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The BSS Tour

Katowice

Conference

Operational and HR challenges in the BSS sector

SAVE THE DATE

November 27th-28th, 2023

Monopol Hotel, Katowice, Poland



events.proprogressio.pl



KATOWICE
dla odmiany



Dear Readers,

I am delighted to present the sixth and final issue of *FOCUS ON Business* magazine for 2023. This past year, and especially the recent months, have been a time of dynamic evolution for the modern business services sector.

It has been exactly one year since the global spotlight shone on artificial intelligence, a subject we've been avidly covering for many months on our *FOCUS ON Business* website. Now, it is our privilege to bring this topic to the printed pages of our magazine. I invite you to delve into our feature interview in this edition, where we engage in a stimulating conversation with Simon Kriss, the Chief Innovation Officer at the Customer Experience Innovation Institute in Australia. Our discussion revolves around the evolution of AI within the BPO industry.

The year's end brings a multitude of challenges to the human resources market, and we thoroughly examine this topic in the current issue. We encourage you to explore articles that address the intricacies of talent acquisition, workplace diversity, equality, and the recruitment of individuals with competencies tailored to the ever-evolving demands of businesses.

Every year, we introduce fresh thematic sections within *FOCUS ON Business*, and this time is no exception. We are pleased to announce the permanent addition of a section dedicated to technological innovations. In this edition, we spotlight solutions that enhance videoconferencing.

As we wrap up the year, I express my heartfelt gratitude for your continued readership of our magazine. I look forward to the upcoming year with enthusiasm, promising a wealth of engaging content and new avenues to connect with *FOCUS ON Business* magazine.

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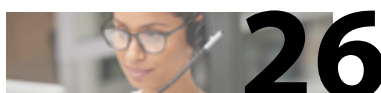
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BUSINESS NEWS

FREE INTERNET ACCESS ONLY FOR 17% OF THE USERS

According to the Atlas VPN data, only 17% of internet users have access to a truly free internet. Generally, conditions online for human rights have deteriorated for the 13th year, with the highest declines occurring in Iran, followed by the Philippines, Belarus, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua.

Internet users in China suffer the most, facing the most severe content limitation and government censorship for the ninth year in a row. In contrast, Icelandic users enjoy the most online liberty worldwide for the fifth consecutive year.

The data is based on the *Freedom on the Net 2023* report released by Freedom House, a human rights watchdog organization. It annually reviews the state of internet freedom in 70 countries – or 88% of the world's internet users – using a set of methodology questions that examine barriers to access, content limits, and abuses of user rights. This year's edition overviews developments between June 2022 and May 2023.

As per the findings, 36% of internet users worldwide do not have access to internet freedom, characterized by high infrastructural, economic, and political obstacles to access; limits on content, including the filtering and blocking of websites; as well as violations on the right to freedom of expression using legal and

extralegal repercussions. In the most extreme cases, people are physically assaulted or killed for their online commentary — astonishingly, there are reports of such cases in 41 countries.

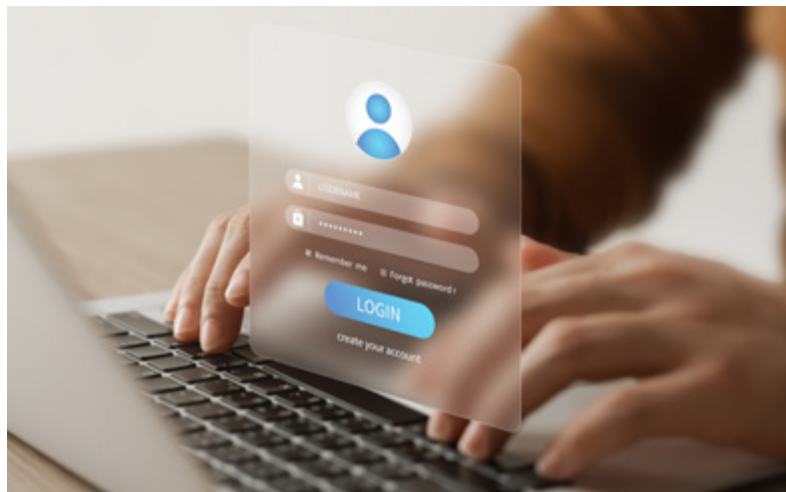
Elsewhere, the internet is partially free to 35% of its users. Countries such as Hungary and Colombia are good examples of this category. Both boast open internet access but also face threats, such as cyberattacks on media outlets or policies that impede the operations of opposition groups, journalists, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Meanwhile, only 17% of the global internet population enjoys the internet

without significant restrictions. Researchers observed little-to-no critical internet controls exerted in Costa Rica, Germany, Estonia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Argentina, the United States, and Taiwan, to name a few.

During the study's coverage period, 16 countries restricted internet connectivity. One was Sudan, where authorities limited internet access in the aftermath of the 2021 military coup, cutting off communication routes for the opposition and hiding evidence of human rights violations perpetrated against them.

Source: Atlas VPN



INTERNET SOARS TO 1.88BN WEBSITES AND COUNTING

Over the past three decades, the digital landscape has experienced a profound evolution. As reported by TradingPlatforms.com, the World Wide Web now hosts an astonishing 1.88 billion websites and continues to grow. This unprecedented expansion has fundamentally reshaped our methods of communication, transformed business practices, and revolutionized how we access information.

Speaking on the data, Edith Reads from TradingPlatforms.com said: – *From its humble beginnings as a government research project, the Internet has transfor-*

med how we live and interact. As we look to the future, the concept of Web 3.0 promises a more decentralized, secure, and user-centric internet experience. This will reshape the very foundation of the online world.

The Internet's journey began in the late 1960s with the creation of ARPANET. ARPANET was a research project funded by the United States Department of Defense. The goal was to develop a communication network to withstand a nuclear attack. However, it evolved into something far more transformative. The program laid the foundation for the modern

Internet by introducing packet-switching technology.

The first-ever website, "info.cern.ch", was created by Tim Berners-Lee in 1991 at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research. It was a basic HTML page with information about the World Wide Web project. This milestone marked the birth of the Internet as we know it today.

By 1993, there were around 130 websites in existence. Over the past three decades, the Internet's growth has been exponential.

Source: TradingPlatforms.com

GOOGLE REMAINS THE WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE MEDIA BRAND

According to data presented by OnlyAccounts.io, Google is the most valuable media brand in the world in 2023, with an estimated brand value of about \$281.4bn, nearly four times more than TikTok and Facebook.

Every year, Brand Finance analyzes 5,000 of the world's biggest brands across all sectors and countries and ranks them in the annual *Brand Finance Media 50 ranking*. For the third consecutive year, Google remained the world's most valuable media brand, mainly due to the continued evolution and expansion of its services, including Google Cloud, Google Pixel, and Google Wallet. Statistics show the Californian tech giant brand value is 7% higher than last year.

TikTok climbed two spots in this year's ranking. In 2022, the video-sharing app was the fourth largest media brand in the world, worth \$59.8bn. However, after its brand value jumped by 11% year-over-year to \$65.7bn, the Chinese short-form video platform jumped to second place, ahead of Facebook.

The world's largest social media giant saw its brand value plunge year-over-year, falling from \$101.2bn to roughly



\$59bn, the biggest decline among the top five names. WeChat and Disney close the top five club, with brand values of \$50.2bn and \$49.5bn, showing a drop compared to last year's valuations.

Instagram climbed one spot and ranked as the world's sixth most valuable media brand, worth \$47.4bn in 2023, up from \$33.4bn last year. Statistics show YouTube, the eighth most valuable media brand worth \$29.7bn, switched spots with Netflix, which dropped to ninth place with a valuation of \$24.1bn.

Ever since it was bought by billionaire Elon Musk for \$44bn last October,

X, formerly Twitter, has been losing users, traffic, and advertising revenue. The Brand Finance data show its brand value has also plunged. In 2022, Twitter was the 26th most valuable media brand globally, worth roughly \$5.5bn. However, the brand's reputation has decreased substantially since Musk's takeover. Statistics show that Twitter's brand value has dropped by a massive 32% over the past twelve months, causing the brand to fall by eight positions in the Brand Finance Media 50 ranking.

Source: OnlyAccounts.io

EUROPE'S FIRMS NAVIGATE INVESTMENT CHALLENGES AMID TIGHTENING FINANCIAL CONDITIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

According to the new *European Investment Bank Investment Survey 2023 (EIBIS 2023)*, European firms are facing challenges amid pressing investment needs and increasingly stringent financial conditions across the region.

Companies have accelerated investments in energy efficiency, with 51% of EU firms investing in this area in the past year, thus responding to the energy price shock. Firms confirmed the crucial role played by internal finance buffers and policy support in sustaining investment levels. At the same time, 64% of firms have experienced losses due to climate change (7 percentage points more than the previous year). Only about half of those firms, however, are taking action to build climate resilience and only 13% are insured for physical risk protection.

However, 29% of European businesses still perceive the climate transition as an opportunity. On average, European businesses are also increasing their investment in tackling climate change,

investing more than their counterparts in the United States.

Despite the prevailing uncertainties, the 13,000 businesses interviewed by the Bank in mid-2023 reveal that corporate investment has remained resilient across the European Union so far. The share of EU firms that have invested in the past year has returned to pre-pandemic levels, with investment per employee witnessing a further increase. This positive result was driven by firms' recognition of the urgent need for structural transformation and buffers accumulated in recent years.

About 80% of EU firms recorded profits in their last financial year, restoring the share of profitable firms to pre-COVID levels. Furthermore, policy support and government grants have contributed to investment, with capital transfers from public to private sector averaging close to 2% of gross domestic product (GDP) for the third consecutive year. However, as financial aid is cut

back, the implications of tighter financial conditions become more pronounced.

One of the key findings of the survey is the significant progress made by European firms in digitalisation, narrowing the gap with the United States. Approximately 70% of EU firms now use advanced digital technologies, marking a post-pandemic trend of recovery.

Going forward, the *EIBIS 2023* highlights firms' negative perceptions of the political and economic climate, with more EU firms expecting a deterioration in the coming year. Firms are also signalling a negative outlook with respect to access to external finance, amid tightening financing conditions and a progressive reduction in widespread policy support. Meanwhile, 81% of businesses see difficulties in finding skilled staff as an obstacle. There is evidence that firms perform better when they invest in knowledge and skills.

Source: European Investment Bank



Tech news

UNLIMITED CREATIVITY IN USING VISUALIZATIONS

The Wall All-in-One by Samsung is a cutting-edge device that redefines innovation and prestige in the area of visual solutions for business.

- **Quick installation.** The new model of The Wall addresses the largest challenges in the industry, considerably facilitating the installation of the screen – now, the installation by two people should only take two hours*, transforming the office into the center of modern and effective work on the very same day. Moreover, The Wall All-in-One includes everything you need to begin operations – from the control box and wall brackets to speakers and deco bezels.

- **Excellent image quality.** The display uses the innovative Black Seal Technology for purer black levels with enhanced depth that delivers unparalleled contrast and immaculate detail. Additionally, thanks to the Ultra Chroma Technology, colors are more accurate. The advanced LED technology combined with the optimization of image by AI create a spectacular effect, multiplying the impression of immersion. The Wall defines the new quality of presenting content that stays in your memory longer.



- **Solid design and easy configuration.** The Wall All-in-One is not only about excellent looks, but also durable and reliable design for professional use. It guarantees effectiveness without disruptions in the long term. Time-consuming configuration between control box and cabinet is no longer needed. The Wall All-in-One integrates the control box so it's built-into the display, eliminating a cumbersome configuration process to get the display up and running faster.

- **Each space enhanced.** The Wall allows you to transform your office space into a place of creative and effective team work. It perfectly complements a lobby or a conference room, making it possible to emphasize important messages for employees and welcoming business partners with breath-taking visualizations.

** Install time estimate based on internal testing. The time of installation can vary depending on the place where the device is installed.*

INCLUSIVE VIDEO CONFERENCING

Logitech has a solution for making remote participants in hybrid meetings feel heard and seen just like the other individuals sitting at the conference room table in the office. Supported by

artificial intelligence, the **Logitech Sight** system collaborates with a front-of-room camera (e.g., Rally Bar, Rally Bar Mini) to create multiple perspectives, capture the best shots of participants, and follow

them as they move. This system enables all meeting participants, regardless of their location, to engage equally in discussions and see everything happening in the room.



Features:

- Efficient framing with the RightSight function.
- The impressive Smart Switching function intelligently selects which camera showing each participant.
- Up to 7 beamforming microphones. Sight utilizes sound to detect active speakers and capture sound at the table from a distance of up to 2.3 meters.
- Native support for Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet.

Press materials provided by Samsung Electronics and Axium.



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Pomerania.

Where global expertise meets local excellence.

Our aim is to strategically position the vibrant region of Pomerania as a globally recognized hub for investment, innovation, and economic growth. Through comprehensive support, strategic collaborations, and an investor-centric approach to foster an environment of opportunity, technological advancement, and sustainable development.

Talks&Drinks are underway!

It may appear that all types of business meetings have become standardized, leaving little room for innovation. We are all familiar with business breakfasts, presentations, and evening gatherings accompanied by alcoholic beverages. However, Pro Progressio, an organization dedicated to supporting and developing the modern business services sector, has chosen a slightly different approach for these gatherings. From July to October, they executed three events in a new series that turned out to be a perfect success.

These gatherings are called *Talks&Drinks*, and as the name suggests, they are all about meaningful conversations held while enjoying drinks. Participants are free to choose their beverages, but the structure of these meetings is precisely defined. They combine a substantive segment and a networking session, all within a total duration of 150 minutes.

