after school, others became part of our team mid-way through their career. Today, they are co-owners of our Firm. **It's great to see that we can support the growth of our company's future leaders.**

In KPMG we believe a real commitment to corporate responsibility (CR) unites an organization, strengthens its reputation and creates vital links with the communities in which it operates. **KPMG is recognized for the efforts we make to alleviate poverty, support education and protect the environment around the world.** KPMG member firms work diligently with other companies, governments and non-government organizations to address these problems and make a positive difference in peoples' health, welfare and prosperity.

ABOUT KPMG IN SLOVAKIA

KPMG in Slovakia is an independent member of KPMG International network and was established in 1991; since that time we have served more than 4000 clients. Among our success stories belong Slovak small and medium sized companies, corporations, government entities and private investors across all major industries. They all benefit from our deep knowledge of the local business environment combined with the experience and the resources of the worldwide network of KPMG member firms.



LYGIA FULLBROOK

DIRECTOR
KPMG IN SLOVAKIA



Lygia has over 20 years of professional experience working with companies based in Slovakia and abroad. She joined KPMG in 2006 and since her passion is to connect finance professionals with the right career opportunities, utilizing her experience and network, in 2013 she created KPMG's Talent Solutions department, a new business line in KPMG Slovakia. For the last 8 years Lygia has been helping clients solve their challenges resulting from lack of suitable finance talent by providing temporary and permanent placement of finance professionals with BIG4 audit background. As KPMG's Sector Leader for the Shared Services Centers (SSC) sector, Lygia is member of a specialized group dedicated to this sector, organized by AmCham Slovakia. For the last years Lygia has been running platforms for finance and HR Leaders of SSCs in Slovakia with the aim to provide a safe space for sharing of knowledge.



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MARIUSZ GATZA

CEO
ORANGE SLOVENSKO



Mariusz Gatza has more than 20 years' experience at Orange Polska. He held various senior positions at the company including Deputy CEO in charge of the business and consumer markets. He was also responsible for introducing major innovative offers like Orange Love and Orange Flex. After successful tenure as CEO in Orange Moldova he moved to the current position of CEO of Orange Slovensko. Mariusz Gatza holds the Master's degree in Civil engineering at the Polytechnic of Bydgoszcz. He also majored Management from Warsaw University and graduated MBA, University of Illinois.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Thanks to the most extensive modernization of our network from previous years, we were able to start implementing several ambitious projects, including the deployment of the first true High-speed 5G network in Slovakia. This innovation brings extremely high transmission speeds and low latency that several industries will benefit from. The arrival of the 5G network was a successful completion of a large three-year investment in the modernization of our mobile network in the amount of EUR 144 million.

Constant global technological progress and higher levels of digitization also mean that we are spending more time online. We should pay even more attention to the protection of our data and personal information, with which we now work practically all day. Therefore, Cyber security plays even more important role in our lives and in business. There has been a boom of various cyberattacks focused on businesses, but also regular customers. Devices of customers and the data stored in them are a great attraction for hackers today. By launching our on-net cyber security solution we try to keep them safe before the malicious stuff could get into their phones, tablets or PCs.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

I believe the recent development has only underlined the importance of the digital economy. A mature digital environment and accessible communication infrastructure is a prerequisite to foster innovation in other sectors and accelerate the transformation into a modern society. It is also the enabler of the increased economy efficiency and faster adaptability to the quickly changing requirements. This effort will certainly go hand-in-hand with the trend to make the climate the top priority when making choices, creating global partnership agreements or doing investment decisions.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

First of all transformation of the education system. It is not only about knowledge. We need young people being prepared for all the challenges of the future, people with open and curious minds, people with self-confidence to challenge the status quo and fight disinformation. Create supporting conditions for the research and development.

And another goal is to increase the robustness of the economy, diversify the resources, manage and mitigate the threats and risks.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

We are a longtime member of AmCham. This is also because we receive high expertise and a professional approach to solving various topics. We appreciate that the selection of the issues they focus on does not depend on the popularity, but on the need to deal with the specific issue and find a relevant solution. AmCham also enters unpopular areas with great determination and seeks solutions from specific people and institutions who are relevant and competent for their solution. This partnership makes sense to us and we believe to deepen it even more in the future.



I BELIEVE THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT HAS ONLY UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY. A MATURE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE IS A PREREQUISITE TO FOSTER INNOVATION IN OTHER SECTORS AND ACCELERATE THE TRANSFORMATION INTO A MODERN SOCIETY.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

It's a combination of things starting with human interactions. Overall I like doing meaningful things, solving complex issues with the team and most of all finding a good balance in all of it; both in work and in private.

JÁN GRUJBÁR

CEO
ALITER TECHNOLOGIES, A.S.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

For me, it's Cloud. A few years ago, Cloud was perceived only as a big technological experiment. Today, the cloud became a new standard, and its use has brought an expansion of many other technologies and innovations in areas like Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, and lots of others.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

One of the sectors with the greatest potential is the IT sector, not only because I am its representative, but especially because there is a great need and great demand for IT services and IT solutions in Slovakia. Already today IT affects almost every single industry and is present in every single business and household and this trend will just continue.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Key goal should be massive investment and an increase in the quality of education with focus on key areas such as the aforementioned IT sector. And at the same time, science and research in companies or universities, which represents areas with huge potential for the future.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

I really appreciate the ambition of Slovak AmCham - to make Slovakia a better place to live and do business by working on improving the business environment and increasing the competitiveness of the Slovak economy.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Success is a great motivation for me, even greater are failures, but the biggest ones are probably good relations and super colleagues around me.



Ján Grujbár has a proven track record in management as leader of numerous one-of-a-kind projects in financial and IT sector, having previously worked as the head of a project management department and later becoming a CIO. He has worked as CEO of Aliter Technologies since 2022.



VISA

L'UBICA GUBOVÁ

COUNTRY LEAD
VISA PRE SLOVENSKO



Lubica Gubová works at Visa as a Country Lead for Slovakia. In this position, she is responsible for the development of the company's business activities on the Slovak market, for strengthening relationships with the company's clients and partners, but also for building brand awareness and representing Visa's values. She joined Visa in 2020, when the company's office was officially established in Slovakia. She has worked in the banking industry in the past. She has worked at Tatra banka for 15 years, where she gained experience in Cards & Payments, Mobile Payments, tokenization. As a Senior Product Manager was responsible for creating product propositions, implementation of innovations, marketing campaigns and also delivering sales and P&L results.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

We are - society and our sector too - in the midst of an exciting transformation, on the cusp of a new, digital future. The pandemic did accelerate some positive changes. Many of the old ways of doing things will not be the ways of the future. Changes in consumer preferences and behavior have accelerated and the future of money is now digital and borderless. The increasing digitization of payments, new ways of money movement and the large number of consumers embracing ecommerce - they all together are important factors. In security of payments there are digital tokens, unique identifiers that protect payment credentials when used for in-store mobile payments or online shopping. There is also emerging area of financial services - Open banking - products and services for the consumer to help make their lives easier. Not to forget one of the latest trends - cards linked to cryptocurrency wallets, effort of many of central banks to work through solutions for their own CBDCs and NFTs which are becoming a trend in investments.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Economic recovery after pandemic can be accelerated if governments will actively consider digitisation at all levels. From our point of view specifically, digital payments can play key role in areas such as disbursements, data, tourism, urban mobility, and public administration.

The past two years have fundamentally altered retail, and consumers and sellers have discovered new ways to embrace innovation. Digitisation has revolutionised retail as convenience became the top consumer motivation and online shopping reached level we did not expect for in at least five years. We have to continue in this trend and bring new possibilities and innovations. As the urgency of combatting the global climate crisis grows, we must also continue to seek out opportunities to support sustainable commerce and inclusive economic growth.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

AmCham is one of the most active foreign Chambers of Commerce or business communities in Slovakia. We have the same goal - to support

entrepreneurs and the business environment in Slovakia and thus to increase the country's competitiveness. Although we have not been members for a long time - we are already seeing the benefits. AmCham organizes various events and activities and offers opportunities for cooperation between members. We have an opportunity to meet interesting people from the business or public sphere. This provides great base for development of the business environment in Slovakia through a lot of initiatives.

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WHAT MOTIVATES ME
IS THE OPPORTUNITY
TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S
DAILY LIVES, KEEP
SOCIETY AND THE
COUNTRY MOVING
FORWARD, HELP
ENTREPRENEURS
MOVE FORWARD AND
CONNECT PEOPLE
ANYTIME, ANYWHERE
BY OUR SOLUTIONS
AND TECHNOLOGIES.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

For me, payment cards are a matter of heart and thanks to them I can be part of projects, initiatives and innovations changing the world. Over the years, we have moved from a magnetic stripe through a chip and contactless payments to mobile and IoT. Today, the world of payments is less about plastic and more about digitization, tokenization, blockchain, sustainability and solutions for consumers, businesses and organizations around the world. What motivates me is the opportunity to improve people's daily lives, keep society and the country moving forward, help entrepreneurs move forward and connect people anytime, anywhere by our solutions and technologies.

CLARIOS PRODUCES BATTERIES AND OTHER ENERGY STORAGE SOLUTIONS. WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Clarios recently announced a few technological debuts. One of them is the new Clarios Smart AGM battery that will be a gamechanger for the industry. Imagine a car battery so intelligent that it communicates with your car in real time and can identify potential issues before they happen. By better sensing what each part of the battery is capable of it gives a message to the car. Based on this information the car can do the right decision about what it can do in each situation. In Clarios, we believe that level and quality of power are as important as other safety features a modern vehicle should have. We expect to launch our Smart AGM battery in the next two to three years.

The other great news is that Clarios recently announced a strategic agreement with Natron Energy, Inc. It is a leading manufacturer of sodium-ion batteries making us the world's first mass-producer. What is so exciting about that? These batteries do not contain lithium, cobalt, nickel, copper, or any other minerals that have recently caused the pricing instability of a supply chain. This secures sodium-ion batteries to be at stable pricing for the customers. Their production will begin in 2023, and we see great potential for their use in electric vehicles and grid energy storage.

MANY COMPANIES IN SECTOR REACTED TO THE WAR IN UKRAINE. WHAT WAS CLARIOS' REACTION TO THIS SITUATION?

The Russian attack on Ukraine impacted Clarios on various levels. Globally, business with Russia and Belarus has been suspended at the beginning of March. However, fortunately, only 1% of the total revenue is generated in Russia and Ukraine.

From the human perspective, we recognized the devastating impact on the Ukrainian people and global Clarios immediately supported UNICEF with \$150K. Additionally to that, the Bratislava office supported with another \$15K. It's really nice to see how people can get together and arrange for the material collections and supply those in need. In cooperation with our Ukrainian colleagues, we have translated our open

positions into the Ukrainian language. We are open to hiring and looking for like-minded teammates to enrich our Bratislava team.

WHY DO YOU INVEST SO MUCH EFFORT IN DEVELOPING YOUR OWN FINANCE ACADEMY?

In Clarios Bratislava business center we have a global role. We are directly supporting finance in two main regions - North America and EMEA. But not only that, our management is covering APAC and LATAM regions too. We drive a great number of global projects from here and we accommodate global roles that require highly profiled professionals. As Clarios is quickly moving forward in terms of energy storage technology, product portfolio, and IT infrastructure, we need to keep the business partnership status with the regions and ensure that our people get all the information they need to succeed. Clarios Finance academy is one of the tools that combine finance and technical knowledge with real-life examples and case studies. Our main goal is to give people more confidence at work, let them think one step ahead, and get them the opportunity to grow professionally.

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Our main goal is to give people more confidence at work.

HOW DO YOU RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES WITH TEAMMATES?

Sport is a great way to recharge my batteries and we currently had a Clarios Sports Challenge in Bratislava. You might have even seen some posts on LinkedIn (smile). It has become our tradition for May and this year our second volume has become a new standard with different sports activities we could do together as a team like hiking and cycling trips, rock climbing, challenges, and tournaments in different sports. On top of that, we organized lectures by a professional mountain rescuer and sports trainers. In June we will be celebrating our achievements together during Sports day. I believe this is a great way not only to recharge batteries but also to build a community.

MICHAL GUŠTAFÍK

FINANCE TRANSFORMATION
SENIOR MANAGER
CLARIOS SLOVAKIA SPOL. S R.O.



Michal Gušťafík has held the role of Senior Transformation Manager in Clarios since January 2020, leading finance transformation of the organization to better respond to fast-changing economic and business conditions. He has over 18 years of experience in corporate finance, management and audit. Previously, he was a Finance Director of management accounting for EMEA and North America at Johnson Controls and before he worked at Dell as the Senior EMEA Consolidations Manager. He is a member of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants in the UK.

MARIÁN HLAVAČKA

CEO
CORWIN SK A.S.



