

New PricewaterhouseCoopers partner steps up to a bigger challenge



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Advisory Partner
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Experience:

- advisory services for strategic management, restructuring, IT, corporate finance, investigation and forensic services, and transaction services

Previous positions:

- 1994 joined PwC: Canada (1999/2000), Czech Republic (2001/2005), Slovakia (2006-)

You have worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) for more than a decade – what has made you stay that long?

The 14 years I have been with PwC have passed quicker than I would like. There are two main aspects that I was looking for in any working environment and I certainly found those in PwC: continuous change and internal team spirit. Due to the nature and average length of consulting services being three months, I have had the luxury of working with dozens of companies, mostly multinationals. My main goal was to offer my knowledge and help. I learned a lot from the experts and the top management of these companies. I learned about their environments, issues and management style - this motivates me when we are starting a new project. The second important aspect is the people that I work with at PwC, both locally and globally.

Since our company values, standards and the recruiting process are the same in all countries, you can always be sure that, in addition to doing professional work, you will also have lots of fun.

What makes PwC different from other big companies in this area of business?

Our leadership team in Slovakia pursues a client service strategy based on a high-quality local team that knows the Slovak environment. It is supplemented by specific technical expertise on an as-needed basis from other countries around the globe in which PwC operates. This strategy has proved to be very much appreciated by our clients, who want to have contacts directly in Slovakia. At the same time, our clients want the same quality advice and standards they would get in America or Western Europe, for example. PwC in Central and Eastern Europe brings enormous knowledge and power when addressing client issues. If I am asked for certain industry expertise that I do not currently have in my team, it is a matter of minutes to find the right person in our region of 19 countries.

What are the most sought-after services of PwC and which ones are exceptional?

For a number of years, PwC in Slovakia has been known as a leader in audit and tax services. However, our reputation in the area of business advisory services is rapidly growing. We are called on more and more when it comes to financial due diligence projects, mergers and acquisitions, forensic work or process improvements. Services that are still rather exceptional are Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects, since these are only starting in Slovakia. However, the PPP projects that our teams are

involved in are great examples of building a local team led by an international expert.

What did you learn during your stay in Canada?

I spent two years in Canada and it was a great learning experience. Canada is a multicultural country that warmly welcomes all newcomers. When flying regularly between Europe and North America, I realized how deeply immersed people sometimes are in details if they do not travel.

What were the most striking differences between working in Canada, the Czech Republic and Slovakia?

Working in Canada by default brings opportunities to work with representatives of other nations and to learn from their way of doing things, which is very inspirational. In Europe we often work with people from other European countries, but it is different from working with Indians, Japanese or Chinese people, for example. One big advantage of working in Slovakia is the current optimism when it comes to the economic boom and the rising income levels of people. People and companies tend to look at things more in the long term, and employees tend to be happier. When comparing particularly Prague to Bratislava, I see a significant difference in both labor markets. There are currently not enough qualified people in Slovakia, which creates pressure for rewards and higher fluctuation, but this also provides more opportunities to grow quickly, compared to the more mature labor markets, as the Czech market is becoming now.

What do you expect your new position as partner of PwC will bring to your working life?

Becoming a partner means

more responsibility, but also more influence. I am looking forward to both and, to learning from the challenges that are ahead of me. Do I see any change to my working life in this respect? Maybe, my clients, my colleagues, and the business people I will interact with will have increased expectations from me, and I would not like to disappoint them.

Do you have a specific goal for your professional career?

This might sound like a cliché, but my goal has always been to do things in a way that lets me look at myself in the mirror. This means doing high-quality work and keeping promises. I should probably set a new goal: to improve my response time. Increased responsibility means more e-mails and telephone calls, and it is simply impossible to respond as quickly and thoroughly as before.

Have you ever encountered (in your profession) a tough challenge that you are proud of handling well?

I assume that all of us encounter challenges every day, and it seems that every new one is tougher than the previous one. But that is part of our development and professional growth. My biggest recent challenge was, and still is, my commitment to our leadership team to develop a leading advisory business in Slovakia. This includes a definition of the vision, strategy and objectives, but more importantly, also finding the right people and helping to develop the right skills. This would not be a tough challenge in a fixed environment that does not change, but this is not our case: the market changes, client needs change, and things around us continuously change as well. However, this also ensures that I will never be bored.