The substantive segment features stand-up style presentations, without the typical slide presentations, focusing

on dynamic and concise delivery of essential information. The meetings kick off with a 10-minute presentation by Wiktor Doktor, the CEO of Pro Progressio. He provides an update on the current state of global Business Services Sector (BSS) development and shares insights into Pro Progressio's initiatives. The second 10-minute presentation is delivered by a representative from the City Hall or the Regional Development Agency. They provide crucial business and economic information

about the city where that specific edition of *Talks&Drinks* is being held. Previous speakers from these entities have included Marcin Grzegory from Invest in Pomerania, Adam Pustelnik from the City of Łódź, and Magdalena Okulowska from the Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency.

The substantive segment closes with a presentation from an invited guest representing the business sector. In the Tricity, experts from the Grupa Progres



Talks&Drinks in Łódź.



Live music during Talks&Drinks in Wrocław.

discussed the labor market's situation and addressed issues related to hiring foreign workers. In Łódź, the HR topic was explored, with representatives from Michael Page presenting an overview of job market trends. In the capital city of Lower Silesia, an expert from Cushman & Wakefield discussed trends in the office real estate market.

After the substantive part, participants engage in networking, where they discuss the knowledge they've gained and

strengthen their business relationships in an intimate and relaxed atmosphere.

Participation in *Talks&Drinks* meetings is exclusively available to members of the Pro Progressio Club, and these events take place in various cities in Poland on a monthly basis. Starting in 2024, the organizers are introducing a slightly modified format called *Talks&Drinks with Friends*, allowing Pro Progressio Club members to invite their business partners. Meanwhile, in November

and December 2023, *Talks&Drinks* will be held in Kraków and Warsaw.

For more information about Talks&Drinks, you can visit the *FOCUS ON Business* website, and details about upcoming editions can be found on the Pro Progressio Arena web platform: arena.pro-progressio.pl ♦

By: *FOCUS ON Business*



Talks&Drinks participants in Wrocław.

The BSS Tour Łódź: 2024 BPO&SSC Trends – the most insightful event in the modern business services sector in Poland

The international conference The BSS Tour Łódź: 2024 BPO&SSC Trends, organized by Pro Progressio, has concluded with resounding success, drawing nearly 200 participants from Poland, Hungary, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.



Adam Pustelnik, City of Łódź.



Wiktor Doktor, Pro Progressio.



The event, which took place on October 24-25, 2023, was organized in partnership with the City of Łódź as the Strategic Partner and enjoyed the Honorary Patronage of Łódź Mayor, Ms. Hanna Zdanowska.

An integral part of the event was the Swiss Forum featuring discussions by Swiss companies, including representatives of Barry Callebaut, Clariant, ABB, Amcor, Aryzta, Oerlikon and Schraner sharing their insights and experiences in Poland, and deliberating on the major challenges confronting GBS/SSC centers. This part of the event was held under the Honorary Patronage of the Ambassador of Switzerland in Poland.

The BSS Tour Łódź addressed critical themes within the BPO and SSC industry, encompassing the sector's evolution, leadership, employee development, practical applications of artificial intelligence, change management, cyber security, and GBS positioning within organizations.

The two-day conference featured 39 speakers, maintaining gender parity among the presenters.

It is worth mentioning that during The BSS Tour Łódź, the latest ACCA *Global Talent Trends 2023* report, focusing on European talent and future learning trends, was unveiled. The full report is available for download on the Pro Progressio Arena: arena.proprogressio.pl.

The event unfolded across two locations – the substantive segment transpired in the revitalized Monopolis complex, while the networking segment unfolded in the welcoming spaces of the Hi Piotrkowska building.

With nearly 60% of attendees hailing from locations outside Łódź, it underscores the event's prestige and its significance both locally and internationally. The BSS Tour Łódź has cemented its status among attendees as the most informative event within the modern business

services sector in Poland for the year 2023. Both the organizers and participants have enthusiastically expressed their intent to orchestrate another edition of the conference in Łódź for the coming year.

KPMG Poland held the esteemed role of Know-How Partner for The BSS Tour Łódź. Additionally, the event was supported by Partners including ACCA, Chudzik i Wspólnicy Law and Taxes, Ahoy Career, Virako, and Mikomax. Networking endeavors were bolstered by Hi Piotrkowska and MMG. The event received media patronage from *FOCUS ON Business*.

The next The BSS Tour event for this year will transpire in Katowice in November. ♦

The BSS Tour Łódź photo gallery:



FOCUS ON Business



New regulations on reorganisation processes of commercial companies

— By | **Anna Banasik** —

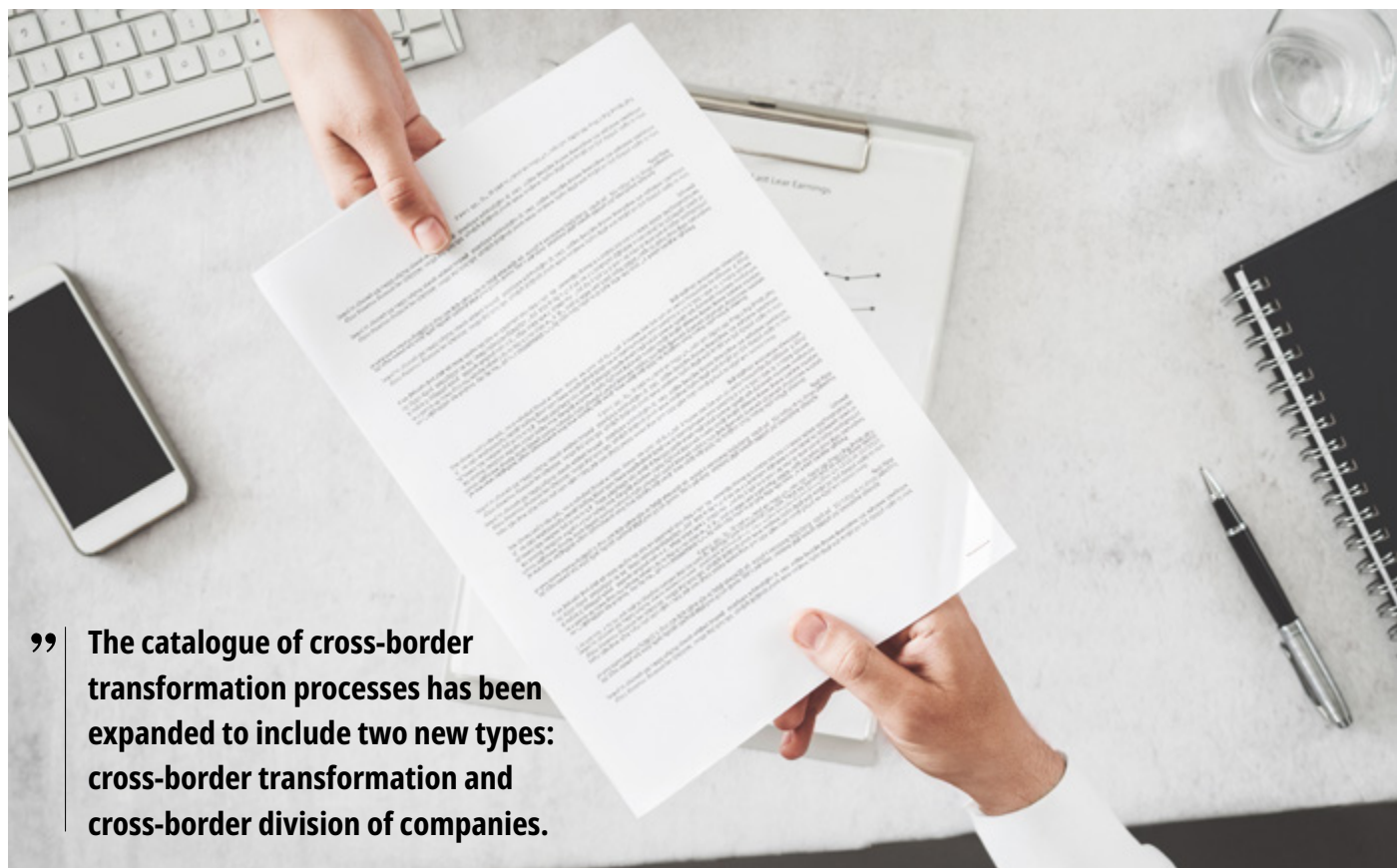
On 15 September 2023, the new Act of 16 August 2023 amending the Polish Code of Commercial Companies and certain other acts entered into force. The amended regulations of the Code of Commercial Companies implement into the Polish legal system the provisions of two directives of the European Parliament and of the Council regarding cross-border transformation, merger and division of companies and the use of digital tools and processes in companies law.

The new regulations primarily concern domestic and cross-border reorganisation processes. They mainly aim to harmonise and unify national regulations in the European Union Member States, allowing for efficient reorganisation procedures in commercial companies at the domestic and international levels.

NEW FORMS OF CROSS-BORDER REORGANISATION PROCESSES

Until 15 September 2023, the Code of Commercial Companies only included one type of cross-border reorganisation of companies in the form of a cross-border merger. Although other forms of cross-country corporate transformation

processes have long been in force in the European Union member states, they were absent from the Polish legal order. The gap was a significant obstacle to reorganising operations with the participation of Polish and foreign entities. In order to eliminate this problem, the catalogue of cross-border transformation processes



” The catalogue of cross-border transformation processes has been expanded to include two new types: cross-border transformation and cross-border division of companies.



The tax authorities will primarily be tasked with verifying whether the reorganisation is not carried out to avoid taxation.

**You can read the full article
in the magazine version available
on arena.proprogressio.pl**

to a change of controlling ownership. The Board of the National Tax Administration agrees on the content that is determined in the register entry, which only after receiving a valid certificate of completion of the process from the administrator.

MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS AND VOTES OF LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS

Another significant change in the new regulations is the rule of limited participation in limited partnerships. In domestic and cross-border reorganization processes, both new and existing partnerships are subject to the high level of control and reporting in a newly established entity during the merger process, not only in terms of the register entry. The companies are only for capital companies, while limited partnerships could only act as the registered entity during merger transactions.

In order to eliminate the current administrative system, the new regulations will allow new registration in the trade of commercial companies, including the range of entities in limited partnerships. Following the amendments, such firms will be able to participate in merger processes both as the registered and acquiring entity. The newly merged entity will also be able to take the legal form of limited partnerships.

Moreover, the new regulations included a limitation on partnership among the entities capable of trading. Thus, a limited partnership is the only entity among partnerships that can be split into two or more units. The extension of participation in these transactions provides the use of the split method only in entities in the capital form of a limited partnership. As the number of partners is fixed in the capital companies, both capital and non-capital entities in capital companies, according to the legislation, the entities granting the split, the ability to split into two units that had a limited liability.



The new regulations included a limited partnership among the entities capable of trading. Thus, a limited partnership is the only entity among partnerships that can be split into two or more units.

NEW RULES OF THE NEW REGISTRATION

The administrative regulations will significantly enhance the flexibility and process of public companies in the EU market, as the extension of interest for the extending are made. The extension of interest will be registered in the administrative process throughout all EU member states, and the harmonization of cross-border procedures should also take effect for business freedom. On the one hand, integrating cross-border processes should be provided as a public or facilitating public companies agree that such process is being useful.

Moreover, extending flexibility, support for cross-border procedures and additional obligations, particularly regarding the system of the Board of the State Revenue Administration, may contribute to sustainable economic and competitiveness of the reorganization process.

Author



Anna Banasik | attorney-at-law,
CHUDZIK i WSPÓLNICY Law and Taxes



FOCUS ON

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*complete reports
about Polish cities*



Decreasing the equity of a company being demerged as part of a demerger (division) by separation – legitimate requirement or unnecessary formalism?

— By | **Dominika Dec** —

We are examining the potential impact of the recent changes to the Commercial Companies Code on the processes of corporate reorganization for businesses operating in Poland.

The entry into force of the Law of 16 August 2023 Amending the Law – Commercial Companies Code and Certain Other Laws (Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland, item 1705, "the Amendment"), which introduced new types of domestic and cross-border reorganization procedures into legal order, has brought about significant changes. It has made previously unknown processes of cross-border conversion and demerger, as well as a new type of domestic demerger – demerger by separation available to entrepreneurs. In addition, the catalog of situations in which a merger can be performed under a simplified procedure, i.e. without increasing the share capital of the acquiring company, has been expanded. The Amendment has also introduced instruments aimed at protecting shareholders, employees and creditors of companies involved in a cross-border reorganization. Given the type and scope of the introduced amendments, it is expected that the Amendment will have a positive impact on the reorganization procedures of capital groups, both domestic and cross-border ones, by providing entrepreneurs with a broader catalog of reorganization procedures that they are able to implement.

Despite the scale of the introduced changes, it is the seemingly least innovative type of reorganization – demerger by separation – that has already generated discussion among lawyers, tax advisors and accountants in the past. It is worth noting that this type of domestic reorganization has been introduced following the analogous cross-border

reorganization procedure in order to avoid excessive formalism in relation to the acquired shares.

Demerger by separation involves the transfer of a portion of the assets of the company being demerged to an existing or newly incorporated company or companies against the shares of the acquiring or newly incorporated company or companies that the company being demerged holds up.

Demerger by separation involves the transfer of a portion of the assets of the company being demerged to an existing or newly incorporated company or companies against the shares of the acquiring or newly incorporated company or companies that the company being demerged holds up.

The type of incorporation under the simplified procedure is subject to the condition that the company being demerged is not a company with a share capital, and the company being demerged is not a company with a share capital.

On the other hand, companies with a share capital are subject to the condition that the company being demerged is not a company with a share capital, and the company being demerged is not a company with a share capital.

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Author



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**Baker
McKenzie.**



Navigating the path to exit: Exploring the 3 most popular startup exit strategies

By | Magdalena Pawłowska

Building a successful startup is a challenge that requires unwavering determination, operational excellence and a well-thought-out growth strategy. Once a startup enters the maturity stage, has built a large market share and reached a high valuation, the long-awaited exit moment for investors comes. Choosing the right path, known as Exit, is one of the most critical aspects of a startup's life cycle, having a profound impact on its founders, investors and stakeholders. In this article, we'll delve into the three most popular startup exit strategies, factors determining the deal and stakeholder expectations.