Marián Hlavačka has been active on the real estate market since 2004. He is the founder of CORWIN, a development company, which focuses on sustainable architecture.

Since its inception in 2010, the company has delivered many placemaking projects. Among their well-known creations is the company's headquarters - Blumental, Einpark Offices - the greenest office building in Slovakia, or Vilharia - the largest commercial building in Ljubljana. As a part of their real estate activities, CORWIN has worked on the renewal of Kmeťovo Square, archaeological research in Devín, or the revitalization of multiple brownfields. Currently, they are finishing the construction of the Guthaus project and together with the urbanistic studio Gehl Architects, they are preparing a large-scale mixed-use development of the former industrial area Palma.

WHAT DO YOU PERCEIVE AS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION OR TREND CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

I wouldn't necessarily call it an innovation; it's rather a different way of thinking. For years, we've been using many of the technologies which are perceived as desired novelties today - such as heat pumps, radiant ceiling cooling, or green roofs.

Our LEED Platinum project Einpark Offices in Bratislava is a nice example. When we were projecting it, we kept hearing that we were investing too much into technologies and that a sustainability certificate was pointless. The project entered the market at perhaps the least convenient moment - during the summer of 2020, right before the beginning of the pandemic wave of the fall months. Despite this, over the past two years we have witnessed continuous interest in this space and it has been growing even during periods when other office spaces were losing their tenants.

They came to us because Einpark is not only the greenest administrative building in Slovakia but also because we put so much emphasis on creating a healthy environment for the tenants. This aspect is becoming more and more important for modern companies. By the way, several AmCham member companies also reside in Einpark.

BUT WHAT DOES THIS VAGUE-SOUNDING AND OFTEN MISUSED TERM "SUSTAINABILITY" MEAN IN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT?

It means that the developer is thinking about the impact of the project starting from the planning phase all the way to the regular daily operations of the building. That is also why we are naturally attracted to brownfields - abandoned and derelict sites - with the goal of bringing them back to life. We don't want to build up fields on the outskirts of the city, take up more land, force people to use their cars and the municipalities to build new roads. Brownfields enable us to avoid this, as they are located within the inner city with good connections to existing infrastructure. In addition, during the construction we rely on local raw materials as much as possible, we construct green roofs, rain gardens, and prefer using heat pumps as energy source. That is why we aim to be the first developer in the world with a fully carbon neutral office portfolio - LEED Zero Carbon certified.

WHO OR WHAT INSPIRES YOU IN THIS REGARD?

From our perspective, there's no other way than sustainable development. It has been like that for us since the beginning. But we don't want to limit this approach to just protecting the planet. Sustainability is also about creating a good environment for people and about making projects which will make sense even in a hundred years. Copenhagen serves as the best inspiration - a city which has transformed itself from an industrial center people were leaving, to a modern green metropolis attracting people from around the world. Famous Danish architect Jan Gehl played a crucial role in this transformation. As our company developed and gained more know-how, he has become a real icon for us. That is why we approached him and the urbanistic study of revitalizing the former Palma plant in Bratislava was done in cooperation with his studio. We want this to be a benchmark project - the first really sustainable neighborhood focused on people. It should be created in human scale, connecting all the basic living needs related to accommodation, work, services, or culture. Although it is quite a challenge to realize this vision in Slovakia considering the current norms, we believe that what is possible in Copenhagen can also be done here.

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE YOUR AMCHAM MEMBERSHIP IN THIS CONTEXT?

AmCham is a unique platform which gives us many inputs and ideas for our business. It has a great reputation which surpasses the business sphere, as it often tackles topics which impact the society at large and it does so very professionally. That is true even in cases when problems need to be clearly identified and suggestions to help solve them proposed. Although it is not always met with understanding, we find this open approach very sympathetic. It gives the Slovak perspective on various issues a new dimension, one that doesn't take the often short-sighted and populist local interests into account. More than once we have already experienced to what extent these can have a "toxic" effect on the community and hinder its further development.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

The legal profession has traditionally been conservative. Lawyers liked their offices with files full of printed documents. One of the most exciting innovations in the legal sector now is legal tech, or use of technology to provide legal services. Legal tech nowadays is far from the standard tools for researching legislation and court decisions, and software for storage and management of documents. Lawyers who do not want to miss the train already have to acquaint themselves with smart document automation tools. This will inevitably create more competitive pressure on the legal market. If even sophisticated contracts can now be created using artificial intelligence, lawyers will have to adapt, invest in the proper technology, and finally simplify commodity work, which will open space for deeper specialisation of lawyers.

Another discussed topic is legal design, or visual communication of legal content. The client-centric approach to legal services requires the lawyers to employ innovative means of communication with the clients. Future lawyers should obtain an understanding of graphic design and the corresponding online tools to make their work output presentable to their 21st century clients. This includes not only the use of graphic elements to present our findings, but also the shift of the entire legal sphere online, such as in the form of smart legal contracts, negotiated, concluded, executed, and enforced entirely online.

Despite all these exciting technological tools pervading the legal profession, it is important to keep in mind that these tools are merely as smart as their user. Even though parts of legal work will be significantly transformed or even eliminated due to legal tech, the main asset of a lawyer is, and always will be, his or her brain. Even if we will all have to adapt to the recent technological trends, the demand for high-quality, sophisticated, and specialised legal services, will always remain, and require the lawyer to be not just part-time programmers and graphic designers, but also, first and foremost, understanding and compassionate human beings.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

How we will be able to recover from not only economic, but often very physical blows inflicted by the global pandemic

and the ongoing war at our doorstep, will shape the character of our country for decades. Slovakia will be successful if we use this opportunity to re-direct our economy towards innovation, research and development, and the digital economy. We do have the people excited to take up the work, they just need the proper societal, economic, and legal environment that supports them.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Slovakia has excellent brains, who must feel appreciated and wanted at home. Opening up to the world allowed the best and brightest from Slovakia to pursue education and career in the most prestigious institutions around the globe. Now is the time to absorb positive models from the world, and to create a model that sees education not as a mere training for the labour market, but as a value in itself, overcoming mediocrity, encouraging critical thinking and innovation. Another equally important challenge is healthcare, where we are lagging behind our neighbours. Slovakia will only stop its brain drain if the people are assured they can obtain a world-class education, and work in an inspiring, state-of-the-art environment at home.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

AmCham provides a unique platform to exchange views with the experts from all areas of the economy, and to help our common goal of improving Slovak economy. Only by being constantly confronted with different views can we grow as professionals, as well as human beings.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Seeing the result of our work in real life. This is especially true for our team focusing on advising the clients in the pharmaceutical and life sciences sector. Knowing that the result of the long hours of analysing regulatory constraints, thinking about strategies and distribution models, drafting and negotiating long contracts, while maintaining the highest ethical standard, is a patient getting access to innovative, often life-saving treatment, is a proof that our work is truly meaningful.

MAREK HOLKA

PARTNER
ČECHOVÁ & PARTNERS



Marek Holka is a partner at Čechová & Partners, an independent Slovak law firm with a 30-year history. His primary practice areas are antitrust and competition law, pharmaceutical and life sciences sector, and distribution. Marek has advised in numerous cases of successful notifications of concentrations to the Slovak competition authority. Marek has advised several global pharmaceutical companies in restructuring their distribution systems in Slovakia, and has guided clients through market access of numerous highly innovative pharmaceutical products. He assists clients in proceedings concerning pricing and reimbursement of medicinal products, advertising and disease awareness activities, and a broad range of pharmaceutical regulatory and compliance. Marek serves as the national representative for Slovakia in AIJA – International Association of Young Lawyers.

MARTIN HOLLER

RECHTSANWALT - PARTNER
GIESE & PARTNER, S.R.O.
- ORGANIZAČNÁ ZLOŽKA



Martin Holler is partner at Giese & Partner. He advises international banks and investors in structuring their investments in Slovakia and the entire Central-Eastern European region. He publishes and reports regularly about present developments in Slovak law and questions concerning financing. Martin Holler was the Chair of the Real Estate Section of the International Bar Association, the leading association of international real estate lawyers. He is frequently recommended by independent institutions such as The Legal 500 and Who is Who Legal. He was admitted to the German Bar in Frankfurt am Main in 1998 and is a member of the Slovak Bar. He is also admitted to the Czech Bar. Martin Holler speaks German, English and Czech.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Our part of the legal industry has changed dramatically over the last couple of years. We advise international corporations, investors and banks on their investments into Slovakia. That means that most of our clients had to travel to Slovakia, if notarial deeds were needed. In many cases, this can now be avoided. New legislation has made it possible that video conferences and digital signatures replace traditional meetings at notary offices in Slovakia. This comes at a time, when several lockdowns and the spread of home office have led to a situation, in which video conferences to a large extent have already replaced business travel and personal meetings. These are behavioral changes that outlive the pandemic.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Energy and real estate. The unprecedented European economic response to the pandemic and the EU's Green Deal offer the Slovak economy a unique opportunity to accelerate the transition to a climate-neutral economy. We all know that the foundation of the Slovak economy, the energy sector, is changing fundamentally. Fossil fuels from unreliable sources will be replaced with renewables. This major challenge for the Slovak economy is being helped by tremendous amounts of money available on the EU-level. Next Generation EU and the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027, with their combined weight of over 1.8 trillion euros, provide significant firepower to help deliver the twin green and digital transitions that not only Slovakia, but all of Europe aspires to.

The real estate industry in Slovakia has adapted its strategies to the situation after the pandemic. Consumers forced to shop online because of closed shopping centers may permanently adjust their buying habits for certain categories toward e-commerce. The shift to e-commerce further boosts already high demands for industrial space and puts pressure on the retail sector to be attractive enough for people to shop in traditional stores. The pandemic has also

shown that a considerable amount of the work that usually takes place in offices can carry on when they are closed. Many Slovak employees have discovered that they can be more productive at home, and enjoy the freedom of a more relaxed schedule. This accelerated trend for home working has also revealed its limitations – we still depend on face-to-face interaction, collaboration and serendipity. Solutions that turn offices in places which are a vital anchor are needed. The real estate industry has the potential to turn Slovakia into a modern economy with attractive places to live, work and shop for everyone.

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The real estate industry has the potential to turn Slovakia into a modern economy with attractive places to live, work and shop for everyone.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Slovakia should aim to become a country with a modern, digitalized and competitive economy. It needs to drastically reduce its carbon footprint and become independent of fossil fuels. The shift from industrial production based on relatively cheap labor to high end products and services should be accelerated. Also, the shortage of skilled workers needs to be addressed.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

AmCham remains one of the most important voices of international corporations that are active on the Slovak market. For us it also provides interesting opportunities to meet and exchange views with other businesses.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

The success of our clients motivates me every single day.

WHAT IS THE „AC HOTELS“ BRAND ABOUT?

AC Hotels was first conceived in 1998 by Spanish hotelier Antonio Catalan, who says he was originally inspired by the fashion houses of Milan. Since 2011 AC Hotels brand is developed in partnership with Marriott Hotels. European fashion influence informs AC Hotels' focus on conscientious lines, human scale, attention to detail, and a defined experience.

The AC Hotel environment is a next generation businessperson's basecamp. You have the architectural and interior decor spirit of a designer hotel, the louche and lounge emphasis of a lifestyle property, central locations indicative of business hotels, and the price point of the select service segment. AC is designed to be more harmonious by giving you everything you need and nothing you don't want.

WHAT MAKES „AC HOTEL BRATISLAVA“ SPECIAL?

AC Hotel by Marriott Bratislava Old Town – which is our full name, is very often referred by our guests and partners simply as „Marriott“ since its opening in January 2021. While AC Hotels brand has originally been mainly present in its home country – Spain & western Europe, in the previous few years it is one of the fastest growing hotel brands in Central Europe thanks to its successful & contemporary concept that work perfectly for our guests.

Combination of central location – just few steps from the Presidential Palace, focus on design, friendly service and welcoming first impression is something that makes it attractive for many modern travellers. Everything centers around our bar called AC Lounge. Together with our AC Library and summer terrace it is an organic part of the lobby area that serves as a ideal meeting point in Bratislava's city center. There is a great focus on the selection of cocktails and wine, and actually, we consider this spot to be one of the most important in the hotel. This is the place where you can choose if you want to be on your own, meet your clients, colleagues, friends or even to organize a small format meeting. AC Lounge will connect you to the local area but will also offer you a spot to enjoy time in a perfect peace.

WHAT CAN AC HOTEL BRATISLAVA OFFER TO THEIR GUESTS?

Our hotel has been fully renovated during 2020, it is currently the most modern and most fresh hotel in the city. Public garage in the underground makes it easily accessible to those arriving by car.

To our guests and business partners we are offering 202 rooms in 3 core categories – Standard, Superior and Executive. Capacity and rooms mix is perfect set for both individual and group accommodations. Our guests have available 24/7 operating Fitness center with a terrace or an AC Shop in the lobby area. Our guest rooms are very spacious and bright, minimum size is 25 square meters.