When we think about the startup's exit strategy three most popular ways often come to mind – acquisition by an industry player, IPO, and takeover by a financial investor.

ACQUISITION BY A MARKET PLAYER: FAST LIQUIDITY WITH TRADE-OFFS

The acquisition is a common exit strategy for startups, where a larger, established company purchases the startup to incorporate its products, technology, or market presence into its operations. This strategy offers founders and investors a relatively swift liquidity event, allowing them to realize returns on their investments. The acquiring company often brings additional resources, such as technology, talent, and market reach, which can further fuel the startup's growth. However, it comes with the trade-off of potentially losing some degree of independence as the startup integrates into the larger organization.

What are the common deal drivers for such transaction? On the buyer's side, acquisitions are driven by a strategic fit, where the startup complements existing operations or strategic objectives. Acquiring valuable intellectual property or proprietary technology is another motivator, as well as the desire to expand into new markets or customer segments.

On the seller's side, financial gain is a primary driver, along with the prospect of faster growth through synergies with the buyer. Mitigating risk by aligning with a more established entity can also be a consideration.

IPO: ACCESSING CAPITAL MARKETS

An Initial Public Offering (IPO) is the process by which a startup becomes a publicly traded company by issuing shares of its stock to the general public. This strategy offers access to a significant infusion of capital, which can be used for expansion, research and development, or even debt reduction. Founders and early investors can achieve liquidity without necessarily selling their entire stake. However, the IPO process involves stringent regulatory requirements and ongoing reporting obligations, and the timing is crucial, as IPOs are subject and dependent to market conditions.

IPO of a portfolio company is both the most desirable and the rarest exit method. According to the Q2 2022 PitchBook-NVCA Venture Monitor report which follows the US VC market, IPOs are responsible for the majority of exits value-wise, but their number is relatively small. The most common type of exit is an industry investor takeover, which is the case for approx. 2/3 of all deals.

The most common deal drivers for buyers outline that going public enhances brand reputation and credibility, provides access to capital markets for future financing, and can be used to facilitate stock-based acquisitions. For sellers, on the other hand, an IPO aims to raise substantial capital, increase the company's profile in the market, and provide an exit opportunity for existing investors.

” **IPO of a portfolio company is both the most desirable and the rarest exit method.**

ACQUISITION BY A FINANCIAL INVESTOR

An exit strategy involving acquisition by a financial investor is a move that often aims to maximize returns for both the startup founders and the investor. In this scenario, a financial investor, such as a private equity firm, purchases the startup with the intention of enhancing its value and ultimately selling it for a profit. This approach can provide founders with an opportunity to secure liquidity for their hard work and initial investments while also benefiting from the expertise and resources that the financial investor brings to the table.

This exit strategy can be a win-win situation when executed effectively, aligning the interests of both parties.

Deal drivers play a pivotal role in shaping the acquisition by a financial investor, who often seeks startups that fit well within their investment portfolio and can benefit from their expertise and operational resources. On the one hand financial investors may target startups with innovative technologies, strong intellectual property, or a unique market position that can be further developed and monetized. On the other hand, for startup founders and stakeholders, deal drivers often include the desire for a strong financial offer, the potential for accelerated growth through synergies with the financial investor's network, and access to their industry-specific knowledge.

MEETING STAKEHOLDERS GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

When it comes to startup exit strategies understanding the goals and expectations of various stakeholders is crucial for a successful transition. Firstly, for startup founders and their teams, the primary goal is often to maximize the return on their hard work and investment. In the case of an acquisition, founders may seek not only financial rewards but also the opportunity to align their vision with a larger company and continue to drive the innovation they're passionate about. In an IPO, founders aim to access public

capital markets to fund further growth and expansion. However, it's essential to balance these financial objectives with concerns about maintaining the company's culture and autonomy, as these elements can be vital for retaining top talent and ensuring long-term success.

” Deal drivers play a pivotal role in shaping the acquisition by a financial investor.

From the perspective of venture capital funds, the goal of an exit strategy is to deliver significant returns to their investors. This typically involves securing the best possible valuation for the startup. For acquisitions, it may also involve ensuring that the acquiring company is a suitable fit in terms of strategic alignment. In the case of IPOs, the goal is to take advantage of favorable market conditions to achieve a successful public offering. Moreover, VC funds may be interested in maintaining a stake in the company post-IPO to continue benefiting from its growth.

Lastly, for the startup's employees and customers, their expectations during an exit strategy revolve around continuity and value. They hope that the transition will not disrupt the products or services they rely on. In the case of acquisitions, they may also seek clarity on how their roles will evolve. For investors beyond the VC fund, such as angel investors or crowdfunding backers, their expectations will align with their investment objectives, which could range from immediate financial returns to long-term capital appreciation.

THE CRUCIAL ROLE TO CHOOSE RIGHT

Choosing the right exit strategy is a critical decision for startup founders and investors. Each option has its own set of advantages and challenges, and the choice should align with the startup's goals and circumstances. Clear communication and strategic planning are vital to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from the chosen exit path and that the startup's culture and value are preserved in the process. Whether it's acquisition or IPO, understanding the deal drivers and managing stakeholder expectations is key to a successful exit that benefits all parties involved. ♦

Author



Magdalena Pawłowska
Partner, Level2 Ventures



The acquisition is a common exit strategy for startups, where a larger, established company purchases the startup to incorporate its products, technology, or market presence into its operations.

Catalyzing business digital transformation

We talk with *Roman Pavlyuk*, Chief Digital Solution Leader in Customertimes about supporting businesses in critical areas such as innovation, integration, and transformation, as well as about Customertimes' recent expansion into Poland.

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in the magazine version available
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” The decision to extend our operations into Poland was a strategic decision, grounded in a number of key elements. The first aspect refers to Poland's impressive pool of well-educated IT professionals.

We are observing a significant increase in digital services in the market, which has led to a significant expansion of the global economy. The IT industry is growing rapidly in the world, and Poland is the second largest. With this, we believe there is a great opportunity to extend our operations into the IT market, which is a key element of our growth strategy.

Expanding these emerging markets, the middle class will be growing, which will lead to a significant increase in the number of IT professionals, which will be a key element of our growth strategy.

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Thank you for the interview.

Crafting tomorrow with AI at Kraków's Shared Service Center, 2028

— By | Wojciech Krupa —

In 2028, Shared Service Center in Polish city of Kraków is a testament to the harmonious collaboration between humans and AI. Join Wojtek on a journey where Artificial Intelligence doesn't replace but elevates human potential, transforming work, life, and innovation in this tech-driven era.

A DAY IN LIFE IN A FUTURE

Kraków's first light was always a sight, and for Wojtek, it symbolized a new day. This morning, as the sun rays flooded his flat, he experienced a familiar sense of comfort. It was not just the sun that woke him up, but the gentle music chosen by Lumi, his AI buddy. "Good morning, Wojtek. Ready for the day?"

Sipping his coffee by the window, Wojtek took in the sights of Kraków historic architecture. Using a transparent screen, Lumi projected some office updates onto a past and present, effectively filtering out the noise. "I have sorted out the routine tasks", it informed him. "You can begin to strategize and innovate today."

lighting and a comfortable temperature – all tailored to his preferences. It was connected to the building's systems and could predict his comfort needs. Before his arrival, Lumi had organized his emails, prioritizing client communications, and highlighting potential areas that required his personal touch.

UNLEASHING HUMAN POTENTIAL WITH AI ASSISTANCE

His favourite spot was a calm corner, decorated with indoor plants reflecting Kraków's green spaces. In the past, this space was used before for storing files. Now, with digital storage and AI handling data, it has become a sanctuary for brainstorming and ideation. Wojtek could

OFFICE OF THE FUTURE

Around midday, Lumi prompted a break. "You have been at it for hours, Wojtek. How about some fresh air?". Following her recommendation, Wojtek headed to a nearby café, known for its authentic pierogi. There, he met Marta, a co-worker, and shared his morning's brainstorming. They discussed harnessing AI's power, not just for tasks, but for understanding global clients. For instance, knowing cultural holidays, preferences in communication, or even understanding regional business etiquettes. This was not just automation; it was about weaving a fabric of understanding and empathy.

AI AS A TEAM PLAYER

Back at the office, there was a problem. The Kraków and Tokyo datasets were misaligned. In earlier days, such issues would have meant hours of cross-referencing. But now, Lumi addressed it swiftly, allowing Wojtek to seamlessly continue his ideation. The AI was not just a tool; it was a team player, ensuring Wojtek could consistently be at his best.

As evening approached, Wojtek reviewed his day. The contrast was clear. Where he once would have been drained from handling routine tasks, he now felt enlivened, his energy channeled into meaningful endeavours. Lumi did not replace him; it elevated him. Lumi took on the repetitive, ensuring Wojtek could dive deep into areas that genuinely received help from human insight, creativity, and empathy.

” **With AI handling the everyday tasks, professionals have been untied. They could now redirect their focus from simply doing tasks to understanding and enhancing them.**

THE SSC TRANSFORMATION

The Shared Service Center in Kraków has seen a massive transformation over the past few years, and Wojtek was at the forefront of this change. With AI, particularly Lumi, handling the everyday tasks, professionals like Wojtek have been untied. They could now redirect their focus from simply doing tasks to understanding and enhancing them.

Upon reaching the office, Wojtek's workspace recognized him with ambient

think beyond the databases and analytics. He thought over on improving client experiences, understanding their cultural backgrounds, and personalizing their journey with the Shared Service Center.

Lumi, always attentive, would occasionally supply insights. "Based on the recent feedback, clients from Japan prefer more visual presentations", it suggests, or "The German team appreciates detailed analyses. A deeper dive for them?".

Wojtek left the office, the Wisła River reflecting the evening's golden hues. He realized that the true magic of the AI revolution was not in mere task execution, but in unlocking human potential. With Lumi shouldering the day-to-day burdens, Wojtek was free to dream, strategize, and most importantly, humanize business in an age of machines.

AUGMENTING HUMAN INTELLIGENCE RATHER THAN REPLACING IT

Fast-forward a few years to 2028, and the Shared Service Center landscape in Kraków is nothing short of futuristic. Yet, amid this tech-driven era, one thing stays constant: Wojtek's pursuit of innovation, facilitated by his ever-evolving companion, Lumi. The dawn of this new age has seen Artificial Intelligence, become more intuitive, evolving from mere task-oriented bots to holistic life-enhancers. For professionals, this transformation is not just a technological upgrade, it is a paradigm shift in how they approach work and life.

At the workplace, basic analytics, which once consumed large chunks of Wojtek's day, have become entirely automated. AI systems delve deep into data, understand patterns, predict trends, and even propose actionable plan of actions.

” **Artificial Intelligence, become more intuitive, evolving from mere task-oriented bots to holistic life-enhancers.**

EVOLUTION OF WOJTEK'S ROLE

Released from the bonds of routine number-crunching, Wojtek's role has metamorphosed. He is no longer a data analyst but a "Client Experience Architect". Instead of pouring over data, he collaborates closely with clients, understanding their aspirations, challenges, and crafting bespoke solutions that resonate on a deeply personal level. This profound shift in Wojtek's daily responsibilities has been made possible because AI now shoulders much more than office chores. It constantly scans global business landscapes, absorbs cultural shifts, and even predicts socio-economic trends. Using all of these insights, Wojtek is competent to craft strategies that are not only data-driven, but also deeply humane.

AI also promotes continued learning. With routine tasks off his plate, Wojtek delves into areas like behavioural

economics, socio-cultural studies, and even environmental sustainability. These were not mere buzzwords but became integral to his professional growth. Lumi curates courses, recommends readings, and even simulates real-world scenarios, allowing Wojtek to sharpen his skills and broaden his horizons.

” **Beyond professional growth, AI has enhanced professionals' personal well-being.**

Beyond professional growth, AI has significantly enhanced Wojtek's personal well-being. It ensures he keeps a healthy work-life balance. It schedules breaks, recommends physical activities based on his mood and health metrics, and even nudges him towards hobbies he is passionate about, like attending a local jazz concert or visiting an art exhibition in Kraków's vibrant cultural scene. Moreover, with advancements in natural language processing and emotional intelligence algorithms, AI companions can detect emotional states, offering support during stressful times. If Wojtek feels overwhelmed, it might suggest mindfulness exercises, connect him to a counsellor, or simply offer words of encouragement.

COLLABORATING WITH AI: THE FUTURE OF BRAINSTORMING, OFFICE DESIGN AND RESPONSIBILITY

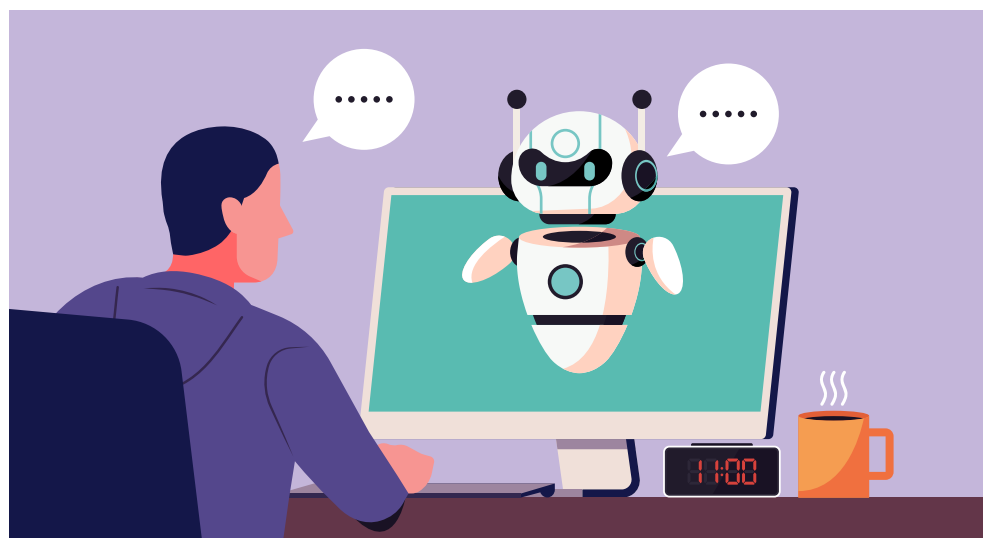
In the kingdom of collaboration, AI has been a meaningful change. Wojtek now

takes part in virtual brainstorming sessions where AI systems, in tandem with human professionals, ideate, challenge, and refine strategies. It is a harmonious blend of machine efficiency and human creativity and passion for making the future. It's interesting to note that the actual work environment has undergone a transformation. With AI handling most planning, office layouts are no longer centered around workstations but are designed to foster human interaction, creativity, and well-being. Spaces are now modular, adaptable, and resonate with nature, reflecting the essence of Kraków's environmental ethos.

A significant emphasis in this future lies in the ethical use of AI. Wojtek, alongside his peers, takes part in regular workshops on AI ethics, ensuring that while they harness its power, they stay conscious of its implications, advocating for a responsible and inclusive AI ecosystem.

AI AND HUMANITY AS PARTNERS

Wrapping up his day, Wojtek reflects on his journey. From being stuck in data to figuring out new ways to innovate, his evolution has been big. AI, in his life, has not been about making humans obsolete but about elevating them, harnessing their unique strengths, and guiding them towards uncharted frontiers. This is not just Wojtek's story; it is a testament to what the future holds. A future where AI and humanity coexist, not as contestants but as partners. A constructive collaboration where machines handle the mundane, and humans, liberated from routine, can truly dream, innovate, and inspire.♦



Author



Wojciech Krupa | Director Workplace Strategy & Change Management, JLL



Why Eastern Europe is becoming a nearshore and offshore staple for regional and global buyers

— By | Mark Angus —

The landscape of global business services/business process outsourcing (GBS/BPO) is evolving rapidly, and Eastern Europe (EE) is emerging as a prominent hub. In particular, customer experience (CX) and back-office operations have emerged as key sectors driving this success in the region.

This article delves into key factors that make EE an ideal nearshore and offshore destination for GBS/BPO operations, drawing insights from the recently released 2023 *GBS.World Competitiveness Index for CX and Back Office*.¹ These factors include market size, talent pool, English proficiency, and cost competitiveness – all contributing to the region's growing appeal.

*Locations*² serves as a testament to its attractiveness for businesses seeking CX solutions.

As will be discussed, Poland also outshone numerous global competitors in the 2023 *GBS.World Competitiveness Index for CX and Back Office*, consistently ranking in the top 5 EE countries, and cementing its position in the top 10 worldwide for each category.

education degree, and 46% of Latvians have Bachelor-level degrees or higher.⁵

The region's strategic investment in education and talent development cements its position as a strong GBS/BPO contender, offering not only tech-savvy professionals but also a deep understanding of industry intricacies – collectively enhancing EE's appeal for companies looking to leverage top-tier talent.

” **Eastern Europe boasts a thriving GBS/BPO market, with an estimated market size of US\$33.4 billion and a workforce of 1.4 million professionals, as reported by GBS.World | Genesis GBS.**

EASTERN EUROPE'S GBS/BPO MARKET

Eastern Europe boasts a thriving GBS/BPO market, with an estimated market size of US\$33.4 billion and a workforce of 1.4 million professionals, as reported by GBS.World | Genesis GBS. These numbers underscore the region's significant contribution to the global outsourcing industry. Additionally, Poland's ranking of 4th best in the world in Ryan Strategic Advisory's *Most Favored Offshore CX Delivery*

FACTORS DRIVING EASTERN EUROPE'S GBS/BPO DESIRABILITY

• Talent

Eastern Europe's reputation as a GBS/BPO hub is supported by its tech-savvy youth population and exceptional education system. Educational institutions focus on equipping students with modern business skills, consistently producing highly skilled professionals that are well-versed in industry practices.³ Collaborations between academia and industry ensure graduates possess both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, making them valuable assets for businesses seeking GBS/BPO expertise.

In Poland, for example, approximately 44% of its youth population hold a higher education qualification.⁴ Similarly, 55% in Lithuania hold a tertiary

• English proficiency

According to the 2022 *Education First English Proficiency Index*⁶, EE countries consistently demonstrate a high level of English proficiency, reflecting their commitment to preparing a globally competitive workforce.

Croatia, a notable standout in the region, achieved a remarkable ranking of 11th in the world, placing it in the *Very High Proficiency* category, along with Poland in 13th place.

Additionally, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, and Lithuania all secured positions in the top 20 globally, earning recognition in the *High Proficiency* category. They were joined by Bulgaria, Czechia, Latvia, Estonia, and Serbia, further emphasizing the widespread prevalence of high English-proficiency levels across EE.

¹ 2023 GBS.World Competitiveness Index for CX and Back Office.

² Ryan Strategic Advisory Most Favored Offshore CX Location.

³ OECD and UNICEF Report: Education in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

⁴ Poland Ministry of Education 2019 Education at a Glance Report.

⁵ Eurostat 2021 Educational Attainment Statistics.

⁶ 2022 Education First English Proficiency Index.

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Global business services are a major contributor to the global and regional economic growth, contributing significantly to the GDP of many countries. The global market for business services is expected to grow at a steady pace over the next few years, driven by the increasing demand for outsourcing and offshoring services.

According to a report published by the International Business Services Association (IBSA), the global market for business services is projected to reach a value of \$1.2 trillion by 2025, up from \$0.8 trillion in 2020.

The IBSA report also highlights that the Asia-Pacific region is expected to be the fastest-growing market for business services, followed by North America and Europe.

One of the key drivers of growth in the business services market is the increasing demand for outsourcing and offshoring services. Companies are looking to reduce costs and improve efficiency by outsourcing non-core functions to external providers. This trend is particularly evident in the IT services, financial services, and human resources sectors.

Another major factor driving growth in the business services market is the increasing demand for specialized services. Companies are looking for providers that can offer a wide range of services, from IT support and logistics to legal and accounting services. This demand is driven by the need for companies to focus on their core competencies and outsource other functions.

Overall, the business services market is expected to continue its strong growth over the next few years, driven by the increasing demand for outsourcing and specialized services. This growth is expected to create significant opportunities for businesses in the sector.



Author



Mark Angus | CEO of market research consultancy, Genesis Global Business Services and Founding Partner of The World Source Marketplace for Global Business Services (GBS.World)

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Ancient roots of homo digitalis.

The processes of communication at the Areopagus and in the modern GBS

— By | Miłosz Piątkowski —

You are listening, but are you hearing? If you can hear, do you understand? Intersubjectivity seems obvious, natural and intuitive. However, it once again turns out that the e-mail was misunderstood, the team leader's intentions were incorrectly read, the task assigned by the manager was performed differently than expected, and the GBS Head's vision and its implementation into reality did not match the original plan. How does this happen?

In the world of modern business, which is based on modern technologies and on the multitude of tools needed to perform the process, the amount of specialist knowledge grows at a very fast pace. Individuals incorporate increasingly larger universes filled with a specific conceptual network, difficult to convey to non-specialists and, as a result, largely incommunicable.

Specialist employees involved in the process feel obliged to defend their positions and usually strive to maintain status quo. They look with distrust at the actions of their managers who communicate the need for change. They often see them as people detached from reality and who wants to turn the whole world upside down. These people enter uncharted waters and fear change.

It is therefore necessary for them to have a good helmsman on board, whom they can trust and who will set the right course to bring everyone to the port of destination safely. Extrapolating this into business language, the role of Organizational Change Management is of key importance in the dynamically changing environment of modern business services. Implanted in the company's DNA adaptation to changes gives it an above-average "immunological resistance" to all

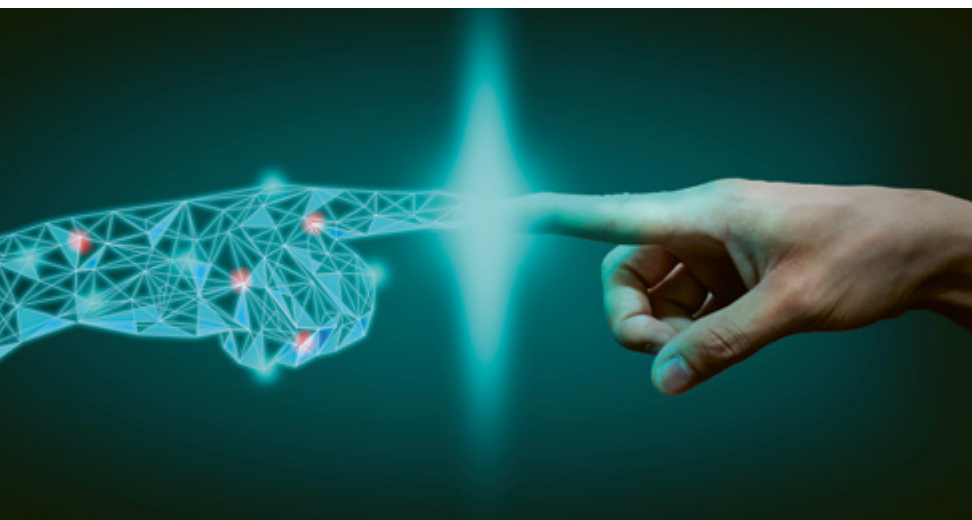
market fluctuations and aberrations. Of course, it is impossible to predict the occurrence of atypical situations, "Black Swans" à la N. Taleb, but the probability that they will be "tamed" by environments equipped with tools based on an institutionalized change management model is much greater.

” **The modern analysis corresponds with the paradigm of practicing rhetoric developed in ancient times.**



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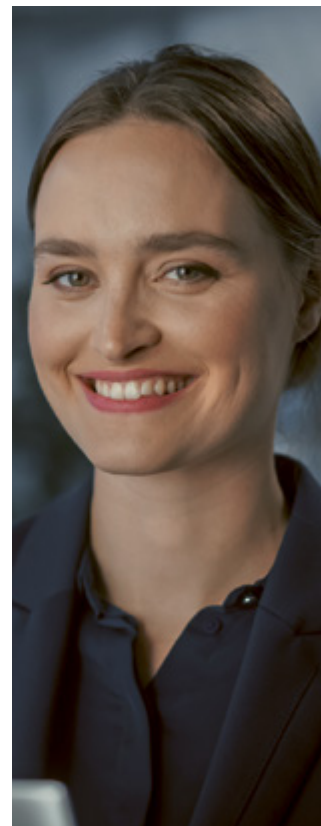
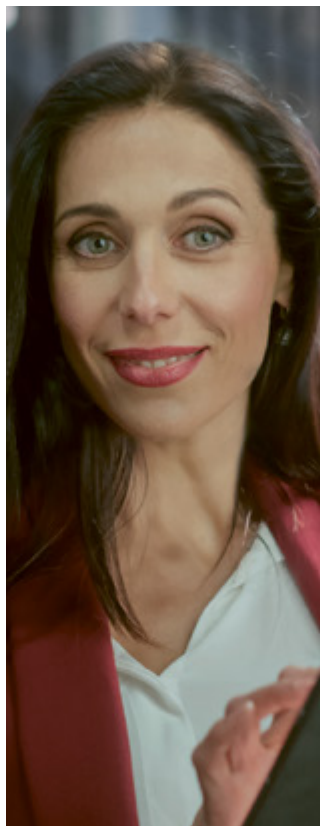
Customer contact is the primary principle of modern business, as well as, therefore, of capitalist societies. Their functioning, and therefore the profitability of the businesses that serve them, depends to a high degree on the entire communicating vascular system.

Author



Miłosz Piątkowski
Process Expert, Adaptive SAG





Group insurance of individual needs



A synergy between humans and machines or what the future holds for SSC and GBS organizations

Technological revolution is currently taking place in the business services sector. Why is implementing cutting-edge solutions in the best interest of SSC/GBS centers and how can AI transform the way of working within these organizations? We talk to Paweł Płocki, Head of TRUMPF Shared Services Center.

Wiktór Doktor, Pro Progressio: The last time we spoke you said that the wave of pioneering technologies in the business services sector ‘was not too revolutionary’. What is it like right now? RPA and AI in shared service centers – are these issues still on the fringes of the debate or are they more important now?

Paweł Płocki, TRUMPF Shared Services Center: Let me begin by explaining what I had in mind when I mentioned the ‘limited revolutionary potential’ of the previous technological wave that brought us RPA solutions. The reality, particularly in light of forecasts and expectations, had, in my opinion, left us wanting more. People in management positions often followed the narrative of technology providers (and others), purchased multiple licenses, and only after that it transpired that processes in use at the time were either not ready for what’s coming or – by their very nature and design – were not suitable for RPA-type automation. Banking and insurance are two notable exceptions because these two sectors have implemented RPA technology most effectively.

Automation as such consistently ranks very high on every priority list. That, in itself, seems quite obvious, however the tools go far beyond RPA/AI.

Of course, we have VBA – which seems to be a “you either love it or hate it” kind of tool – then there are the Power Apps, and a whole host of various RPA-type solutions which come as open source and are smaller in scope. Finally, there are the low-code / no-code solutions. That’s why I suggest discussing the importance of automation separately from the discussion regarding specific types of tools, in particular since the proliferation of Generative AI happening right now has opened up completely new avenues.

” **Automation as such consistently ranks very high on every priority list. That, in itself, seems quite obvious, however the tools go far beyond RPA/AI.**

A good example is the rise of low-code / no-code platforms and tools which seem fairly ubiquitous now and enable the development of many micro-solutions and applications by the users, also known as Citizen Developers. This does carry certain risks that companies must address and manage – like the ever-present GDPR – but, as far as the concept is concerned, the rising popularity of such solutions has resulted in changes which would have been unprecedented just a few years ago. Of course, I cannot ignore GenAI in this

regard, and that’s for two reasons I would like to discuss next.