An important part of the hotel is our conference floor – AC Meetings include two dividable meeting rooms of 211 and 122 square.meters of conference space, possible to welcome up to 330 participants. Smaller meeting formats can use a boardroom suitable for 12 guests equipped with multi-purpose electronic blackboard. The key audio-video equipment is already built-in and external installations for tailor made events are easy to organize.

AC Kitchen restaurant on the same floor is where the fantastic breakfast is served but also the spot for lunches or dinners for your events. Its layout and design make it a great venue for private events either.

All of our guests can benefit from one the largest global loyalty programs – Marriott Bonvoy. Nights and spend in any of the Marriott properties worldwide are giving to its members a variety of benefits in return, depending on their status – Silver status starts with 10 nights per year already. There is also loyalty program for meeting organizers available to reward their business. Membership and points collected can be used in any of the Marriott properties across the globe and will grant you a true VIP status.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

We have joined AMCHAM as soon as the chance appeared after long restrictions affecting our business throughout the 2020 & 2021. We believe success is a form and outcome of continuous partnerships and cooperation – this is the opportunity we value in AMCHAM the most. As a Marriott International affiliate – a US based company, joining AMCHAM family was a very logic step. We appreciate AMCHAM working in many business related directions in order to support their members but also to improve the overall business climate for all, proactively opening actual themes and working on legislation improvement processes. For us it is a platform where you can find long-term partners, improve your business but also offer assistance in return.

MARTIN HURBAN

GENERAL MANAGER
AC HOTEL BY MARRIOTT
BRATISLAVA OLD TOWN



Martin Hurban has more than 20 years experience in finance and hospitality management. Held various positions in Radisson SAS Carlton Hotel, Bratislava, Slovakia, moved from Finance Director to Operations Manager and later Executive Manager roles in both Radisson Blu and Park Inn hotels in Bratislava. Continued as pre-opening and opening lead with two hotels in Astana, Kazakhstan, later managed two properties in Moscow Russia, and opened and managed a 5* hotel in Rostov-on-Don, Russia. After almost nine years of gaining expertise abroad, returned to Bratislava in 2020 to lead the opening of AC Hotel by Marriott Bratislava. Martin Hurban holds the Master's degree in Management of Industrial Enterprises from Slovak University of Technology.

MARCEL KAŠČÁK

MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
TATRA BANKA, A.S.



Mr. Marcel Kaščák (53) graduated from the University of Economics, Bratislava, Faculty of Informatics. In 1993 he joined Tatra banka, a.s. and worked at the Credit Division, later Corporate Banking Division.

In the years 1999 - 2004 he was promoted to the office of Head of Corporate Banking Division and later in 2004 he was appointed a proxy of Tatra banka, a.s. Since January 2005 Mr. Kaščák has held the position of a member of the Board of Directors responsible for corporate and private banking and Capital Markets.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

We want to be a partner in the field of sustainability for both clients – consumers and corporate clients. Our current innovation – digital signing for corporate clients we introduced in the first half of 2021 supports our ambition to gradually move as many services as possible to the paperless world. At the moment, our clients are able to use digital signature either via Business banking^{TB}, Internet banking^{TB} and Tatra banka mobile application for all service documents such as for instance account opening, card issue, change of authorised persons, confirmations or change of instalment calendar. Except these documents, we already can sign also bank guarantees or even bank information our clients use at public tenders.

Digital signing was introduced to our corporate clients since April. Except it markedly simplifies and accelerates the processes, it has also a positive impact on the environment.

In the upcoming months, we intend to introduce another functionality, which allows signing contracts in Business banking^{TB} using a so-called qualified electronic signature, i.e. via an ID card. This service will allow us implement the digital signing even with large loan and security contracts and hence being paperless in all the areas of contact with clients.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Oddly enough, the most potential lies with the public sector. Given

the increase in EU funds, the war in Ukraine, there is a significant need for modernizing education, healthcare, transportation, energy production, and other aspects of the economy. There is fear that this opportunity will be wasted.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

The Slovak Recovery plan is written as an optimistic vision of Slovakia. It is the absolute minimum the country has to do in order to stay competitive in the global landscape. In sport speak, we are not competing for the title but struggling to avoid relegation. Membership in the club of the richest countries is not a given. Some countries have dropped out back from group of high-income countries. If Slovakia does not pass significant reforms and investments, we risk dropping out of the club of rich countries as well.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

AmCham membership is our entry point to USA investors and especially appreciated for its large membership base enabling networking, advocacy and information sharing.

Indeed, AmCham's wide portfolio of events serves as the ideal opportunity to meet interesting people from the American Community in Slovakia and generally speaking foreign investors, build new contacts, share best practices, spread the word about your business and find new business partners.

Art. Education. Technology.



Three worlds. One bank.

We are moving the boundaries of banking, where art, education and technology come together to create a new, intelligent future.

www.tatrabanka.sk

FROM A LOCAL START-UP TO A GLOBAL MARKET, WHAT IS THE STORY OF ASSECO?

As a successful international software house, Asseco has grown to the size of a global player in over 30 years of its existence. Great vision, innovation, perseverance, and product orientation – these are four important attributes accompanying our company since its inception that have led it to a significant milestone, when we, as part of the Asseco Group, have become one of the top software providers in Europe and the largest provider of innovative IT solutions in the Central and Eastern Europe.

WHAT IS YOUR LONG-TERM PATH TO SUCCESS?

To bring the “out of the box” solutions with innovation and reliability that are, and always will be, supporting our clients. Today’s world is changing faster than ever before, with the digital transformation taking on significant proportions in all aspects of life. At Asseco, therefore, we not only develop products, but we bring added value that is not subject to time; it becomes an important element in the process of building a quality digital base wherever it is needed.

CAN YOU HIGHLIGHT ANY OF THE INNOVATIONS YOUR COMPANY IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

As a strong group, we operate in various areas, in which we change the demanding requirements of our clients to the new opportunities. We offer modern products and innovative solutions mainly in the following domains:

- **Banking and finance** – Solutions for the banking and financial institutions,

which we are constantly streamlining, developing in business, and advancing technologically to a new level thanks to more than thirty years of our experience. Our new solutions are cloud-ready, built on the up-to-date technology platforms.

- **Healthcare** – We transfer the commonly available off-line medical services to the online environment through digitization. An unimaginable experience in the past; today, a reality taking up a form of telemedicine, also including artificial intelligence.

Our significant milestones also include the development of a new innovative hospital information system that will significantly simplify the user experience for both, the medical staff and patients.

- **Robotization and virtual reality** – Through our autonomous logistics portfolio in the form of intelligent mobile robots, digital twins and the smart factory concept by Asseco CEIT, we are transforming manufacturing plants into intelligent factories using virtual reality to optimize their processes and automated tools for Industry 4.0.

- **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) information systems** – Thanks to the revolutionary software solutions designed for the small and medium-sized enterprises, we bring our customers the ability to digitize the production, logistic and business processes on the basis of artificial intelligence. Thanks to its use, we can monitor all processes and commodities necessary for the efficient operation of the enterprises.

ASSECO

JOZEF
KLEIN

CEO
ASSECO CENTRAL EUROPE



Jozef Klein graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University in Bratislava, Department of Theoretical Cybernetics, and Mathematical Informatics. He has been working for Asseco CE since 1996, first externally, later as an internal worker in the position of the product and project manager. Since 2002, he has been the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Asseco Central Europe in Slovakia; since December 2009, he has also been the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Asseco Central Europe in the Czech Republic. He also holds the position of CEO in both companies. He is part of the top management of Asseco Enterprise Solutions, Asseco International, and Asseco Group. In 2016, he received the EY Entrepreneur of the Year award of the Slovak Republic.

Technology for business, solutions for people.



ERP



Finance



Utility



Industry 4.0



Healthcare



Public

ASSECO

ASSECO.COM/CE

PETRA KOTULIAKOVÁ

FOUNDER AND CEO
AJ TY V IT



Founder and CEO of the Slovak NGO "AJ Ty v IT" ("You in IT"), CESA Award Female Role Model of the Year 2018 in Slovakia by, and the winner of Women in TECH Inclusion Award 2020, delivered by the Department of International Trade of British Embassy, challenging and empowering young girls and women into TECH fields. In 2015, she represented Slovakia in the International Visitor Leadership Program of the US Department of State, Women in STEM field. Petra gained her PhD. at the University of Economics in Bratislava and previously studied at the Université Pierre Mendès France Grenoble and Institute des Études politiques Paris.

WWW.AJTYVIT.SK

WHAT LED YOU TO ESTABLISH AJ TY V IT?

I was born in Slovakia, and, with a few shorter breaks, I grew up here. I want this to be a place where my kids feel good as well. I want them to know that this is a country providing good education, opportunities for career development, and a safe living environment. That is one of the reasons I founded a non-profit with this kind of vision for Slovakia.

On the one hand, I was motivated by my own life story, when my family recommended for me to study economics, which was the norm for girls, instead of pursuing my interest in mathematics. On the other hand, because I worked at the Faculty of Informatics and Information Technologies in Bratislava I realized how many opportunities women are missing just because they do not study or work in ICT.

WHY, IN YOUR OPINION, IS IT SO?

Without a doubt, one of the reasons is the lack of motivation among female secondary school students and their low access to technical education. However, girls and women without digital skills do not have the same opportunities in the labor market, and this inequality has a direct impact on their economic independence. The small number of women in ICT occupations is also associated with a huge loss of female talent for the whole industry. Their weak technical skills do not enable them to apply for the newly created jobs, which again leads to their lower-income and gradual loss of jobs. That is why in 2012 I founded AJ Ty v IT.

WHAT IS THE GOAL AND VISION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Our main claim is "Technology has no gender" and we do our best to improve the above mentioned situation. We educate, motivate, and kick-start women's careers in the field of technologies. We bring solutions ensuring access to digital education for girls and women, removing the lack of motivation in secondary schools, and trying to attract girls to technical fields and retain them there.

We are also the first organization in Slovakia that brings specialized technical education to groups of girls and women only. From our experience, women in mixed groups do not feel safe, and the pressure on performance and competitiveness discourages rather than motivates them. With us, their self-development journey does not end with finishing an up-skilling or a re-skilling course. Besides the technical education itself, we offer career workshops and

counseling and immerse them into a supportive community of strong IT women.

BEING ACTIVE FOR TEN YEARS MUST HAVE ALREADY BROUGHT SOME RESULTS...

In the 10 years of its history, almost 25,000 girls and women have participated in the AJ Ty v IT activities. We managed to increase the number of female students in ICT faculties from the original 5 % to the current 15 %, and the number of women working in ICT positions in Slovakia is nowadays 16 %. Our work with girls from 8 years of age builds a pipeline of young female talents, and we educate them already in primary schools. The digital skills that they need for life thus automatically become a part of their skill set. Every year, about 2000 young secondary school girls attend the Girl's Day event, which is the biggest career event for this demographic with the aim to motivate to choose education in the field of technology.

SO WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ICT SECTOR IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Definitely diversity. Not as an ultimate goal but as a tool leading to better economic results. Technologies created by mixed teams where women have their place can better reflect the needs of all users, which can also be seen in the final products and their subsequent acceptance and sales.

We are also being sought out by motivated women who decided to start their careers in ICT and are keen to work on social change together with us. To eradicate stereotypes about what women should study or what work they should do.

We hope that ICT does not miss even a single talented woman and that no woman misses a wonderful chance for a better and more content life.



Photo credit: D. Holubová (portrait)
and D. Šimeková (AJ Ty v IT team)

REGIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE LABOUR MARKET - SLOVAKIA

In the second half of 2021, the Slovak economy experienced growth, although this process was slower than it was originally estimated. Undoubtedly, it was impacted by rising COVID-19 cases and the global situation connected with the pandemic. The Slovak labour market in 2022 is predicted to have continually an upward trend and the most noticeable areas will be IT, services, engineering and logistics.

For years, prices of goods and services barely increased. Currently, the high inflation has a huge impact on the labour market, where employees request salary increases in line with better work conditions and benefits.

Companies that want to be competitive in the market should invest in wellbeing and benefits adapted to the changing needs of employees from different sectors.

TAMING THE NEW REALITY

After experiencing several waves of COVID-19, we can honestly admit that we have got used to the new way of working, adapting our homes to a professional workspace. However, the longer we live in the new reality, the more insecure we feel. This causes lower employee turnover and the willingness of candidates to change jobs decreases. In Cpl Slovakia, we observe that demand for employees is high, and to convince candidates to change jobs is becoming more and more difficult. Candidates need very good reasons to leave their current jobs and the challenge for employers is how to deal with it.

STABILIZATION IS KEY

With economy in an upward trend, candidates have immense options for a career change. However, even a big number of job opportunities won't necessarily translate into the openness of candidates to take those chances. They are looking for stability, so switching from a safe, stable job to a trial period isn't the priority.