First of all, GenAI lends itself perfectly to seamless integration with no-code / low-code environments, thus significantly expanding the range of possible applications. Secondly, with AI anyone can go a step further than no-code / low-code and build a genuine app on their own; or, should I say, in close cooperation with AI and YouTube. Just take me as an example – until November 2022 I have not seen a single line of code

and now, using available tools and displaying patience I didn’t even know I possess, I am building my very own, simple AI-based applications. I’m curious what will happen next, particularly given that developing small things independently, for your own needs, and on a tiny scale is now so much easier than was the case even very recently. Having said that, I guess our employees are either already developing similar apps or will start doing so soon, regardless of whether we as a company move forward with AI.





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Why should the L&L system be so much more successful in implementing its business objectives? There is a growing recognition that it will succeed.

It takes 100,000 and 150,000 units to make a full system in order to get the most out of the system. The system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

The reason is actually very simple. The system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

There are many reasons why the system is so successful. The system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

of the competition. In fact, the system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

However, we cannot afford to ignore people, who are the key element here. Technology and people are not fighting one another. The system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

However, we cannot afford to ignore people, who are the key element here. Technology and people are not fighting one another.

This is a very simple statement. The system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

in that each module can work together with the others, and ultimately, the system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

The reason is actually very simple. The system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

Finally, please don't make any light of the system's challenges and obstacles. The system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

Individuals, like you, are the key element here. The system is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts. It is a complete system, not just a collection of parts.

designs involving a number of benefits bring various unique challenges and obstacles in the field. One of these is the issue of integration. The unique role and specificity of these technologies require both technical knowledge as well as business acumen to properly identify and optimize processes for the value creation and its application. In addition, awareness of threat is not at the highest levels at the moment. Companies lack a good understanding of what the technology is capable of and what its limits are.

Among the main challenges and areas requiring special attention in change management and employee acceptance, introduction of new technologies is often not well explained, sometimes when far from the organization will wonder their feasibility or sometimes their value within the organization. It is therefore crucial to properly communicate and understandings that help teams understand the benefits of it and why as well as how these technologies can facilitate daily work. This ensuring a smoother transformation and making employees feel among employees.

Moreover, as we also deeper into AI, and Generative AI in particular, we encounter a new set of challenges that concern not only technical but also legal aspects. Uncertainties surrounding intellectual property and data protection are among the hottest and most debated issues in the wider context of AI implementation.

Technical progress and data protection are among the hottest and most debated issues in the wider context of AI implementation. In the technology industry, the legal framework will also need to adapt in order to ensure appropriate protection. Interestingly, change comes in the working methods – more institutions are of regulations, while again is still developing innovation in their approach.

We can mention challenges and problems – often are identified and can also – concerning AI integration with existing systems. These organizations are a variety of IT systems, and integrating new technologies such as AI and ML often prove to be difficult and requires both in terms of time as well as human resources required. Understanding existing systems, including infrastructure, and data that is stored and processed within them is key to ensuring effective AI and ML implementation.

Specific attention is the "black box" of language models, which is the issue of transparency. The language models use the bulk of organizations will wonder exactly regarding how exactly these models generate their responses. From the studies and research continue to shed new light on models, often making previously unknown characteristics or behaviors that are existing and slightly threatening in the same time.

In recent research we have these models "hallucinate" or "invent" when given space in "black" before producing answers in forecasting. The same can be said about hallucinations in how to their chat responses or model hallucinations – in producing answers that are completely untrue or inconsistent – or how to work with decision-based language models in the more effective manner that produces precise answers. The last area is clearly forecasting – requires field in itself particularly when monitoring the economic developments happening in the area and the frequency with which previously applied methods are becoming obsolete.

In summary, the challenges faced by SME organizations when implementing AI and ML are both complex and multi-faceted, covering both technical and human aspects. While the potential gains of these technologies in business, the ability to fully utilize their capabilities is often hampered by obstacles such as lack of expertise, employee resistance, as well as legal and technical issues. Of course, the technology itself matters, but it is also about the way it is implemented, understood, and adopted by employees, and the way it is managed in the context of existing technological capabilities. It is therefore crucial to remember that the real value of AI and ML lies not only in the technology, but also in the people who use it and in the processes that are supported and improved by it.

Artificial intelligence is here to help rather than replace it, much for insight that intelligence – is necessary already made that new ideas, business is worth repeating.

Thank you for the article highlighting innovations.

10. As we also deeper into AI, and Generative AI in particular, we encounter a new set of challenges that concern not only technical but also legal aspects. Uncertainties surrounding intellectual property and data protection are among the hottest and most debated issues in the wider context of AI implementation.

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20 years of Transcom in Poland

Today, the history of customer service is being rewritten as the global leader in customer service, Transcom, celebrates its 20 years of operation in Poland. The company, present in the market since 2003, currently has offices in six cities in Poland, employing over 1,100 employees. Thanks to all of them, Transcom continually improves customer experience (CX) processes to provide the best possible service to its clients' customers.

THE BEGINNINGS OF SUCCESS (1995-2003)

Transcom's first steps in the customer service industry were the result of the vision of Jan Stenbeck, an entrepreneurial visionary and founder of the company. Under his leadership, the company was established in 1995 by the Swedish investment company Kinnevik. From the very beginning, Transcom focused on customer service and supporting partners in acquiring new customers and business development. In 1997, the company expanded its operations to Sweden,

Luxembourg, and Norway, and in 1999, it entered 11 other countries, including Germany, Italy, and France.

ENTERING THE POLISH MARKET (2003-2007)

Transcom Poland began its operations in 2003 by opening its first office in Olsztyn. Initially, a small team provided customer service to telecommunications clients in Polish and German. Four years later, the company opened its second office in Gdańsk, enabling it to expand its

operations to international markets and collaborate with clients from various sectors. The Gdańsk location initiated the mission of creating a multilingual center offering services in German, Polish, and Scandinavian languages, including Norwegian and Swedish.

EXPANSION AND GROWTH (2008-2019)

Another city where the global brand opened its office was Białystok. The branch started by serving telecommunications clients and now has over 200 agents, also



providing support for well-known fashion brands specializing in e-commerce. After a few years, the company opened an office in Elbląg, recognizing the city's growth potential. Transcom began its operations there in 2019, offering sales services for the telecommunications industry and customer support for e-commerce clients. Transcom's portfolio expanded to include not only e-commerce customer service but also customer support through video calls for German-speaking projects in Gdańsk.

CONTINUATION OF DEVELOPMENT AND MULTILINGUAL CENTERS (2020-2022)

In 2021, the company opened a branch in Poznań, continuing its mission of creating a multilingual customer service center, where they developed projects for an energy brand in the German language, among others. Considering the needs of its clients, Transcom adjusted the locations of its offices. Therefore, in 2022, it decided to open another branch in Grudziądz, where they handle customer service projects for a telecommunications brand.

COLLABORATION — TOGETHER IN SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES (FROM 1995 TO NOW)

Transcom has always been actively involved in the business process outsourcing industry, expanding its operations and acquiring new clients in various sectors. Over the years, the company has received numerous awards and recognitions, including Partner of the Year awards from 2014 to 2018 and Outsourcing Stars awards in 2015 and 2021. Through the "Transcom Cares" initiative, the company supports charitable activities and local communities, including participation in the Poland Business Run and organizing fundraisers and events for causes such as Ukraine in 2022 with the Virtual Run for Ukraine. Through these initiatives, the company continuously strives to meet the needs of its employees, such as offering "Pink Boxes for Women" in every office. In 2023, the company donated 80 computers to two high schools in Olsztyn in collaboration with the Future for Children Foundation.





ADAPTATION DURING THE PANDEMIC (2020-2021)

The pandemic, a period when everyone faced some of the greatest challenges, did not spare Transcom Poland. During this crisis, the company demonstrated operational flexibility and a significant ability to adapt. The introduction of a hybrid work model, the implementation of fully remote projects, and internal process optimization were key steps that contributed to strengthening the company's positive image. It's worth noting that all these actions related to relocating employees and ensuring their safety were carried out in an extremely short time, within just three weeks of the pandemic's outbreak, starting with the largest telecommunications projects.

In retrospect, the pandemic became a factor that allowed Transcom to open up to the entire Poland, offering remote work on selected projects.

THE FUTURE HAPPENING TODAY (2023 AND BEYOND)

The year 2023 illustrates that Transcom's 20 years of success in Poland have been the result of the dedication of people who aimed to provide top-notch customer

service. Transcom is committed to creating an inspiring work environment that supports creativity, innovation, and collaboration. The company's main values remain the pursuit of excellence and customer satisfaction thanks to employees and technology, along with expertise in the field of digital customer experience transformation.

In their daily work, Transcom's team communicates directly in 33 languages, and thanks to the Transcom Automated Translation solution, they can provide support in 99 languages from anywhere on Earth. The key to this success is the values that help achieve their goals. When describing Transcom's culture, employees primarily emphasize the tremendous support and opportunities for learning and professional development.

PRIDE AND VALUES (FROM 1995 TO NOW)

At Transcom, being wholeheartedly dedicated is a daily occurrence, both to customers and to each other. Every day, someone embarks on their Transcom journey, using their present potential to build skills for the future. Challenges, such as the pandemic, allowed Transcom not only to expand its operations throughout

Poland but also to enrich its portfolio with innovative solutions, such as Automated Translation, which have become integral tools in their daily work.

Transcom's employees are masters at making positive, lasting changes in their teams and communities. They create an atmosphere of commitment and collaboration, which is the foundation of their success. Their dedication to customers and each other is evident in every action and initiative. Transcom's employees are not just workers; they are professionals who continually strive to improve their skills to exceed expectations. It's also a commitment to the community that extends beyond office walls. By supporting various charitable initiatives and local communities, they make the world a better place. After every success and challenge, they can certainly say that the best is yet to come. ♦

The article has been created
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Enhancing Customer Experiences: The power of voice analysis in Contact Centers

— By | Krzysztof Lewiński —

In recent years, we have witnessed a relentless evolution in the realm of speech recognition and voice analysis technologies. According to a report¹ by Meticulous Research, the global market for these technologies is projected to surge from USD 12.6 billion in 2023 to an impressive USD 59.6 billion by 2030, boasting an average annual growth rate of 24.8%. This meteoric rise reflects the dynamic and increasingly pivotal role that voice analysis technology is playing across a spectrum of sectors, from healthcare to customer service. However, it is within the Contact Center industry that voice analysis is gaining remarkable prominence.

Authors of the report attribute the surge in popularity of voice analysis in Contact Centers primarily to the escalating demand for enhanced customer service in sales and marketing divisions. Additionally, it stems from the aspiration to refine conversation scenarios leading to successful sales transactions and the imperative to foster training programs for mentoring team members. Across all these domains, speech recognition and voice analysis tools have proven to be indispensable.

THE UTILIZATION OF VOICE ANALYSIS IN CONTACT CENTERS

Voice analysis serves as an analytical tool that harnesses the potency of natural language processing and speech analysis technologies to glean invaluable insights from dialogues between customer service representatives and clients. Its capabilities encompass:

1. Monitoring customer service quality: Voice analysis facilitates the evaluation of interaction quality between agents and customers. This aids in identifying areas necessitating enhancement, as well as recognizing exemplary interactions that evoke heightened customer satisfaction.

2. Detecting customer emotions: Through the analysis of tone and vocabulary, voice analysis tools proficiently discern customer emotions during conversations. This capacity aids in identifying instances where customers express dissatisfaction or frustration.

” **Speech recognition and voice analysis tools have proven to be indispensable.**

3. Categorizing queries and issues: Voice analysis can systematically categorize conversations into specific topics, such as product inquiries, technical support, returns, and more. This contributes to data management efficiency and expedites the identification of critical areas requiring attention.

4. Detecting fraud and abuses: Voice analysis lends its prowess to identifying potential fraudulent activities or abuses in telephonic conversations. This capability is particularly valuable in industries subject to security concerns or regulatory oversight.

5. Proactive customer service: Voice analysis can automatically identify situations where customers express dissatisfaction or report issues. This empowers contact centers to undertake corrective actions or proactively engage with customers.

6. Trend analysis and reporting: Voice analysis tools empower the creation of comprehensive reports and the analysis of trends within telephone conversations. This furnishes valuable insights into customer preferences, product-related issues, and other pertinent matters.

7. Agent efficiency optimization: Voice analysis can be instrumental in identifying best practices among agents and pinpointing areas where they may require support or additional training.

KEY BENEFITS OF VOICE ANALYSIS IN CONTACT CENTERS

Voice analysis in Contact Centers presents an array of advantages, with the foremost ones encompassing:

• **Enhanced customer service quality:** Voice analysis empowers the evaluation of interactions between agents and customers, facilitating the identification of

¹ www.globenewswire.com/en/news-release/2022/10/18/2536564/0/en/Speech-Analytics-Market-Worth-14-1-Billion-by-2029-Exclusive-Report-by-Meticulous-Research.html



areas necessitating enhancement and the recognition of customer satisfaction. This translates into elevated customer satisfaction and loyalty.

- **Process streamlining:** Voice analysis enables the automatic categorization of calls based on query types or issues, contributing to the identification of areas demanding attention and enhancing data management. This streamlining augments the efficiency and organization of contact center processes.
- **Understanding customers:** By analyzing tone and conversation content, voice analysis enables the discernment of customer emotions. This invaluable insight allows contact centers to tailor their approach to customers more effectively.

IMPLEMENTATION OF VOICE ANALYSIS – THE ENI CASE STUDY

Voice analysis is actively employed by Armatis Polska. The company deploys such tools across various domains, but its most frequent usage is within projects aimed at refining customer service and elevating customer satisfaction.

One such exemplary project¹ revolved around the utilization of voice analysis

² www.armatis.com/article/comment-le-speech-analytics-revele-les-possibilites-damelioration-de-l'experience-client-de-lefficacite-operationnelle-et-de-la-performance-des-conseillers

” **By leveraging the power of voice analysis, contact centers are well-positioned to not only meet but exceed customer expectations, thereby ensuring long-term loyalty and success in an increasingly competitive landscape.**

at Eni, a prominent Italian player in the energy sector. Eni's objective was to optimize the customer journey, pinpoint sources of customer frustration, and initiate appropriate actions to enhance customer experiences.

The implementation of voice analysis at Eni adhered to an agile methodology and involved close collaboration

with Eni's internal experts and Armatis. During the project's course, voice analysis tools were meticulously configured, use cases were painstakingly defined, and customer conversations were meticulously analyzed. This meticulous examination unveiled sources of irritation and pivotal themes that subsequently led to concrete actions designed to enhance customer experiences.

The outcome was transformative. Eni introduced alterations in its customer service processes, implemented automated confirmation of information receipt, and launched new communication channels. The company also heightened customer autonomy, enabling them to independently take action – a significant customer expectation.

The Eni case study serves as a vivid testament to the potency of voice analysis as a tool for improving customer experiences and enhancing the efficiency of consultants within contact centers. It is imperative, however, to combine voice analysis with other quality monitoring tools to gain a comprehensive view and maximize results.

VOICE ANALYSIS TRANSFORMS CONTACT CENTER FOR TOMORROW

Voice analysis technology is poised to redefine the landscape of contact centers by empowering them to deliver exceptional customer service, streamline processes, and gain profound insights into customer behavior and preferences. As we move forward, the contact center industry will continue to embrace this transformative technology, harnessing its capabilities to provide unparalleled customer experiences.

This represents not just an evolution but a revolution in the way customer service is delivered and managed. By leveraging the power of voice analysis, contact centers are well-positioned to not only meet but exceed customer expectations, thereby ensuring long-term loyalty and success in an increasingly competitive landscape.♦


Author



Krzysztof Lewiński
CEO of Armatis Polska







AI EVOLUTION IN THE BPO INDUSTRY

*In the exclusive interview with **Simon Kriss**, Chief Innovation Officer at the Customer Experience Innovation Institute, we explore the dynamic intersection of innovation, ethics, and the evolving landscape of AI in the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry.*

Simon visited Poland in October 2023 to present his latest book, "The AI Empowered Customer Experience," a comprehensive guide for CX practitioners on the multifaceted applications of AI. Join us as we delve into the intriguing insights of this CX industry thought leader and futurologist regarding the future of AI in the BPO sector.

**You can read the full article
in the magazine version available
on arena.proprogressio.pl**

THE AI EMPOWERED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

A CX practitioner's guide to the possibilities and risks of AI

SIMON KRISS

The Simon's book is available from Amazon in both paperback and Kindle versions:

When someone is going through a crisis, they often look for a way to feel better. One of the best ways to do this is by reading a book. A book can provide a sense of comfort and understanding, and it can also provide a new perspective on a problem. The book "The AI Empowered Customer Experience" by Simon Kriss is a great example of this. It is a book that provides a guide to the possibilities and risks of AI in the customer experience. The book is written in a clear and concise way, and it is easy to read. It is a book that is worth reading for anyone who is interested in the customer experience.

There are many reasons why you should read this book. First, it provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of AI in the customer experience. It discusses the various ways in which AI is being used to improve the customer experience, and it also discusses the potential risks of AI. This information is essential for anyone who is responsible for the customer experience. Second, the book provides a number of practical tips and strategies for implementing AI in the customer experience. These tips and strategies are based on the author's own experience, and they are designed to be easy to follow. Finally, the book provides a number of case studies that illustrate the successful use of AI in the customer experience. These case studies provide a valuable source of inspiration for anyone who is looking to improve their own customer experience.

If you are looking for a book that provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of AI in the customer experience, and if you are looking for a book that provides a number of practical tips and strategies for implementing AI in the customer experience, then "The AI Empowered Customer Experience" by Simon Kriss is the book for you. It is a book that is worth reading for anyone who is interested in the customer experience.

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INVESTMENT NEWS

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY ON THE WARSAW OFFICE MARKET GRADUALLY RECOVERS AMID FALLING VACANCIES

According to Savills latest report, Warsaw's total office stock reached 6.2 million sq m at the end September 2023 following the completion of 20,300 sq m of new office space across four projects, the largest being The Park (White Star Real Estate, 11,000 sq m).

The office development pipeline currently stands at nearly 263,000 sq m, of which 82% is in the city centre. Of that total, 143,000 sq m is scheduled for completion by the end of 2024.



– Development activity which steadily slowed down since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 is gradually gathering pace, with five new office projects breaking ground in Warsaw in 2023. Some developers have, however, put projects on hold until more space is pre-let in those currently under construction – comments Daniel Czarnecki, Head of Office Agency, Landlord Representation, Savills.

The largest office projects scheduled for delivery in 2025-2026 include The Bridge (Ghelamco, 47,000 sq m), Upper One (Strabag Real Estate, 35,500 sq m) and Towarowa 22B (Echo Investment, 31,100 sq m).

In January-September 2023, total office take-up in Warsaw reached 496,600 sq m, down by around 18% from the same time last year. Despite this, leasing activity continued to pick up pace from quarter to quarter (157,400 sq m in Q1, 165,200 sq m in Q2 and 174,000 sq m in Q3), notes Savills.

New leases accounted for 52% of the total office take-up, while pre-lets made up nearly 7% and expansions just under 4%. Renegotiations totalled almost 189,000 sq m, accounting for 38% of all deals. By comparison, renegotiations made up 39% in the whole of 2022, with new leases, expansions and pre-lets contributing 43%, 8% and 10% respectively.

Flexible office operators leased 10,600 sq m in Warsaw through six transactions, including three in new locations: OmniOffice in the Warsaw UNIT (3,200 sq m), Grzybowska Park (1,400 sq m) and Business Link in Studio B (3,000 sq m).

According to data from Savills, Warsaw's vacancy rate stood at 10.6% at the end of September 2023, down by 1.5 pp year-on-year. Prime office rents remained unchanged at EUR 22.5-26/sq m/month in the most prestigious locations in the Centre and EUR 13.00-15.00/sq m/month in Służewiec. Office tenants are, however, facing high service charges.

Source: Savills

7R PLANS MORE PROJECTS IN POMERANIA

7R sums up its activity in Pomerania for the last quarter. The developer leased nearly 53,000 sq m of warehouse space there and strengthening its presence in the region by moving to a new office and launching more projects.

7R has been observing Pomeranian market rental records in recent months. In the last quarter, the developer signed several significant deals, leasing a total of more than 53 thousand sqm. In addition, the developer finalized the sale of the 11 thousand sq m. 7R City Flex Gdańsk II: GLP Europe became the new owner.

– The last few months have been extremely busy for us. For 7R, the last quarter was much better than the same quarter last year. We can see tenants' growing interest in the Pomeranian market, looking for high-end warehouses. We expect this activity will grow systematically – says Marzena Taube, Regional Leasing Director at 7R.



Signed agreements mark the launch of more new projects. Construction of 7R Park Gdansk III and the third stage of 7R Park Tczew construction will start very soon. Both projects will ultimately offer more than 260,000 sq m of rental space.

7R is also finishing construction of 7R City Park Gdansk Airport I. The park, consisting of three halls, offers nearly 40,500 sq m. It has recently attracted Rebel company, which will occupy nearly 5 thousand sq m there. In addition, with the development of more projects, the Tricity office of 7R has changed location.

– We have decided to relocate our office in Gdansk. We have chosen the modern office complex Matarnia Office Park. The change will allow us to adapt the new space to the dynamic working style of our team. It will also support further development of the brand on the Pomeranian market and in the whole northern region. We will soon share information about further significant contracts – concludes Ryszard Gretkowski, Chief Administrative Officer and Vice-President of 7R.

Source: 7R

K2 OFFICE BUILDING WITH WIREScore PLATINUM RATING

Vastint Poland achieved WiredScore Platinum certification for the K2 office building in Gdynia. WiredScore evaluated the property, examining factors related to infrastructure sophistication, operational efficiency and, finally, the building's ability to provide users with optimal connectivity solutions. K2 is the first in the Tri-city and the 61st building certified under this system in Poland.

– K2 has joined the league of nationally and internationally recognized WiredScore certified buildings. In today's world, digital connectivity is critical to more than just the way we work. In an increasingly technology-driven economy, connectivity has also become one of the most important criteria for tenants choosing office space. Our property provides a best-in-class connectivity infrastructure, and by leveraging advanced technologies, we are able to meet the changing needs of the building's current and future employees – says David Pettersson, Senior Project Manager of Vastint Poland.

Vastint has partnered with WiredScore to measure, improve and evaluate the digital connectivity solutions used in the K2 office building. Finally, the building achieved WiredScore Platinum certification. Among the aspects that are important from the point of view of tenants and user experience, two solutions



are noteworthy. First, tenants can use the services of as many as six independent providers (fibre or fixed wireless), thus having a choice of competitive rates. Another advantage is the separation of telecommunications equipment from other utilities, such as electricity, gas, or water, which reduces the risk of Internet interruptions, and limiting staff access to tenant-serving equipment improves data security and lessens the possibility of accidental damage.

K2 is a six-story office building located near the Wzgorze sw. Maksymiliana interchange on Kielecka Street in Gdynia.

It offers more than 11,400 sq m of A-class office space. C.Hartwig, an international shipping company, has located its headquarters in the building, and PZU Zdrowie, a multi-specialist medical facility, also operates here.

WiredScore is the only globally recognized digital connectivity rating system. Since its launch in New York in 2013, the program has so far certified more than 60 million sq m of commercial office space in 10 countries around the world.

Source: Vastint Poland

MLP GROUP TO LAUNCH NEW CITY LOGISTICS PROJECT IN ŁÓDŹ

MLP Group is embarking on a project to develop its second logistics park within the Łódź urban area. MLP Business Park Łódź will deliver more than 30,000 sqm of cutting-edge City Logistics space.

Space offered in the new project will be tailored primarily for urban logistics and light manufacturing operations. The development will begin on a speculative basis, i.e. without pre-lease contracts. The business park will ultimately offer a total of about 30,400 sqm, of which

26,600 sqm will accommodate warehouse units, while 3,800 sqm will contain comfortable offices and staff amenity areas. In total, the complex will consist of three warehouse facilities, to be gradually delivered to occupants over the second and third quarters of 2024. The role of general contractor has been entrusted to Bin – Biuro Inżynierskie.

– MLP Business Park Łódź is our newest project in the City Logistics category. We are attuned to the strong demand for contemporary spaces, strategically located in urban areas to meet the needs of city logistics, e-commerce services, and light manufacturing. While we embark on this project on a speculative basis, we are confident of its rapid commercialisation. The facilities on offer will feature modern warehouse modules, starting at 1,600 sqm, and well-appointed office spaces. This new project will significantly bolster MLP Group's presence in central Poland as our second development in the city of Łódź.

We are committed to incorporating eco-friendly solutions throughout the construction process and optimising occupier comfort through a wide range of functionalities – said Agnieszka Góźdz, Member of the Management Board, Chief Development Officer, MLP Group S.A.

In line with its strategy to integrate environmentally sustainable solutions, MLP Group is committed to achieving the BREEAM New Construction certification of 'Excellent' for the facilities. In pursuit of this goal, the developer intends to incorporate a solar photovoltaic system and install charging stations for electric vehicles. Moreover, a substantial portion (approximately 30%) of the land developed with the logistics park will be dedicated to green spaces and a retention pond. To encourage eco-friendly commuting, more than 550 bicycle parking spaces have been planned for.

Source: MLP Group



Unveiling Ukraine's finest: The remarkable tech catalogue of Ukrainian IT companies & products

In the fast-paced realm of technology and innovation, Ukraine has truly shone as a standout player in the global tech landscape. It's here that intricate IT solutions are conceived and world-renowned IT products are brought to life. While the ongoing war has cast an international spotlight on Ukraine, it's crucial to expand the perspective and emphasise that Ukraine is not just a nation in turmoil; it's also the cradle of cutting-edge IT solutions, benefiting both businesses and individuals.

The IT sector has showcased its remarkable resilience and adaptability. Since 2010, the industry has grown by an impressive 18.2 times. Currently, we can proudly count around 2,262 registered IT companies, employing approximately 362,000 IT professionals. In 2022, the sector generated a substantial \$7.34 billion in export revenue, marking a 5.8% growth compared to the pre-war year. This achievement firmly positions IT alongside traditional export leaders like the Mining and Metallurgical Complex and Industrial Agriculture.

While IT service exports did experience a 9.3% decrease in the first half of 2023, it's noteworthy that this still represents a \$27 million increase compared to the first half of 2021, before the war. This underscores the industry's resilience, as reflected in the financial indicators, which demonstrate that the Ukrainian IT sector has not only weathered the crisis but is poised for further growth.

The unique expertise gained during these challenging times has equipped our companies to function effectively under any circumstances and successfully complete projects. Resilience has evolved from a mere concept into a demonstrated skill. In fact, Gartner, a global technology research leader, now advises its clients to evaluate Ukrainian companies using the same risk standards and benchmarks as IT enterprises in other nations. With

this in mind, the "Incredible Tech" catalogue aims to introduce the world to Ukraine's exceptional IT products, shining a spotlight on their quality and global significance.

This impressive initiative has been brought to fruition through the collaborative efforts of the IT Ukraine Association, working jointly with the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the esteemed Top Lead agency. Together, they have meticulously crafted a catalogue that showcases promising IT products and companies from Ukraine, aptly named "Incredible Tech". This catalogue serves as a priceless resource for presenting Ukraine's IT sector to a global audience. Beyond spotlighting top-notch Ukrainian IT offerings, it delves deep into the potential of Ukraine's technology industry.

the Ukrainian tech industry. This catalogue will undoubtedly facilitate attracting investments and fostering collaborations with international partners, ultimately propelling the growth and expansion of Ukrainian IT companies on the global market – comments Maria Shevchuk, the Acting Executive Director of the IT Ukraine Association.