What's interesting, competitive salary might not be always the cure for this issue. Candidates are afraid of losing jobs due to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine and expect a great amount of flexibility in terms of working hours and remote work. After many months of experiencing what it is like working from home, they expect employers to be flexible in this area - it is no longer a benefit but a standard of work. Majority of IT specialists in Slovakia expect both flexible working arrangements and prefer a freelance type of contract. The length of an offered contract plays an important role as well, while the majority of candidates prefer an unlimited type of contract.

Organizations try to attract employees in various ways - from extensive Employer Branding activities to interesting projects. Mainly IT Specialists/ Developers have many career opportunities and choose jobs based on the product or project attractiveness.

PUTTING CANDIDATE ATTRACTION FIRST

With candidate shortage and many companies hiring and fighting for candidates, the labour market forces employers to change on many levels. Complicated hiring processes aren't well received by candidates - many interview rounds take a long time, and as a result, candidates accept other offers in the meantime. Companies need to be very quick and effective, if they want to win the best candidates.

For many years, Cpl Slovakia has been supporting their clients in providing professional recruitments services. We have access to a broad base of candidates, offering the best specialists on the market. We build comprehensive recruitment strategies suitable for our clients' needs. Partnership between clients and service providers leads to an effective cooperation and results in successfully filled positions.

Global issues affect us locally and it is important to stay together, share our know-how, our experience and help each other. Our membership in the AmCham community helps us to fulfill this mission.

L'UBICA KRAJČOVIČOVÁ

BRANCH MANAGER
CPL



Lubica Krajcovicova has been in recruitment since 2006. She worked in internal HR and Talent Acquisition for an international IT company for 12 years. Since 2019, she has been working for CPL, a consulting company specializing in recruitment and total talent solutions. As a Branch Manager, Lubica is leading the Slovak subsidiary of CPL within the CEE. She is experienced in people leadership & development, recruitment, business development, client, and relationship management. She has also gained a certification as a Brain-based coach in the NeuroLeadership Institute in Prague. She is living in Bratislava and has 2 children at the age of 8 and 12. In her free time, she likes reading, playing the piano, doing Pilates, going for long walks, and spending time with her loved ones.

RENE KRUIJT

MANAGING DIRECTOR
HEINEKEN SLOVENSKO



Rene Kruijt is an experienced senior manager with roots in the Netherlands who has been with HEINEKEN since 1985. After several On Trade Sales positions in the Netherlands he joined the HEINEKEN Export Group in 1995 for a period of 2 years as Area Export Manager in Africa, followed by a 3,5 year period leading the Global Duty Free & Travel Retail department. In 2001, Mr. Kruijt started his expatriation journey as a Sales & Distribution Director in Slovakia for a period of 4 years. In 2019 Mr. Kruijt returned back to Europe, after having spent fifteen years in Africa and South America in increasingly Senior positions in Sales & Distribution, Marketing and General management in respectively. Mr. Kruijt returned to HEINEKEN in Slovakia in January 2019 as the CEO of the company.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

In general we see digitization accelerating across the sector. More specifically, in terms of product category, there is a rapidly growing consumer interest for so-called flavored beers. We are proud to lead this category with our Desperados brand.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

To me it all starts with Education which needs a serious quality boost to stop the brain drain and loss of local talent. This is the basis to shape the Economy.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

The goal should be to get back to consistent high GDP growth numbers by

diversification of the Economy; be less dependent on automotive – focus more on local, value added production and agriculture.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

To be part of the high quality, broad network of business leaders that AMCHAM offers. The variety and quality of programs and topics that AMCHAM addresses in order to improve the business climate in Slovakia.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

My people, my team and obviously the product category in which I operate.



WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Banking is a constant innovation – majority of which is however not visible to clients. Banks constantly need to innovate their security systems to protect clients' assets, as well as their internal IT solutions to ensure compliance with multilevel constantly evolving regulatory requirements. These innovations are inevitable and mandatory. However, innovations banks love the most are those bringing something new to clients – instant payments are 2022 "new kid on the block" for Slovak retail clients.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Slovak economy needs to retain and train its talent. We must improve quality of our education across the board at all levels. We also need to find a way how to attract talented people from abroad to tackle demographics and missing skills, heads and hands. We need to act now.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

For me AmCham means professionalism. I appreciate its active involvement in various areas helping to shape Slovakia.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU AT WORK?

My motivation in work? I just like what I do – I like that the bank is a "behind the scene partner" of key Slovak businesses. I like that my job is diverse and I very much like the team I meet in the office every day. I'm very proud of the transformation the team and the bank underwent over 10 years – we have grown together and together with our clients. It just feels great!



KATARÍNA KURUCOVÁ

COUNTRY MANAGER
& EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
KOMERČNÍ BANKA, A.S.,
POBOČKA ZAHRANIČNEJ BANKY



Katarína graduated from City University, Bellevue USA in Business Administration. Prior to banking, she worked for Slovak American Enterprise Fund focused on equity investments within SME sector in CEE as Investment Manager and in Deloitte Slovakia as a Consultant within Management Consulting stream. In 1999 she joined ING Bank N. V., where she spent 12 years on various positions in corporate banking. As of October 2011, the Country Manager & Executive Director of Komerční banka Slovakia, member of Societe Generale Group and elected Member of Presidium of Slovak Banking Association.

THE FUTURE LINKS US TOGETHER

Corporate banking

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MIRIAM LACHOVÁ

CEO & OWNER
HUMAN DYNAMIC
EUROPE S.R.O.



Miriam is a leadership coach, motivational speaker, entrepreneur, consultant, investor, supporter of the needy, mother and wife.

She is the owner and CEO of Human Dynamic Europe, company providing counseling and coaching services for corporate clients in five countries. She previously held various diplomatic positions for the US Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Balkans and managed large investment portfolios. *"I like working with people who are interested in self-development, want to be more motivated, have a better performance or find passion in what they do. I believe that all of us have the potential to be better. I get fascinated with the capacity of our brain to develop and change throughout our entire life, as long as we're open to change and new opportunities with humility and courage."*

WHY SLOVAKIA?

Although I was born in (former) Czechoslovakia, I spent most of my life somewhere else in the world and lived in more than 10 cities. When I moved back to Slovakia fourteen years ago, I thought that I would only be here for a year... what an exciting journey it has been! In those 14 years, I met my husband and got married, my daughter got to know her extended family, the beautiful nature and castles in Slovakia caught my heart (I love biking, skiing and hiking them), I tried a new career three times until I started my own business, and have seen a great progress from where Slovakia was back then to where it is now. Out of all the places I've lived and visited, Bratislava is my favorite city in the world!

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE ABOUT AMCHAM?

One of the first events I attended when I arrived in Slovakia was the AmCham Business Breakfast. At the table I met 2 people who both offered me a job... this breakfast was instrumental for me in starting a new path in my life and realizing what I want to do next. It was similar to when I was chosen as one of the top 12 students from the University of Central Florida to participate in the project at various US Embassies in South America, when I also embarked on a new journey in my life. In Guatemala, where I was stationed, I closely worked with AmCham. Later on in my life, I became a Foreign Services Officer for the State Department and served at the Embassies in Sarajevo and Podgorica, which was an amazing and adventurous career. I believe that AmCham can be instrumental in those important career decisions and new paths, just like it was for me twice in my life.

YOUR COMPANY PROVIDES MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS TO COMPANIES. WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Human Dynamic Europe cares about the mental health of employees and organizations. With our state-of-the-art Employee Assistance Programs, we take care of over 60000 employees and their family members. We develop their potential and believe that every situation, no matter how difficult, can be helped with our positive approach, genuine care for the wellbeing, and passion for others. We consult and coach

key leaders in organizations to make them better, because when the leaders get better, the organizations thrive and flourish. I believe that the area of mental health has lost its stigma in the last few years, and we can see the positive response from the employees who are given the opportunity to have counseling and coaching as a benefit. When the employer cares about the employees' wellbeing, it increases people's motivation, engagement and loyalty. On the other hand, when the employee is doing well emotionally and physically, he/she is more effective, creative and performs better. The organizations are healthier and more productive. Everyone wins. The mental health (or EAP) programs' return on investment for organizations, when provided locally, is amazing. I am truly honored and grateful to have the opportunity together with my team to influence, support and help many lives, families and organizations.

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LIFE IS NOT
ABOUT WHAT YOU
GAIN, BUT ABOUT
WHO YOU BECOME.”

WHAT DO YOU VALUE ABOUT BEING A LEADER?

I believe that every leader has to start from self - seek honest mentors and coaches, be an example to others, serve others with passion and humility, and develop the potential of others. It should not be some fancy words in a mission statement, it should be a daily sacrifice and true action because it is a huge privilege, responsibility and reward. I wish for every leader to become great by accepting who you are, finding a purpose in what you do, be thankful for what you have, continuously learn and develop, and pursue your dreams with passion. And if you need encouragement, support or help along the way, have the courage to seek it out.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Innovation does not always have to bring revolution, many times innovation connects the right dots to improve and increase efficiency. Such innovations often help us bring better solutions to our clients, which is core of our business.

As an example, we are preparing a joint offering with a startup, Flowbox, which connects the dots between the energy sector, sensors, and big data. As a result, you can observe and optimize the energy consumption of properties, saving the money of our clients and the environment. You can implement this solution anywhere, even in older buildings without digital infrastructure, which tend to be the least energy efficient. There are many data outputs and we create predictive models based on these data streams to fix the problems and solve challenges in the future.

Another innovation that I am very proud of is our tool, Aosint. This is an AI-based platform that can process over 4 million articles a day, understand these articles and turn them into facts related to companies or individuals, to track risks and new opportunities. We have been using this tool to help companies navigate their business as regards opportunities for some time already. But as the Russian invasion of Ukraine has completely changed geopolitical and economic ecosystems, we also began using it for predictive analysis of potential threats to business caused by such conflicts.

And finally, an innovation also related to the situation around Ukraine, is IRENA. IRENA is a voicebot and chatbot platform to assist refugee aid NGOs. Within a couple of days, our team launched and configured IRENA's virtual communication platform to help overstretched NGO volunteers manage requests and respond to inquiries from refugees in Ukraine. After few days of the start of the project, we had more than 10 NGOs onboarded from five countries, including Slovakia, and more than 170 volunteers responding to almost 10 000 calls per day. We are continuing to expand to other countries and NGOs, which makes me super excited, as we can combine our unique knowledge with meaningful help. This innovation makes me especially proud because we used our knowledge to help and support those who really need it and it is a perfect example how innovation and technology

can help in the areas and situation you may not expect it.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Services, automobiles and electronics, machinery, steel, chemicals and pharma are probably the most important industries. In the future, I believe the circular economy, effective technology, and sustainable business in general, are great opportunities for Slovakia. Producers and sellers will both benefit, making the whole process sustainable and bringing long-term benefits. I am confident that all the aspects of the production cycle, customer satisfaction and a value-oriented approach can be improved together.

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At the end of the day, I must believe in what I do and how I contribute, not only to me and my family, but also to our clients and the wider society. I care whether my role and decisions influence day-to-day life around me and our future.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

The community. Having a vision and a positive influence. It often requires ambition and effort to achieve change and progress in many areas and having committed experts and communities to discuss and align on challenging topics and shape the vision is very valuable.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Purpose, I would say. I don't want to completely ignore other aspects and say they don't matter, but the work and the purpose is the main driver for me. At the end of the day, I must believe in what I do and how I contribute, not only to me and my family, but also to our clients and the wider society. I care whether my role and decisions influence day-to-day life around me and our future.

Deloitte.

IVANA LORENCOVÍČOVÁ

MANAGING PARTNER
DELOITTE CZECH
& SLOVAK REPUBLIC



Ivana Lorencovičová is Managing Partner of Deloitte Czech & Slovak Republic. She is also the WorldImpact Leader for Deloitte Central Europe promoting initiatives focused on creating a more sustainable and more equitable corporate environment. Ivana has over 20 years of experience in transaction advisory and manages projects for strategic and financial investors in various sectors, including advisory on M&A, company sales, restructuring, refinancing and business valuations. She is a Fellow Member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (FCCA) in the UK.