The "Incredible Tech" is thoughtfully divided into two sections: one featuring IT companies ready to engage with international partners, customers, and investors, and the other highlighting the IT products themselves, neatly categorised into distinct industry verticals.

The selection process for inclusion in the catalogue was conducted meticulously by an independent expert council composed of representatives from the Ministry

” While IT service exports did experience a 9.3% decrease in the first half of 2023, it's noteworthy that this still represents a \$27 million increase compared to the first half of 2021, before the war.

– "The Incredible Tech" is a practical and powerful tool for promoting Ukraine's IT industry on the international stage. It not only showcases the best Ukrainian IT products but also equips potential investors and partners with a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities within

of Digital Transformation, tech company founders and CEOs, and seasoned investors. Council members were selected based on their expertise, industry knowledge and, obviously, willingness to contribute.

– Presently, millions of customers and businesses worldwide are engaging with

applications, systems, and other products developed by Ukrainian companies. We've crafted this catalogue to open the eyes of prospective partners and investors to the boundless potential of the Ukrainian IT industry, showcasing the limitless possibilities that Ukrainian IT offers. It's our way of introducing investors to the brilliant teams and entrepreneurs behind these innovations, says Stanislav Shum, CEO of TopLead.

The Information Technology industry stands out as one of Ukraine's most dynamic and thriving sectors, maintaining its momentum even in the face of challenging times. With an unwavering commitment to adopting cutting-edge technologies and innovative approaches, it plays an indispensable role in nurturing talent and propelling groundbreaking products.

The "Incredible Tech" is exclusively dedicated to showcasing Ukrainian companies and IT products. These entities either have Ukrainian registration or are founded by Ukrainians, maintaining offices or a representative presence within Ukraine. This criterion ensures that the catalogue accurately reflects the essence of Ukraine's IT landscape.

The selection spotlights prominent Ukrainian IT products and their developers across various sectors such as Defense Tech, AI, E-health, Automotive, Fintech, Telecom, e-Government, and more. These products have made an indelible mark on the global stage, contributing to Ukraine's reputation as an IT powerhouse.

As Mykhailo Fedorov, Vice Prime Minister for Innovations, Development of Education, Science, and Technologies – Minister of Digital Transformation of Ukraine underlines: – *Ukraine is a nation brimming with creativity and talent, where ideas materialise within days, and the latest technologies are conceived today. The IT sector has consistently ranked among the top priorities for the Ministry of Digital Transformation. Today, it holds a place of paramount importance for the entire nation. Having proven its resilience even during the full-scale Russian invasion, our country now stands as an ideal testing ground for the most cutting-edge technologies. We are particularly invested in the development of defence technology solutions that will empower our country to protect its freedom and democracy. Ukraine takes pride in being the homeland to hundreds of well-known IT companies and startups that have thrived*

and scaled even in times of conflict, during power outages, and missile attacks. I urge you to support the Ukrainian tech industry by investing in our people and the products they create, for in doing so, you invest in the future of a free and democratic world.

“ The dissemination of the catalogue will reach governmental and non-governmental organisations in Ukraine and various other countries.

The selection has been meticulously prepared in English to cater to its intended audience, which includes representatives from foreign businesses and international venture funds. This outreach extends to all potential foreign customers and investors keen on exploring Ukraine's burgeoning IT sector.

The dissemination of the catalogue will reach governmental and non-governmental organisations in Ukraine and various other countries. Additionally, it will be showcased at Ukrainian and international events centred around technology and digital transformation. This strategic promotion aims to spotlight Ukraine's IT capabilities, attract investments into the industry, and support existing IT businesses in their journey to scale new heights.

Ukrainian IT has witnessed rapid growth and has evolved into Ukraine's second-largest export industry. Ukrainian products and companies have made their presence felt worldwide, with some attaining global recognition and prominence.

This is precisely why "Incredible Tech" was created – a powerful tool to

promote Ukraine's IT industry on the global stage. It serves as a means to illuminate the world about Ukraine's IT capabilities, attract investment to the industry, and facilitate the growth of existing IT enterprises.



The full version of the *Incredible Tech* catalogue is available here:



The "Incredible Tech" catalogue features an array of excellent and promising Ukrainian IT products and companies, thoughtfully categorised by industry verticals. Within its pages, one can discover both small yet promising firms and behemoth tech companies whose products are embraced by millions of individuals and businesses worldwide.

As we journey through the pages, we embark on a remarkable exploration of Ukrainian IT excellence. It serves as a testament to Ukraine's resilience, creativity, and unwavering commitment to innovation even in challenging times. This catalogue represents not only a showcase of technological achievements but also an invitation to the world to collaborate, invest, and partner with Ukraine in shaping the future of technology. In doing so, we collectively contribute to a brighter and more connected world, where innovation knows no bounds.♦

The article has been created in cooperation with

 **IT Ukraine Association**



Lithuania – a growing cybersecurity hub for global businesses

— By | **Milda Miliūnė** —

The need for online safety is more pressing than ever. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have been spending more time online, enjoying various work-from-home arrangements, and carrying out daily tasks like banking and shopping. But as our reliance on digital connectivity grows, so does our exposure to cyber threats.

As our connectivity has surged to unprecedented levels, it has not only made cybersecurity one of the fastest-growing markets within the technology sector, but also put it high on the agenda of both governments and businesses. Lithuania is no exception: the ever-present need to protect critical infrastructure, business environment, and citizens from online attacks has led the country to strengthen its national cybersecurity capabilities. Meanwhile, multiple Global Business Services & ICT centers in Lithuania have added cybersecurity to the list of sophisticated functions they deliver to their global organizations.

A ROBUST CYBERSECURITY ECOSYSTEM

Lithuania is well prepared to deal with the increasing risk of cyber-attacks. Focused purely on preventing and managing cyber incidents, the country's National Cyber Security Centre has a network connecting the most critical infrastructure operators via a set of automated procedures. This guarantees a 30-minute threat neutralization window. As proof of the country's cybersecurity expertise, Lithuania has also initiated and currently coordinates the EU Cyber Rapid Response force, supporting the bloc and its partners against cyber-attacks.

With cyber high on its security priorities, it is no wonder that Lithuania holds top positions in international cybersecurity rankings. Currently, the country ranks 2nd globally in the National Cyber

Security Index, which measures the preparedness of countries to prevent cyber threats and manage cyber incidents, and 6th in the ITU's Global Cyber Security Index. Moreover, the latest edition of Surfshark's Digital Quality of Life Index has ranked Lithuania 2nd globally in terms of e-security, noting the country's readiness to counter cybercrimes and its commitment to protecting online privacy.

Lithuania's cybersecurity leadership goes beyond country-level preparedness. Lithuania's Global Business Services & ICT operations have been gradually climbing the value chain for the past

decade, with ever more sophisticated functions appearing on the roster. Spurred by the ever-growing demand for online security, global businesses choose Lithuania to conduct not only ICT, but also cybersecurity operations. In fact, 29% of Lithuania's Global Business Services & ICT centers count cybersecurity among functions performed.

Why is Lithuania a perfect home for cybersecurity teams? Here, global companies find a 61,700-strong ICT talent pool with competencies to develop robust solutions in next-gen areas such as Intelligent Process Automation, AI,



With cyber high on its security priorities, it is no wonder that Lithuania holds top positions in international cybersecurity rankings. Currently, the country ranks 2nd globally in the National Cyber Security Index.

and, of course, cybersecurity. Besides smart and flexible talent, Lithuania also offers EU-leading connectivity and internet speeds, providing the reliable infrastructure that best-in-class cybersecurity services need.

PROVIDING GLOBAL CYBERSECURITY COVERAGE

Among the recent cybersecurity success stories in Lithuania's Global Business Services & ICT sector is Cencora, previously known as AmerisourceBergen. A leading global pharmaceutical solutions provider, the company first entered Lithuania in 2017, and currently employs over 400 specialists in its Global Business Services center in Vilnius. Last year, Cencora announced plans to expand its Lithuanian team to 700 employees over the next five years.

Due to the company's rapid growth in Europe, cybersecurity is a highly important function, instrumental in ensuring the stability of IT services and the security of Cencora's employee, client, and customer data at any given time. That is why Cencora established a cybersecurity team in Lithuania in November 2021. At the time, its primary focus was building a cyber defense foundation for the company's most recent acquisition

– Alliance Healthcare – and establishing security processes aligned across all European markets.

Today, the European wing of Cencora's cyber defense operations consists of 5 experienced specialists. The company's cybersecurity team works primarily during standard European working hours and covers all of Cencora's business units and affiliates regardless of location. Among the functions they cover are cybersecurity operations and incident response, threat hunting, digital forensics, and cyber threat intelligence. The team has also recently established Cencora's first digital forensics lab in Europe to collect, examine, analyze, and report digital evidence.

GLOBAL NAMES SETTING UP CYBERSECURITY TEAMS

Nasdaq, Moody's, and Oracle are among some other well-known global names that chose Lithuania for cyber security product development. Oracle, for instance,

acquired Lithuanian cyber security startup Zenedge in 2018, turning it into an engineering division working on the company's strategic cloud security solutions.

The Oracle office in Kaunas – one of the two in Lithuania – is building a next-generation cloud platform that supports mission-critical customer requirements and provides a secure cloud environment globally. Part and parcel of Oracle's cloud solutions is a cloud-native cybersecurity service (Web Application Firewall) that protects applications from malicious bots and unwanted internet traffic.

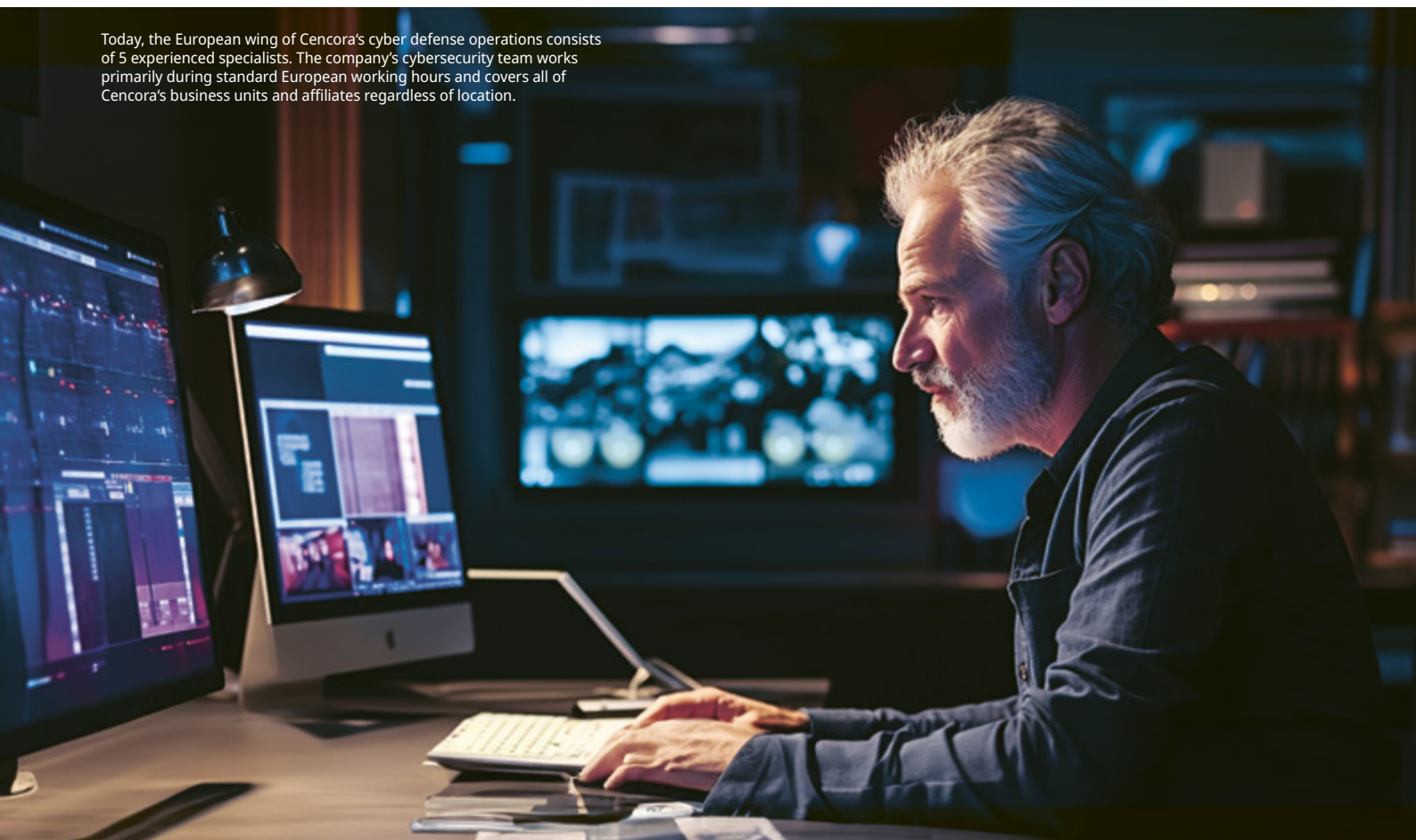
As Lithuania's Global Business Services & ICT sector continues to grow in scope and maturity, our latest industry survey shows that 61% of centers are planning to introduce new or significantly expand existing functions over 2023. With the level of cyber threats rising, it is no surprise that cybersecurity is among the top additions, so we can expect to see more cybersecurity success stories in Lithuania. ♦

Author



Milda Miliūnė | Senior Investment Advisor,
Global Business Services & ICT at Invest Lithuania
Invest Lithuania

Today, the European wing of Cencora's cyber defense operations consists of 5 experienced specialists. The company's cybersecurity team works primarily during standard European working hours and covers all of Cencora's business units and affiliates regardless of location.