WWW.DELOITTE.SK

MARTIN MAŠTALÍR

GENERAL MANAGER
DELL TECHNOLOGIES
SLOVAKIA



Martin is managing DELL business in Slovak republic and for last 25 years he moved from banking and telco to IT. Expertise includes sales, marketing strategy and business development. His mission is to help customers with their growth and transformation. Responsible for revenue and financial results in related segments. Martin finished PhD at University of Economics in Bratislava and prior to joining DELL, he previously held various positions at Cisco, Orange, and the financial sector. DELL is one of the world's leading technology companies, helping to transform people's lives with extraordinary capabilities. From hybrid cloud solutions to high-performance computing to ambitious social impacts and sustainability initiatives - what we do affects everyone and everywhere.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

We see several focus areas related to data management, edge, security and 5G. And the last two mentioned we believe will bring many innovations very soon. As enterprises and governments are facing cyberthreats and ransomware of greater sophistication and impact on revenue and services. Security industry is moving from discussion of security concerns to action with greater automation and integration. We see a change from automated detection to prevention and response with a focus on applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to speed remediation. The opening of the private mobility ecosystem will accelerate with more cloud and IT industries involved on the path to 5G. Enterprise use of 5G is still early, but this will change in 2022 as more modern, capable versions of 5G become available to enterprises.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Slovakia has long been a country with a strong automotive and engineering sector, but at the same time lags in research and development, which may bring negative prospects for economic growth from a medium-term perspective, when the market or world conditions will change. We can see it even now, because of war in Ukraine. In addition, the rapid aging of the population will exacerbate fiscal challenges and burden long-term growth. To prepare for an aging society, pension, health and long-term care and labor market, reforms are needed to prolong working lives, improve the health of the aging population, and increase the efficiency of public spending. At the same time, the aging of the population reinforces the need to increase productivity. Therefore, innovation and investment in (R&D) can be considered as an accelerator of future success in all the above sectors. At the same time, it is necessary to inspire in countries with significant support for the start-up environment to support growing of the new sectors.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Digitization of the country and its services for the inhabitants and entrepreneurs of Slovakia. To simplify the provision of services on both sides - the customer and the provider. The basic condition is a suitable infrastructure, and of course one of the important prerequisites for the digitization strategy is continuity and planning. The digitization plan should consider the real trends and needs of the country in the context of the EU and be superior to political decisions. Digitization not only simplifies the provision of services, but when applied correctly, the positive effect will also be reflected in financial and personnel savings. Digitization in the SME sector needs special attention, considering dynamics of Slovak market, as the SME sector is one of the key pillars. Finally, an element of communication and discussion between the private and public sectors in the planning and use of expert resources is important for the development of digitization.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

The current world situation has shown us, how important it is to know how to communicate, cooperate and stand up for the right thing and our values. And AmCham has a unique and very active position in Slovakia within the business, and as well in cross-sectoral dialogue between the public and private sectors. Actively looks for solutions to current issues such as digitization of the country and its services, education, rule of law and innovations. We very much appreciate the creation of a space for discussion within professional conferences and working groups, which helps to move business, and at the same time, we perceive social commitment to improve the legislative and business environment in Slovakia. Without a suitable and trustworthy platform such as AmCham, this would not be possible.

MARCELO PASCUAL

MANAGING DIRECTOR
MERCK SHARP & DOHME,
S.R.O.



Marcelo joined MSD almost 20 years ago. Initially he held different marketing & sales roles, and then several senior management positions before taking over in his current role as Managing Director in Slovakia. As the Managing Director of MSD in Slovakia, Marcelo continues to successfully implement internal change, from a closed culture to an engaged, inclusive and transparent organization which works collaboratively with the Regional team. He has been a member of The Supervisory Board at AIFP since August 2021. Marcelo is of Spanish nationality and holds a degree in business administration and MBA Executive from Malaga University and Maastricht University. He also successfully completed the Business Leadership Program at Duke University, USA. Throughout his career he has developed an expertise in Marketing Management and People Management.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

MSD as a biopharmaceutical company focused on research and development, which has been bringing innovative medicines and vaccines to patients in Slovakia for 30 years. I would give a special mention to immunotherapy which is revolutionary in cancer treatment as it allows to fight cancer by activating patient's immune system. I am glad that regulatory framework is on its way to a positive change and patients in Slovakia should soon gain better access to innovative treatment.

However the most exciting current innovation is the use of artificial intelligence which is accelerating drug discovery and development processes. Patient identification is a crucial step in the drug discovery and development process, especially for conducting clinical trials. Artificial intelligence simplifies the identification of eligibility criteria and the inclusion of patients, and also makes the cohort identification process faster and cheaper.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Definitely the healthcare and education sectors. The Slovak healthcare system is struggling for a long time and the COVID-19 pandemic escalated all the problems and weak areas even more. The only way to improve healthcare is to change our approach towards our health and look at it as an investment. I am glad that MSD is an active partner in helping to shape the system. We participate in important discussions around key topics and offer our perspective and view, based on experience and expertise. One positive change already is that all relevant stakeholders are aligned on the future of Slovak healthcare and highlighting prevention and investment as key success factors.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Slovakia needs modernization in general. As a small country it needs to make the system and process efficient and less bureaucratic. There are lots of opportunities for investment here, but

the investment needs to be attractive and available. Another important aspect is partnership. The public sector needs the private sector, and vice versa. A good partnership, together with a strong element of trust, can make a difference. Look at Estonia, also a very small country, which has managed to build one of the world's most advanced digital societies long before the COVID-19 pandemic, providing services such as electronic voting, online learning in schools, digital bureaucracy and healthcare. When the coronavirus crisis struck, this investment paid off as Estonia's digital public services continued mostly uninterrupted. Public-private partnership and trust in public institutions are the secret of Estonia's success. Citizens embraced the digital revolution because it was transparent, fair and to the benefit of all.

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A GOOD PARTNERSHIP, TOGETHER WITH A STRONG ELEMENT OF TRUST, CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

AmCham is an independent organization which helps to build bridges between different sectors and connects important stakeholders. Because of the broad skillset within the AmCham membership, it has an ability to identify the problem and accelerate solutions and projects with a long-term perspective.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

The main motivation is a desire to help and improve the life of patients. Patients always come first. I come to work every day knowing that we can make a difference and we in MSD do our best.

CARLOS GARRIDO PEDRAZ

CEO
HOLCIM EBS EUROPEAN
BUSINESS SERVICES



Carlos Garrido Pedraz has been part of the Holcim Group for more than 20 years. He started as an engineer at one of the cement plants in Spain and since then he has taken on consecutive leadership roles in several countries, mainly focusing on the fields of business transformation, performance, data management, financial planning & analytics. In late 2021, he was appointed CEO of Holcim European Business Services (EBS) in Kosice, with the mission to extend the range of the activities and grow the center in line with the Group Strategy.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

The Business Services Centers are rapidly evolving from the traditional transactional activities to become real Centers of Excellence for high-value roles.

For example, there are impressive steps in the fields of digitisation, robotics & data analytics. These are differentiators which enable ambitious projects at a global scale. In Holcim core business, we are making great progress in sustainable solutions, using new technologies & innovative solutions directly in our production plants, together with 3D concrete printing and circular construction strategy. This is key to decarbonisation and building more with less, while ensuring the well-being of our employees, communities and customers.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

I have already mentioned digitization & robotics as key drivers for further growth in Slovakia. In addition, ensuring a sustainable future is one of the top priorities when making business & individual choices. Circular economy and investments into green development will be critical for a healthy development. Slovakia's natural resources deserve investment to protect them and carefully plan their future utilization, within the framework of EU funding, research and development investment and well established IT infrastructure.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

In my opinion, the priority should be to develop the future generation with the right mindset to think globally & act locally from early on. Use critical thinking and fact-based arguments to challenge the status quo in a positive & constructive way, while being generous and empathic to keep the spirit of the nation. Together we must diversify investments into new technologies, research & development and take good care of the beautiful nature and protect the resources of Slovakia towards a sustainable future.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Holcim has been a happy member of AmCham from our beginning and we have always relied on their support and professional approach. AmCham helps us manage many challenges for our business, while building a solid network with whom we could collaborate. We highly appreciate that AmCham is very active in areas critical for the future of the BSCs (and therefore also for Slovakia's success) with a pragmatic mind-set and creates a partnership between companies & institutions across sectors. In addition, they address the importance of education and the right skills for success.

“ MY GOAL IS TO HELP MY TEAM NAVIGATE THROUGH TIMES OF HIGH AMBIGUITY, DEVELOP & GROW SUCCESSFULLY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. ”

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Throughout my career, I have always been passionate about business transformations that help our people & our company develop and succeed. This is also my many goal now in Holcim European Business Services (EBS) in Kosice. starting from creating a strong team of professionals, developing a mature digital environment and supporting modern society in a sustainable environment. I feel at ease in fast-paced environments, with fluid requirements that require constant adaptation and I enjoy helping my team navigate the uncertainty of modern times. Most of all, I love seeing my people challenging the status quo, using their own individual skills to grow and have fun while improving all together.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Digital / Intelligent transformation and the Hybrid work model are huge opportunities for the IT Industry. Business Customers are looking for IT vendors to provide more than just hardware – customers want an IT vendor to provide solutions. Lenovo is uniquely placed to meet this demand, by being able to offer customers end to end, scale-able solutions. We are the only IT vendor that can offer a full “Pocket to Cloud” solution.

Our portfolio of devices (phones, PC tablets, IoT) combined with Infrastructure (Data Center, Edge, Cloud Computing) and Services, means customers don't need to look any further than Lenovo for all of their ICT (Information and Communications Technology) requirements.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Those companies that embrace the opportunities offered through Intelligent transformation will be the “winners” regardless of the sector they are in. Lenovo is excited at the opportunities Intelligent transformation brings, and we look forward to supporting our customers on their Intelligent transformation journeys.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Education is the key. In my opinion, Slovakia should be focusing on education in order to create a pool of talent across all business sectors that will encourage Global Companies to invest in Slovakia. One of the reasons behind Lenovo choosing Slovakia in 2006, was the availability of a university educated workforce with English language skills. That is no longer enough – Slovakia needs to ensure that it is producing graduates with the skills required to thrive in a competitive global environment.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

AmCham provides an excellent framework for business leaders to come together, network, and share ideas. This

was especially beneficial through the Covid-19 pandemic. The Shared Service leaders faced similar challenges then (as we all moved quickly to a remote working environment) and continue to face similar challenges now (the best way to manage in a hybrid office/remote working environment). Having a network of peers who are always willing to share ideas and best practice is a great resource for all of us.



Education is the key. In my opinion, Slovakia should be focusing on education in order to create a pool of talent across all business sectors that will encourage Global Companies to invest in Slovakia.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Lenovo is an exciting company to work for, with a company culture and philosophy that is truly unique. We use the term “a company of owners” – we want every employee to make decisions as if they owned Lenovo. We foster a culture of innovation and encourage our people to take risks. We empower people to change how they do things to find new solutions, and we are embracing the opportunities both internal and external that come from Digital/Intelligent transformation.

What motivates me the most, however, is seeing how our people take those opportunities. It gives me great pleasure to see how hundreds of our employees have really grown their careers in Lenovo. From learning new skills, joining new teams, and taking on new responsibilities (over 60% of our management team where promoted internally vs hired externally) it is wonderful to have watched so many people grow both personally and professionally over the last 15 years.



DAVID REILLY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
/ BRATISLAVA SSC SITE LEADER
LENOVO (SLOVAKIA) S.R.O.



David Reilly, from Glasgow, Scotland has 23 years' experience in the IT industry. David joined IBM in Scotland in 1999, becoming a Lenovo employee in 2005 following Lenovo's acquisition of IBM's PC Division. David has wide Global Experience, having lived and worked in Europe (Scotland and Slovakia), Australia and the US, holding leadership positions in Finance, Supply Chain & Operations. As part of the original leadership team when Lenovo first opened its SSC in Bratislava in 2006, David has seen Lenovo Bratislava grow to become being an integral part of Lenovo's success, with over 1,000 employees across functions like HR, Finance, Operations, Supply Chain and Services.

MAREK REŠOVSKÝ

MANAGING DIRECTOR
DEUTSCHE TELEKOM SERVICES
EUROPE SLOVAKIA



Marek Rešovský has been working in Deutsche Telekom Group for 16 years. During this period, he has gone through various management positions. Since 2012, he was acting as Chief Financial Officer of T-Systems Slovakia. Marek has been acting as Managing Director in Deutsche Telekom Services Europe Slovakia since June 2017. He has received several national and international awards for his managerial achievements, including the most recent The BIZZ award in the Best company leader category. Thanks to the successful transformation of Deutsche Telekom Services Europe Slovakia, he managed to build one of the most awarded Shared Service Center in Slovakia.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THE PAST TWO YEARS OF COVID PANDEMIC AND HOW DO YOU IMPLEMENT THESE INSIGHTS?

In the two years of the pandemic, we gained extensive experience with hybrid forms of work and gathered feedback from the teams early on. It became clear that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. This is also reflected in the team commitments, in which colleagues agreed on the design of hybrid working. What became clear: The office is and will remain an important place to meet and work, but with a defined share of hybrid forms of work.

HOW DO YOU CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR HYBRID WORKING?

On the one hand, there is the technical infrastructure, which we adapted as part of our office refurbishment. On the other hand, it's about empowering colleagues. To this end, we have set up workshops on how to use digital tools, but also on soft skills, which are becoming increasingly important in hybrid forms of work. Hybrid working is a constant learning process that we promote in a targeted manner.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT AN ELEMENT OF COMPANY CULTURE THAT HELPS COMPANIES KEEP EMPLOYEES MOTIVATED?

In my opinion diversity is a crucial thing. Diversity in terms of understanding that each employee has different needs, ambitions and backgrounds.

TALKING ABOUT DIVERSITY, WHAT IS THE OVERALL APPROACH AND STRATEGY FOR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

The inclusion and diversity is rooted in the foundations of Deutsche Telekom Services Europe Slovakia. We live by several "Guiding principles" which are also listed in the Code of Ethics of our company. One of them is the principle "Act with respect and integrity" – what means, that we strive to create an atmosphere of acceptance and mutual

trust by respecting the personality of others, acting openly, honestly and respecting personal and cultural diversity. Whether there are differences in terms of age, gender, religion, ability, gender or sexual orientation – Deutsche Telekom wants the diversity of its employees. The different cultures, languages and family backgrounds of the company's employees help us increase this diversity. In Deutsche Telekom Services Europe Slovakia, we support all kinds of diversity and for example up to 44% of the leading positions in our company are held by women. In addition, our two largest service lines, Procure-To-Pay and Customer Finance, are also run by women. However, our efforts do not end here, because diversity is part of our DNA.

“

The office is and will remain an important place to meet and work, but with a defined share of hybrid forms of work.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR COMPANY?

There are really many innovations in different areas of our company. However, many topics are related to process automation, fully digital solutions, artificial intelligence and robots. Of course, we are also adapting our company for these innovations, whether in the area of building infrastructure, the development of our colleagues, but also in the recruitment of new candidates with the necessary profiles. We currently have more than 40 open positions, many of which require these future skills.

RUŽIČKA AND PARTNERS' 10TH WIN IN THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CATEGORY!

THE PUBLISHING HOUSE EPRAVO GROUP S. R. O. IN COOPERATION WITH THE TREND WEEKLY MAGAZINE ANNOUNCED ON 26 APRIL 2022 THE WINNERS OF THE 10TH ANNUAL LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR 2022 AWARDS. RUŽIČKA AND PARTNERS WAS AWARDED THE TITLE IN THE CATEGORY OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT FOR THE TENTH CONSECUTIVE TIME. IN ADDITION, THE FIRM RANKED FIRST IN THE PRESTIGIOUS CATEGORY OF **MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS**.

The final rankings were announced at a gala event at the DoubleTree by Hilton | Bratislava. The ceremony was held after a two-year-long hiatus caused by the pandemic. The results were published online at www.epravo.sk and www.pravnickafirmaroka.sk and also in the Trend weekly magazine, in a special insert titled Právo a advokácia (Law and advocacy).

The ranking aims to provide the local market with an overview in key areas of legal practice. This year, awards were given out in eighteen legal areas and two special categories – Pro Bono & CSR and Best Client Services.

In Public Procurement, RUŽIČKA AND PARTNERS is an undisputed Slovak market leader, as proven by an uninterrupted streak of wins in this category commencing in 2013. The firm's lawyers have worked on numerous major public sector projects. They have also represented several private companies poised to become public-sector contractors in Slovakia and abroad.

Ján Azud, leading partner for Public Procurement expressed his joy in receiving the award: "Public procurement law is key for the public sector; it is a tool enabling the government and local governments to satisfy their day-to-day needs, but also achieve the strategic goals of national and local policies. This area will be crucial also in terms of restarting the economy and addressing the consequences of the global pandemic and the security crisis. Therefore, our victory in this category is special to us. Our tenth win in a row is a huge success and we are proud of it."

Having been a leader in Mergers & Acquisitions advising corporate clients for many years, RUŽIČKA AND PARTNERS sees itself as a provider of comprehensive services of strategic nature, whether it is corporate reorganisations and acquisitions, changes to organisational schemes, implementations of various systemic measures across organisations, or strategic advice in solving demanding corporate tasks at the top-management level.

Dana Nemčíková, leading partner for Corporate Law, Mergers & Acquisitions adds: "As one of the key elements of corporate law, M&A is one of the most prestigious areas of legal practice both locally and internationally. We are grateful for having received the award in this very category. Our thanks go out to our loyal clients as, without their trust in us, these achievements would not be possible."

"We value these awards and the overall outstanding ranking of our office in the Law Firm of the Year contest very dearly. We are proud that in addition to our business achievements over the last thirty years of our existence on the market, our professional efforts and intense work in the individual areas and sectors of legal practice have been reflected by the independent acknowledgments of professionals both at home and abroad," concludes Jaroslav Ružička, the firm's Managing Partner.

RUŽIČKA
AND PARTNERS

JAROSLAV
RUŽIČKA

MANAGING PARTNER
RUŽIČKA AND PARTNERS
S. R. O.



Jaroslav Ružička is the founder and Managing Partner of RUŽIČKA AND PARTNERS s. r. o. In his almost forty-year career, he has become one of the leading figures of the legal profession in Slovakia. Jaroslav started his private legal practice in 1992. During his professional career he has worked primarily in the fields of real estate law and construction law, has gained abundant experience in corporate transactions and company acquisitions, infrastructure projects, as well as in advising public-private partnerships. He has provided advisory services to foreign investors intending to enter the Slovak or Czech markets.



WWW.R-P.SK

ROBERT ŠIMONČIČ

GENERAL DIRECTOR
SLOVAK INVESTMENT AND
TRADE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



Worked in management consulting in the United States, was President of the Board of Directors of the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) and also Chairman of the European Council of the American Chamber of Commerce. He later managed the Slovak branch of Microsoft, where he was in charge of 30 countries in the field of Microsoft Business Services. Since 2010 he has been the General Director of the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO). During his term SARIO has become one of the most relevant and reliable players in the field of investment, trade promotion and innovation in Slovakia. On March 29, 2022, SARIO has been awarded as the Best Investment Promotion Agency for the European Region.

Slovakia has maintained its investment, business and innovation potential for several years. Since establishing the agency in 2001, Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO) successfully completed more than 600 investment projects in total worth of € 12.6 billion, helping to create more than 132.600 jobs. The development trend was maintained even during the pandemic. SARIO's response to the new conditions was prompt and the results proved effective. Thanks to the expertise, competence and professional network of contacts, the agency's team was able to move things forward. Also the investors have already been able to adapt their strategies to this situation in a relatively sophisticated way, so they have kept their ongoing projects and have a great appetite for expansion. For Slovakia, in 2021 we closed 29 investment projects worth almost half a billion euros with more than 3.200 jobs.

Last year, there were signs of recovery in the world economy. We noticed that especially in numbers of new projects. Current value investment projects in progress reaches more than 17 billion EUR, three times compared to 2019, with potential to create more than 44 thousand new jobs, 55% more than in the pre-crisis year 2019.

Investors' interest in Slovakia also required increased activity in the regions focused on industrial parks. The readiness of sites has long been one of the key factors in the decision-making process of potential investors, and therefore I am glad that it is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Economy and the Government of the Slovak Republic. Although Slovakia is perceived as a manufacturing power, we see its future mainly in high value-added projects, investment in research and development and innovative operations. We proudly can proclaim that the number of value-added projects is growing year by year. Eight years ago, they formed only ten percent of the total number of closed projects, in 2021 it was already more than fifty percent.

Of course, for a country like Slovakia, where there is a large share of foreign and quality investments, expansions are very significant and new technology trends need to be captured there. The base of large and well-established investors is strong

in Slovakia. New expansions are often associated with new R&D centres and technology centres. The factor of overall diversification has also become important. We are entering new areas, such as the gaming, aerospace and space industries. We strive to support the gaming industry, green technologies, healthcare technologies and so on. In addition, electromobility, medical and protective equipment is a big topic. These new sectors accelerate the digitization and technology transfer.

The SARIO is responsible for the inflow of investments, but also for the support of export activities of Slovak companies on the global market. Thanks to the quality of the services provided, it has become one of the most relevant and reliable players to support Slovak exports. In 2021, the agency provided thousands of B2B negotiations and networking opportunities to establish new business contacts and contracts for hundreds of Slovak companies at 14 international fairs, 16 foreign and domestic business missions, developed almost 200 inquiries for domestic and foreign companies interested in expanding supply and demand networks and providing territorial or sectoral information. Specific activities of SARIO directly in the territory for departmental missions, at international fairs and exhibitions and especially on the Expo 2020 Dubai platform, as well as individual assistance to entrepreneurs in promoting foreign markets, have brought several export successes and visibility of Slovakia. They confirmed that Slovakia is already known and highly competitive in traditional sectors - engineering, automotive, aviation, but also that in the so-called new sectors - green technologies, space, cyber security, smart city, Slovakia is building its position as a relevant partner not only in production but also in research and development. Six months of concrete activities of the SARIO representative directly at EXPO 2020 clearly increased the awareness of Slovakia and its business potential not only in the UAE region, but worldwide, as EXPO connected more than 190 countries and institutions. Overall, the SARIO agency successfully fulfills its mission and vision in 2021, effectively disseminating and fulfilling the messages of the Good Idea Slovakia brand and increasing the visibility of Slovakia, from which we as a country can benefit in the future.

VLADIMÍR ŠOLÍK

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SIEMENS HEALTHCARE S.R.O.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

I would like to highlight the Siemens Healthineers research and development activities aimed at providing our customers with innovative and sustainable solutions. In fiscal year 2021, we reported R&D expenses of € 1,546 million representing a 9 % ratio of R&D expenses to revenue. This is one of the main factors reinforcing our global innovative leader position in the healthcare industry.

In November 2021, Siemens Healthineers launched NAEOTOM Alpha, the world's first photon-counting CT scanner with Quantum technology. The photon-counting technology enables revolutionary improvements and opens a new era in diagnostic imaging and redefining CT. It is an exciting success of research and development.

In fact, the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has even referred to this development as the "first significant new technology for computed tomography in nearly a decade". With this groundbreaking innovation, which the development team worked on for more than 15 years, Siemens Healthineers has set new standards in radiology. Thanks to novel and pioneering detector technology, medical imaging has been raised to a previously unknown level of precision. At the same time, it significantly has reduced radiation and the dosage of contrast media for patients.

As the global healthcare innovation leader, Siemens Healthineers is preparing a €350 million High Energy Photonics (HEP) Center in Forchheim, Germany which is our company's largest single investment in new construction. It will bundle the production, research and development, as well as the logistics of X-ray tubes and generators. These last two being the main components of modern CT systems such as NAEOTOM Alpha and angiography and X-ray systems.

The new factory will be fully digitally connected and will have highly automated equipment that will help reduce production costs, increase product quality, and provide sufficient capacity for further growth in the future. A specially developed energy concept was designed to enable almost CO₂-neutral operation of the building complex. The HEP Center is scheduled to go into operation at the end of 2023 and offer space for around 700 workplaces.

I am very proud to announce that in Slovakia the pioneering new technologies are also implemented in healthcare. The best example is the first installation of the revolutionary CT NAEOTOM Alpha, which will, in the immediate future, start to contribute to healthcare improvement in Slovakia. Patients in our country will be able to benefit from the precise photon-counting diagnostic technology.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

The omnipresent digitalization and workflow efficiency is affecting all industries and has a significant impact on the Slovak economy. I believe digitalization is a great tool, having the potential to elevate the healthcare industry. Access to high quality data will lead to more precise diagnostics, in Slovakia and globally.

My future expectations regarding the Slovak economy are influenced by price increases of energy and primary materials. This will be the new basis for customer purchase decisions and hopefully will accelerate innovation. Slovakia may still count on its advantage of relatively low prices of sources (e.g.: labor costs or energy) and therefore we should focus on the transition to high added value sectors such as R&D or services with innovative and unique profiles; ones not easily replaced by automation in the mid to long term.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

To predict the future has never been easy, but I think it is even more difficult now as we have to be ready to embrace the culture of change. Change requires a new attitude, a modification, and a transition from our comfort zone of the familiar, in purchase decisions and behavior.

Slovak industries still benefit from being a leader in automation. However the transition should focus, in my opinion, on educated skilled workers, as they have the potential to impact the economic growth of a country. There are some national initiatives and campaigns, supported by our government, focused on attracting young Slovak talents to return from abroad. It is important to find a way to motivate them to return. The "skilled economy" has the ability to contribute and support our country's development.



Since 2006: He has worked at Siemens s.r.o. as the Technical Head of the Medical Technology Division in Slovakia

2010 - 2015: Head of the healthcare sector at Siemens s.r.o.

2015 : Global Siemens AG Group created a separate legal entity for the healthcare sector - Siemens Healthineers

May 2015: Independent company Siemens Healthcare s.r.o. in Slovakia founded

March 16, 2018: Siemens Healthineers was listed on the stock exchange

He became Executive Director of Siemens Healthcare s.r.o. in Slovakia

In the field of healthcare, he is an expert in medical technology and processes. His professional leadership is enhanced by almost 30 years of experience.

ANDREJ TOMAŠIK

GENERAL MANAGER & DIRECTOR, CUSTOMER QUALITY EMEA
ON SEMICONDUCTOR
SLOVAKIA, A.S.



Andrej spent over 20 years in semiconductor industry and during his career held various positions starting at semiconductor production line in Slovakia. Later he was responsible for quality performance of foundries corporation was using in EMEA region. Over the years his role expanded from semiconductor manufacturing focused scope to customer oriented activities. Currently he is leading onsemi EMEA customer quality organization with team spread over several countries in Europe and managing onsemi entity in Slovakia.

WHAT IS THE EXCITING INNOVATION INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

Semiconductor world is actually innovation itself by nature. World is moving to automation, energy efficient solution, productivity and the amount of data processed and speed of exchange is continually growing. To drive and achieve desired status requires development of tools containing semiconductors having better energy efficient performance, advanced capability to support decision making. For onsemi, intelligent power and intelligent sensing are focused areas as it is linked to megatrends where deployment and quick acceleration are expected specifically in automotive and industrial markets. Autonomous driving, electrification, green energy, automation of processes, those are areas where either power must be efficiently managed, or sensing capabilities are needed to ensure safe and precise performance.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Expecting automotive will continue to be the driver followed by IT, however proper diversity level with other markets will be important. Coming from the semiconductor world, I am seeing electronics are playing a significant part across various industries and that would be the area where one of our opportunities lies in the future.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Key goal should be massive investment and an increase in the quality of education with focus on key areas such as the aforementioned IT sector. And at the same time, science and research in companies or universities, which represents areas with huge potential for the future.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Create environment supporting companies operating on markets which in long term horizon will ensure continual growth and these will have desire to invest their business in Slovakia. Of

course, there are multiple attributes that need to be considered as part of the entire ecosystem and ideally we should not see these attributes as individual pillars but rather as connected and influencing each other. It is true that many of the programs are discussed already, but there must be a strong focus on fast deployment. A significant part of all that, in my opinion, is to build an education system enabling us to get resources in those areas where focus will be in years ahead. We must be more demanding in the educational area. Yes, we still have talents, but we need to ensure that there is also critical mass available. We are a small country and to diversify too much will be a challenge afterwards to keep the pace and quality desired to ensure required progress.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

AmCham provides great opportunity to share information across various operational segments in Slovakia and has capability to voice needs and expectations from market to government. Such kind of collaboration is needed in the environment which is very dynamic naturally and getting higher level of importance if additional factors influencing this dynamic are added on top. We can see what is happening around us during the last few years.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Dynamics of daily life, which are driven by people, their ideas, opinions, expectations and in parallel driven by organizational needs, market situation and requirements of our customers. I became "veteran" in semiconductor sector as I have been in it for 20 years already. When I started in this field shortly after finishing university and met people working in industry for 15+ years I was wondering for how long for I would find this field fulfilling as I saw it as an extremely long period at that time. Looking back now after 20 years, that was dynamics of work environment I was exposed to, positive situations but also crises I went through and technologies which were under development and discussed years back which are now deployed into the market.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR COMPANY?

As Deutsche Telekom IT Solution Slovakia, we have started with a new sovereign cloud portfolio aiming to provide the public sector with an ability to capitalise upon a secure, legally compliant public cloud. We are further strengthening our competences in this area, particularly in healthcare cloud services.

WHICH SECTORS HAVE THE GREATEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

With reference to our record of accomplishment, we currently observe the following focus topics to improve the business environment in Slovakia:

- Expedite digitization initiatives to support sustainable growth of local companies
- Enable Industry 4.0 frameworks to increase the country's competitiveness
- Advance Intelligent Automation to enhance cost efficiency and agility in the productive sector
- Promote IoT initiatives for smart solutions in the public sector

The IT sector can make a significant contribution to shaping Slovakia and its economy. The ongoing digital transformation of the economy and society under the influence of innovative technologies and global megatrends is a clear example of this.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

As for Deutsche Telekom IT Solution Slovakia, we need to further strengthen

our competencies to lead, design, innovate and take overall responsibility for larger parts of the global value chain. As such we continue to transform ourselves into a vertical full service provider with strong industry competencies. As for the entire Slovak economy, we expect labour arbitrage effects more or less to vanish over the next ten years, hence further increasing the demand for specific industry leadership and skills.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

I appreciate the the given networking opportunities, in particular the CEO breakfasts and especially the All American evening in Kosice. As Deutsche Telekom IT Solution Slovakia, we regularly join Amcham business events to connect with and across the industry. We also contribute actively to the standing working groups capital of talents and regional capital.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

I take pride working for the „magenta family“ and with people who are committed towards social responsibility and continuously give back to the community, in particular in the area of education & digital literacy. It also makes me feel proud that we support various level of schools and extend our collaboration with universities and technology transfer centers. And it matters a lot to me that we pursue our journey towards net zero energy consumption & emissions.



DEUTSCHE TELEKOM IT SOLUTIONS

ANDREAS TRULS

MANAGING DIRECTOR
DEUTSCHE TELEKOM IT
SOLUTIONS SLOVAKIA



As a Regional IT Executive, Andreas has extensive experience designing and implementing scalable growth strategies that deliver increased shareholder value in the outsourcing industry. Andreas carries 20 years' experience in leadership positions, both locally and regionally, and is directing large technical & service delivery teams of over 2000 seats with a proven record of accomplishment in Complex Infrastructure Services, Cloud Transformations and Data Centre Consolidation. Andreas holds a master in communication sciences with major in IT and a master in business administration.



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Adecco

IVANA HERETIK VAČOKOVÁ

GENERAL MANAGER
ADECCO SLOVAKIA



Expert in recruitment services and experienced manager, with over 16 years' experience on agency side including international exposure (Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, Czech Republic). Specialties: people management, interim management, project management, process implementation, performance management, green field projects, foreign direct investment consultancy, tendering process, training & development, SSC, RPO, HR consultancy. All-rounder with passion for business,

WHAT IS CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR THE MOST?

Labour market is currently influenced mostly by the peak of open vacancies, which is the highest ever recorded and lack of qualified workforce. The market has again changed to candidates driven and direct search became a must for every successful recruitment process. Employers need to attract talent. Employer branding, leadership, T&Cs, company culture and working time are playing major role in keeping the talents in the organization.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Sectors with biggest potential in Slovakia are defined mainly by automotive, logistics, IT and SSC & BPO sector. We can observe a shift in the complexity of roles, and increase of added value positions. Requirements on employees are becoming more demanding, and the ability to learn and adapt becomes one of the biggest assets. Education system should adapt, and be able to transform based on this facts.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

The goal should be to create a fair, flexible and transparent business and

working environment. We should become more competitive within EU to attract added value companies from different sectors, and become less reliant on one industry. As we are and will face lack of workforce in the future faster and easier process for foreign employees, and creation of an ecosystem for them would be an advantage from a long term perspective.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

I appreciate the possibility to get to know the partners, as well as the events organized by AmCham which are creating a great platform in formal or informal environment between members. The hands on approach of AmCham, the engagement of the members from multiple sectors are really great and of added value.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

I'm motivated by satisfaction of clients, candidates and employees as well as their growth. Possibilities of self-realization, ability to transform, create new things and their successful implementation. Work life balance is another important part as I'm a mom and family is one of my top drivers to be a good role model.

ADECCO SLOVAKIA SERVICES

We provide a wide range of services to reflect the needs of our clients, in various business segments throughout the Slovak Republic.

We always tailor the offer for clients, according to their current needs.



Temporary Help
/ Staffing



Permanent
Placement



Payroll and
Personnel agenda



Workshops
and trainings



Consulting
and audit



Outsourcing

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

The automotive sector is generally very innovative, as it has to constantly adapt to the growing demands of both customers and EU regulations on emission limits. In this regard, I am pleased to say that Garrett belongs to the leaders in innovation and products such as the internationally award-winning electric turbocharger (E-Turbo) and electric compressor (E-compressor) meet these requirements to a significant extent.

WHAT SECTOR HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

From my point of view, the automotive sector will remain dominant, which, thanks to product innovations, also brings the latest technologies to Slovakia, as it produces vehicles with high added value. At present, there is a need to digitize almost all processes, work with Big Data, which places increased demands on the educational system that is lagging behind in Slovakia.

I would like tourism to come to the forefront in the future because Slovakia is a beautiful country and has all the prerequisites to generate much higher incomes than before.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

To diversify the economy so that it does not depend on just a few sectors, which in the event of a crisis will pull GDP results significantly down. To attract science and research to Slovakia for higher value-added products, to offer global IT services so we can be perceived as the Silicon Valley of Central Europe. To offer solutions in the field of digitization and process automation. All of this will require a transformation of the education system, which must capture these trends in order to supply young talents to the labor market.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

To be a part of an institution that enables the leaders from different sectors to meet, the exchange of best practices, and the enrichment of different views of the same problem. I also appreciate that Amcham has the ambition to raise and address burning issues in society in order to move things in a better direction.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

A passion for excellence in all areas, my amazing team who grows in all directions and also products that are made in Slovakia and appreciated abroad.

Garrett

ADVANCING MOTION

MARIÁN VAZUR

PLANT DIRECTOR
GARRETT MOTION SLOVAKIA
S.R.O.



I have more than 20 years of experience holding different positions with increased responsibilities in various sectors, mostly in an automotive sector. From 2001 after completion of my university studies I spent 7 years in the Czech Republic working for companies such as Valeo, Ishimitsu, where I was in charge of new products introduction, industrialization and E2E quality management systems. Since 2010 spent almost 4 years in France as an expat working in a construction industry for the US company Manitowoc Cranes Ltd as EMEA Reliability Manager, in charge of Quality and Reliability of new products introduced on the market including Warranty predictions. Since 2016 joined Honeywell Turbo company in Slovakia, held different positions in Quality and Operations, after company spin-off in 2018 currently working as a Plant Director in Garrett Motion Slovakia s.r.o. I hold the Master's degree in Metallurgical Engineering at the Technical University in Kosice.



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accenture

TOMÁŠ
VOLEK

COUNTRY MANAGER
ACCENTURE



Tomáš Volek is country managing director for Accenture in Slovakia and Hungary. He is also leading Accenture's Advanced Technology Centers in Slovakia, Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic, whose nearly 2,000 employees provide technology services and digital capabilities to Accenture clients worldwide. Since joining Accenture in 1995, Tomáš has served as an SAP expert and worked on several large systems integration projects across a wide variety of industries in Western and Eastern Europe, Turkey and India. In 2003 he set up the Bratislava Delivery Center for Technology, taking on the role of delivery center lead in 2012. Tomáš holds a master's degree in electronics from Hull University in the U.K. and an engineering degree from Czech Technical University in Prague. He lives in Prague with his wife and 3 kids.

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION CURRENTLY INFLUENCING YOUR SECTOR?

We believe that the next wave of digital change is here and it is called the Metaverse continuum. This spectrum of digitally enhanced worlds, realities and business models will influence our lives and enterprise in the next decade. As the next evolution of the internet, it will transform how businesses interact with customers or how work is done. Enterprises also should start preparing now for the quantum revolution. As much as 97 % respondents to our survey agree that quantum computing will provide enormous growth for their companies comparable to the growth they have experienced from artificial intelligence.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SLOVAK ECONOMY?

There is a potential across the sectors as we are entering the era of innovation. Technology is everywhere and it will be reshaping the Slovak economy in coming years. Companies thus should focus on implementing the right technology to address their challenges such as automation, customer experience, market position and leveraging data. Moreover, it is essential to drive the use of green energy in all parts of the economy to secure our sustainable future. This can be also done via smart solutions that enable to optimize energy use.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

One of the key goals that has recently emerged is to cut dependence on Russian gas and oil. Accenture stands with Ukraine and calls for the immediate end to the unlawful and horrific attack on the people of Ukraine and their freedom. We should therefore start considering more sustainable energy solutions that would replace the fossil fuels and accelerate transition to a green economy. The Slovak economy should also further aim at attracting sophisticated investments with added value that would help to make it more resilient against future shocks.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

I truly appreciate AmCham's efforts to bring together leaders of major Slovak companies who have a unique opportunity for open and honest discussion.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

Progress in the field of technology and constant innovation convince me that there will always be something new to learn and experience. However, one of the most important things that inspire me are amazing people, my colleagues who are able to motivate me with their ingenuity and new ideas.



WHAT IS CURRENTLY THE MOST EXCITING INNOVATION IN YOUR SECTOR?

PwC Slovakia is the largest consulting company and brings a unique combination of financial, technology, process and operations expertise using our experience across industries and borders. Recent innovations in audit and consulting are based on data analysis, data mining, RPA, and are secured by cyber security tools and processes.

We help our clients use AI, so they can do what they do faster, cheaper and more accurately than ever before. Machines can now read contractual terms and conditions, predict behavior on transport systems and pick out faces in crowds. Our AI teams are made up of specialists in cognitive computing, deep learning, machine learning and natural language processing and generation. They can help turn the data companies own into insights and action at organizations.

At PwC, we build trust and solve important problems, technology helps us provide our services and offer our customers reliable solutions and our people more engaging work.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

Slovakia is a strong automotive country and in the future will need many engineering and IT specialists, who will also be needed in many other sectors. Without investing in increasing the quality of high school and university education and developing a highly qualified workforce, Slovakia will not be able to move forward in any sector.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE GOALS FOR THE SLOVAK ECONOMY OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Slovakia should invest in increasing the technology level of industries, digital transformation in business and public sector, digital upskilling of the workforce and increasing the level of university and high school education. We believe a business's impact on the environment will become an important factor in maintaining competitiveness and a key driver of success. Slovakia must also focus on the sustainable future of business and society and take environmental and social aspects into consideration when making strategic decisions.

Slovakia needs to become more attractive to investors and the business community. Slovakia has one of the highest tax and contribution burdens in the EU and EFTA. Creating a more motivating environment for R&D investments will help increase the technology level of manufacturing industry, which the Slovak economy is dependent on.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT AMCHAM MEMBERSHIP?

We highly appreciate that AmCham is a great place for business networking and a platform which helps shape legislation and which supports continuous improvement of the business environment in Slovakia.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU AT WORK?

PwC is a global company with a strong brand in the rapidly changing business environment. This motivates me and my colleagues to learn continuously about technology opportunities in business.

VĚRA VÝTVAROVÁ

COUNTRY MANAGING PARTNER
PWC SLOVENSKO



Věra has 28 years of experience in audit and has been leading PwC Slovakia as Country Managing Partner since 2020. Previously, Věra led Assurance at PwC CEE, and managed the Assurance practice in 29 countries. She became a Partner in 2009 and Assurance Leader in 2014 at PwC Czech Republic and led financial audits of large multinational and local clients. In addition, she has also managed related advisory and assurance services, such as conversion to IFRS, consolidation, assistance with setting and improving reporting systems and corporate governance. Věra received a TOP Women Award in Business in the Czech Republic, and was ranked as one of the most influential women by Forbes in Czech Republic and one of the 10 most successful women in consulting and law companies in Slovakia.

The largest consulting company in Slovakia

Assurance

Tax and Legal Services

Advisory



BART WATERLOOS

MANAGING PARTNER
VG SLOVAKIA



Bart is currently managing partner of VG Slovakia. He started his career with VG nearly 25 years ago as audit assistant and via the VG offices in Brussels and Prague, he came in 2004 to Bratislava, Slovakia. Gradually he took over the responsibilities of this small office (founded in 2002) and via mergers and acquisitions he built it to one of the TOP consulting and audit companies in Slovakia. He is specializing in audit, business advisory and outsourcing. Originally coming from Belgium with more than 20 years of experience in Central Europe, he is experienced in managing the expectations of foreign investors in the central European region. Bart is also actively involved in a global network, Nexia International, with a position on the EMEA Board. He can help clients not only to start in Slovakia, but also with supporting Slovak businesses with their international expansion plans.

SK.VGD.EU

VG SLOVAKIA IS CELEBRATING 20 YEARS ON SLOVAK MARKET

HOW HAS OUR BUSINESS CHANGED SINCE ENTERING SLOVAK MARKET?

VG formally entered the Slovak market as from January 2002, so we are now more than 20 years active here and over this period we noticed significant changes.

In the past we used to focus on compliance, as foreign businesses entering Slovakia (with the anticipated entry into the EU in May 2004, there was a real boom back then), needed firstly support in handling the different systems. Until today we can say that Slovakia, in the field of accounting and taxation, is rather formalistic and that unfortunately form is often more important than substance. Whereas in several western countries, businessmen are more used to the substance over form principle.

Already from the beginning we tried to be a one-stop-shop for companies by offering seamless services in the area of accounting, payroll, taxation and audit. As our clients grew, there was a need for more specialized and complex services and thus we added new business lines such as Transaction Advisory, Legal, Subsidies and Digitalization.

Especially in the field of digitalization we see that Slovakia is taking good steps, allowing now much more digital documents and signatures, thus our clients can significantly reduce their archives. We ourselves are ready for these changes and we also have tools that respond to this trend so we are encouraging our clients to take these steps.

HOW OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CLIENTS HAS CHANGED?

With the complex services, we also noticed that clients demand that we switch more away from the strict compliance approach, towards a more advising role. Our activities do not stop with filing the VAT statement, but extend into detailed reporting systems, explaining trends and forecasting future cash-flows, as well as organizing payments or sending out invoices or reminders on behalf of our clients. As such we can say that our relationship with our clients has changed and we are now much more interacting with them. That was underlined by our previous brand line: beyond partnership: we can integrate much more with the

clients systems and procedures. Currently we use "Let's Talk" because we believe that we can serve the client only when we understand his needs and requirements accurately and that we can only find out by having intense talks and discussions with our clients.

At VG we know that entrepreneurs have to deal with number of aspects around their businesses that are constantly changing and modifying. We are happy to assist them and handle these activities for them. So that they can focus on core business and be more successful.

WHAT CHALLENGES WE SEE FOR THE FUTURE?

The challenges that lay ahead of us are in the first place to continuously invest in our staff, so that they become the real advisor of the client. We have set-up several processes that will result in the majority of the compliance tasks to be automated, freeing up more time to reach out to our clients.

At the same time this automation and digitization is something to keep a close eye on, as the speed of changes is enormously. We constantly have to outweigh the costs that are involved here and the return that we can give to our clients.

There is certainly also a challenge to attract and retain our talented staff. With individual career plans, on the job training, high partners involvement and special initiatives such as our internal program VG Academy and LMS systems, we believe that we are still able to make a difference here.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

Membership in AmCham brings us the opportunity to build and further strengthen our relationships with clients. Especially in Covid times when opportunities for networking were limited it proved its importance to be an active business community via the various webinars that took place. Further we know that AmCham has various contacts towards the official authorities and that when it makes comments, its voice is being listened to.



MindMoments

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE MINDFULNESS FIELD THESE DAYS?

There is still huge interest in mindfulness. Mindfulness is adopted by the mainstream at a growing speed which brings benefits and also risks. Good news is that there are already different formats available to everyone who feels the need to live a better quality life with increased self-awareness and resilience. There are options for everyone – corporate workshops, deeper programs like Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction courses or many meditation apps. The interest combined with impatience in our society, hunger for quick results and new stimuli also brings the risk of over-simplifications though, and drive for results with little time investment. And these are in fact quite opposite to the essence of the practice.

WHAT ARE THE KEY QUESTIONS IN MINDFULNESS RESEARCH?

Numerous research studies have already proven the effect of mindfulness on well-being, stress reduction, cognitive functions and self-regulation. The question that still resonates is „how does this happen?“ What are the elements in mindfulness training that foster change? Except for attention training and increased self-awareness, mindfulness courses support the attitudes of openness, non-judging, acceptance, gratitude and kindness to self and others, which bring participants inner space and wisdom. There is also more and more research on impact of compassion, relation with trauma healing and questions on interconnection of mindfulness with the science of unconscious bias.

IS GIVING YOUR MIND A BREAK THROUGH MEDITATION A LUXURY OR A NECESSITY TODAY?

Our minds are often on overdrive these days, things happen fast, we are being focused on results and improvements to our environment most of the time. The motivation often comes from a very good cause, however the way we operate can drain a lot of energy without us even realizing it. Everyone with regular practice could describe the benefits of feeling calm, aware, connected and being able to take wise decisions. In the constant speed and impact of the digital age on our minds, meditation

becomes more a necessity, just like physical activity for our bodies. However the choice is personal and the practice can have different formats. Formal meditation is just one way to practice mindfulness, there are also many informal ways.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE NEXT PERIOD?

Except for corporate assignments, I am focused on working with teachers more and more in the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction courses. I believe education is a field that is so important these days, with huge potential and a lot of space for work. I am also diving deeper in field of compassion. Especially in difficult times like we have been experiencing, it is a very useful approach and also an area that penetrates the business world slowly too. I am also becoming more active in Slovak Mindfulness Institute that is a new institution and a member of European Association for Mindfulness. The mission of the institute is to bring science based information and create a professional platform for certified teachers of mindfulness programs which is a new and exciting area in Slovakia.



OUR MINDS ARE OFTEN ON OVERDRIVE THESE DAYS.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN WORK?

I am lucky to be highly motivated to work in this period of my life. It is the sense of personal fulfillment that I get everyday when working with my clients who experience real change in their ability to approach challenges, cope with stress and enjoy life more. The gratitude from clients contributes to my feeling that this work makes sense. I also have an exciting opportunity to go deeper in the field of psychology, where so much interesting development and research happens these days. My personal meditation practice gives me a sense of following the right path.

EVA ZAVACKÁ

FOUNDER AND
MINDFULNESS TEACHER
MINDMOMENTS (PART OF
FULLHOUSE CONSULTING)



Eva Zavacká is a psychologist who specializes in developing individuals and groups through mindfulness approaches, building resilience and working with stress reactions. Eva completed long-term mindfulness teacher trainings in Germany and UK. She is a teacher of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program certified by the Institute of Mindfulness-Based Approaches. She is a member of Mindfulness Institute Slovakia. Eva is also an internationally certified coach and member of ICF. She has over 15 years of experience in the business, HR and leadership development and previously worked in management positions in different world countries.

WWW.MINDMOMENTS.SK



MARTINA ŽEMBEROVÁ

EXTERNAL
PARTNERSHIPS LEAD
ROCHE SLOVENSKO



Throughout her career, Martina has focused on building partnerships and advocating for sustainable, predictable and transparent business climate. While she has spent most of her career working for large multinational corporations, Martina also served as economic and policy advisor in the field of foreign affairs and diplomacy. This combined experience has prepared Martina for her current mission working in a highly regulated pharmaceutical industry. Martina's primary focus in her role as a Lead of External Partnerships in Roche Slovensko is contributing to a better vision and a long-term strategy for a modern and resilient healthcare and a fair access to medical innovations for all people living in Slovakia.

WHAT SECTORS HAVE THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE SLOVAK ECONOMY?

For Slovakia to remain competitive, it would be desirable to focus more attention, policy support and funding towards life sciences, including biotechnologies. Highly innovative and R&D intensive industries complement the well-established manufacturing basis of the Slovak economy. In order to attract more foreign and domestic investment in innovative fields, Slovakia needs to re-shape its education system to fit the needs of the 21st century. Policy-making needs to shift from short-term decisions towards a long-term vision that will ensure a sustainable and prosperous future, avoid further brain-drain and attract new investment.

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE THE MOST ABOUT MEMBERSHIP IN AMCHAM?

I have worked and partnered with AmCham for over thirteen years. AmCham Slovakia remains one of the leading business platforms advocating for meaningful policy changes. It offers a good mix of expertise, flexibility and innovative approach, while staying industry-neutral. I appreciate the focus

on critical areas including education, rule of law, and human capital, as well as policy and advocacy activities geared towards creating a predictable and sustainable business climate across industries.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU AT WORK?

Working in the area of healthcare is a great privilege. Health is the most valuable asset, a universal value, the best investment with a certain return. I consider my current role as a mission rather than a simple job assignment. It is both humbling and rewarding to be able to contribute to better healthcare in Slovakia through raising awareness of individual and societal responsibility for people's health, communicate the importance of timely prevention, and advocate for the value and benefits of innovations in the area of diagnostics and treatment. As a people leader, I realize how crucial it is to create the right conditions for people to strive, dare, try, learn from failure, and succeed. These principles are universal and apply to multinational corporations just as much as to public institutions. We have a shared responsibility to make Slovakia a great and healthy place to live.



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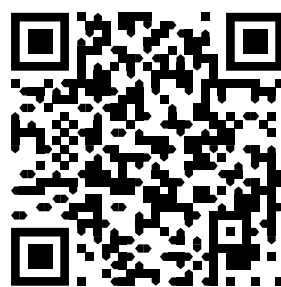
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NEW BUSINESS LEADERS PODCAST



AmChat
BUSINESS LEADERS PODCAST

AmCham Slovakia has become an active creator of content not only for its executive business community, but also for a wider audience in Slovakia. The content is brought to you through a number of streaming platforms and introduces important current topics from the perspective of the most influential business leaders among AmCham's members. We aim to cultivate and transform the local business environment through the power of best knowledge and practice exchange, reflecting the exclusive company brands, talents and innovative technologies represented by our members.



www.amcham.sk/press-room/amchat-podcast