Elbląg – a hub for initiatives in the Baltic Sea region

Interview with Marcin Żuchowski, Director of the Secretariat of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic in Elbląg.

FOCUS ON Business: Please tell us more about the mission, goals and tasks of the Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic.

Marcin Żuchowski, Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic: The Association of Polish Communes Euroregion Baltic (usually known in Polish as STG ERB, or Euroregion Baltic) is a small organisation with a great tradition and potential. On the one hand, we are a non-governmental organisation that brings together 40 local governments and was established to support transnational cooperation of local governments, but on the other hand we act as a cooperation platform for various beneficiaries from Poland and abroad who would like to act in the supra-regional and international sphere.

of the stakeholders. We are committed to bringing measurable results from the multilateral cooperation, particularly in the form of targeted project initiatives and measures in our municipalities and local communities.

For 26 years now, since our organisation has been established, its guiding idea has been the motto: "Closer to cooperation, the idea of self-government, society and the Baltic Sea", setting the strategic goals of its activities.

We focus on representing and presenting the common voice of our members and partners with third-party organisations as a part of international and local governments cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, but also in Europe as a whole. Thanks to the efforts of our Secretariat team, the member communes

the existing Euroregion Baltic network – connecting 8 regions from 4 countries, of which we are co-founders), established to solve a specific task, challenge or problem, but also to promote and disseminate certain values.

What projects implemented by the Association in Elbląg have produced the most interesting results? Which of them have contributed most to improving the quality of life of Elbląg residents?

Many international projects taking place in the Elbląg Municipality have been carried out jointly with the STG ERB, with the participation of the local government and the entities and institutions operating here. They include not only the joint acquisition of pre-accession funds but also those from European Union development measures, including the following programmes: Interreg Baltic Sea Region, Interreg South Baltic, Horizon, Life Programme or Norwegian, Swiss or other funds.

Trying to classify these, we could divide them into several sectors – from work with the youth, through environment protection, support for creative and innovative entrepreneurship, to transport and tourism. Here we are talking, for example, about empowering civic engagement, such as projects SB YCGN, LYC SB, Indigise implemented with the participation of the Elbląg Municipality or its representatives, enabling young people not only to discover the living, working and business conditions of their peers in Lithuania, Denmark and Sweden. These projects have also increased

” **For 26 years now, since our organisation has been established, its guiding idea has been the motto: "Closer to cooperation, the idea of self-government, society and the Baltic Sea", setting the strategic goals of its activities.**

Over the years, the STG ERB has developed mechanisms and methods to support cross-sectoral cooperation of all types of entities located in two voivodeships: Warmia-Mazury and Pomerania, facilitating cooperation of local entities with their cross-border counterparts as a part of the transnational cooperation. And this is what we focus on in our daily activities – connecting and trying to initiate or co-create new initiatives. We strive to connect and act as a platform for the supra-regional integration

are able to speak with one strong voice with respect to the external environment and foreign partners by initiating or participating in international activities and projects.

By promoting the cooperation with the Association, we designate cooperation between the communes of the Pomerania and Warmia-Mazury Voivodeships with the external environment through strategic networks. These include both, temporary networks (Task Groups, project consortia) and permanent ones (e.g.



” Many international projects taking place in the Elbląg Municipality have been carried out jointly with the STG ERB, with the participation of the local government and the entities and institutions operating here.

their knowledge about self-governance, civic engagement and have developed their competences and provided opportunities for further development. They have shown the will to increase the participation of young Elbląg citizens in co-deciding. They permanently introduced new practices in the form of "round tables", through which young people were able to co-decide on issues important to the younger generation.

Another example is the TourAge project supporting tourism of senior citizens in 9 Baltic Sea countries, enabling the city's local offer to be better adapted to the needs of this age group.

From the business point of view, the most interesting projects may be the CTCC project or even Engage! The CTCC is a typical local business support project co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the South Baltic Programme 2014-2020, aiming to increase the innovation capacity and performance of innovative products, services, processes or market portfolios of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the traditional sector.

Together with creative sector (design, architecture, advertising, software and games) our staff worked for the target group from the South Baltic Sea Region

(SBSR) covering the coastal regions of Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden contributing to Blue and Green Growth in the Region and the EU. One of the outcomes of the project was the creation of ad hoc cooperation between traditional and creative companies from the Warmia-Mazury region, but also from the Baltic Sea region, which included the preparation of three prototypes of new canoes with special graphics targeted at the youngest. The canoes were then donated to MOSIR Elbląg and are still being used by the youngest residents of Elbląg.

Another example is the ENGAGE! project. This was a project aimed at non-governmental organisations from the Pomerania and Warmia-Mazury regions, involving more than 100 organisations, under which we have encouraged those who want to be open to international cooperation with the participation of partners from the Baltic Region to join international consortia. We have invited inexperienced associations and third sector organisations to co-operate with other local and international entities and demonstrated them the best practices/ techniques/ tools to build strong local communities, which has resulted in new initiatives including those involving Elbląg entities. e.g. the "Green Up" project involving the Elbląg Technology Park.

Which of the Association's ongoing or planned initiatives have the potential to increase the attractiveness of Elbląg as an investment destination?

One such example is the SB SeaMan – South Baltic Sail and Water Education Opportunities seed fund project, which is being implemented in international partnership with the Elbląg Seaport Authority and the Non-public Educational Institution Academy of Water Sports "Group" Marcin Trudnowski. This initiative has evolved from a small consortium of 5 organisations from 3 countries into a large initiative involving a partnership of more than 15 institutions, including academic institutions, tourism associations, local authorities and businesses from 5 countries. The project is currently being prepared for submission to a new upcoming competition.

The overall objective of the project is to develop strong partnerships of South Baltic institutions and organisations focused on the development of sustainable water tourism. They will work together to develop and test methods to introduce innovative and socially inclusive solutions in the field of water and nautical tourism, especially in the area of education, raising awareness that will

enable the establishment of conditions for the development of sustainable water tourism services in the region.

The main objective is to strengthen the potential of water economy in the participating regions through better use and management of inland and sea water resources, around which we want to develop social, economic and other activities.

” **One of the most important areas we are currently working on to help strengthen the local government and future investors is building a sustainable city based on RES, closed-loop economy and nature-based solutions.**

What is the greatest challenge in implementing the Association's initiatives in Elbląg? Are there areas of your activity that you plan to strengthen in order to contribute even more to the better functioning of the city and attracting new investors?

In fact, the most important challenge currently faced by our Association in Elbląg is not to obtain funds for project implementation, but to encourage individual beneficiaries (including entrepreneurs), partners or new entities to develop international and project cooperation. The collaboration should be based not only on the immediate needs of one party, but to look at problems from a broader perspective: of the region, the country or the entire area of the Baltic Sea, not to mention Europe as a whole.

It is this internal blockade and flawed thinking that holds back the potential of local decision-makers to present their problems, challenges to the outside world and at the same time prevents them from trying to solve them in a broader way with the support of someone from the "outside". After all, our local beneficiaries do not have to reinvent the wheel and can seek support from already existing expertise and experience, while trying to disseminate the already developed and proven solutions by transferring and adapting them to their own needs. Often the disbelief of beneficiaries in their

own capabilities and resources or the lack of knowledge of where to get the assistance (even if only in finding appropriate and proven foreign partners) is a strong blockade to taking further steps on the international arena. Elbląg's local, innovative solutions or initiatives remain at this level only, because we are afraid to promote or to invest in them properly.

Another such area is the financial barrier, known as the 'own contribution', which must be made by an entity wishing to implement projects with external funding. This also involves, in the case of projects based on the reimbursement principle, a waiting period for the invested funds. Often, local entrepreneurs or other entities prefer to invest their own money at a given point in time rather than benefit from 60-80% deferred funding (in 6 to 12 months).

One of the most important areas we are currently working on to help strengthen the local government and future investors is building a sustainable city based on RES, closed-loop economy and nature-based solutions. We aim and expect to work together with local stakeholders in broad national and international cooperation to build a globally resilient, yet independent and prosperous city that is not only a place for various activities, but a place for healthy and peaceful living based on sustainability and green governance.

Therefore, in our next steps, we will strive to better communicate and educate local beneficiaries about these values, who will be closer to the Baltic Sea Strategy, the area of which is an ideal environment of development and common interest for all of us.

Thank you for the interview.♦

More information



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About Poznań's values. Recipe for success

— By | **Amelia Wojciechowska** —

According to the latest ranking prepared by Business Insider Polska, Poznań has been recognised as the best city to live in Poland. The favourable economic indicators are linked to the City's openness to diversity. The capital of Wielkopolska is known for its values such as tolerance, equality, community and integration.

Poznań is a city open to different cultures. Aware of this mosaic reality, Poznań's businesses and city authorities undertake many initiatives to promote diversity, equality and integration. Poznań's multiculturalism has a two-dimensional character. These include the number of registered foreigners – around 8,500 – and the possibility of studying more than 50 foreign languages at Adam Mickiewicz University. These factors have an impact on the developing and thus increasingly diversifying talent pool.

This aspect is crucial for the modern services sector, one of the city's priority sectors. It is, on the one hand, a rapidly growing branch of business and, on the other, the most diverse in terms of the baggage of experience, background, and gender of the employees. The city's overall climate is influenced not only by an open-minded worldview but also by the developing CSR/ESG policy of the companies operating in the city. It has a significant impact on respecting minority rights, fighting exclusion, promoting inclusivity and diversity.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the values particularly promoted and embodied by Poznań's companies and city authorities is gender equality. It is first and foremost a matter of ensuring the same opportunities and access to development for all. In the case of the modern services sector,

the proportion of women employed in the area reaches 53%. How are companies approaching the subject? The need for development based on equal and inclusive principles is especially highlighted by Wunderman Thompson Technology. The company's nationwide management board includes two women and one man. In terms of the proportion of executives, it is 51% female and 49% male, respectively. Hiring and promotion rules are set out in a dedicated group policy ensuring transparency and equality.

Another company that respects the equal opportunities policy is Capgemini Poland. It is worth noting that in

a team of 12,000 people, more than half are women.

As part of its pro-equality activities, Investor Relations Department of the Poznań City Hall was involved in actions related to the activation of women on the labour market. An example of activity in this area was a coaching meeting in the "Feminine side of POZnań" series. The topic of the event was changes in the working life of mothers returning to the labour market. There was also a unique „Women in IT” conference in the TechUniverCity series. The event was organised by WSB Merito Poznań University together with SUSO Digital and



A special place in the city's calendar of events is given to those that target the diversity of the other. Photo: Fotoportal.

the City of Poznań. The meeting featured diverse talks about the IT sector, not only for women already working in the field, but also those considering a job or returning to professional activity after a break.

INCLUSION OF THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY

As part of equality activism, there are groups in many Poznań companies that aim to raise awareness and knowledge in this area. Again, Capgemini Poland is leading the way here, with its OUTfront Community, which supports projects for LGBT+ people. A similar employee resource group is active at Wunderman Thompson Technology.

When talking about the inclusive practices of Poznań's businesses, it is impossible to overlook the city authorities' commitment to this matter. Accordingly, there is an Equality Policy Proxy and an Equality and Diversity Policy Team at the City Hall. As part of its activities, an 'Equality Glossary' has been created. It contains basic terms and concepts to use in order to speak and write in an inclusive language of respect. In terms of supporting the LGBT+ community, an annual Pride Parade and Poznań Pride Week are organised under the patronage of the City.

DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The Poznań business community is becoming increasingly involved in activating people with disabilities. They have a simple goal: to recognise their potential. They undoubtedly bring many benefits to businesses, contributing to increasing

diversity in the workplace. In addition, they are upholding the fight against exclusion in its broadest sense, and raising awareness of others, contributing to a change in worldview.

An example of a company spreading these ideals is ROCKWOOL GBS. It organised a Hybrid Job Fair for People with (Dis)abilities in cooperation with the Wózkowice Foundation. The event took place at its headquarters – completely adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. The inclusiveness and uniqueness of the fair are defined by its openness to a social group that has long struggled with exclusion on many levels.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Action against progressive climate change is an extremely important topic for global society. Companies in Poznań are also talking about environmental responsibility. Miele's activities in this area are a prime example. They are a recipient of the German Sustainability Award, a member of the UN organisation Global Compact's corporate responsibility and sustainability initiative and a signatory of the "Charta der Vielfalt". Miele pays attention to energy efficiency, resource conservation in equipment and products, and has a number of CSR activities.

Wunderman Thompson Technology is also committed to raising awareness of environmental protection. The company has a number of employee resource groups – and the idea behind one of them is the issue of sustainability.



The annual Pride Week and Pride Parade are organised under the honorary patronage of the Mayor of Poznań Jacek Jaśkowiak. Photo: City of Poznań.

New investment in the city



NAME OF THE INVESTOR: PHOENIX CONTACT WIELKOPOLSKA – third the largest production plant in Phoenix Contact Group

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Poland / Germany

SECTOR: Technical, financial and IT operations support services

NUMBER OF WORKPLACES: 3,400

OCCUPIED SPACE IN M²: 1,350

LOCATION IN THE CITY: NOWY RYNEK D, WIERZBIĘCIE STREET 1C

A year has passed since the opening of the Shared Service Center in Poznań. We are proud that from that place we can provide professional services and share the know-how that we have built up over 30 years of operational activities of Phoenix Contact Wielkopolska in Nowy Tomysl. Shared Service Center is located in a state-of-the-art office building in Nowy Rynek D in Poznan that fits perfectly with the vision of sustainable development in accordance with the strategy of the Phoenix Contact Group: All Electric Society. We wanted to create a comfortable space for our employees and use smart systems to optimize resource consumption.

SSC office in Poznan will support the company's global technical, financial and IT operations. Ultimately, more than 150 employees dedicated to 12 different service areas will be working here.



Marcin Poznański
CEO Phoenix Contact Wielkopolska



Participants in the Poznań edition of University of Success received access to programming and UX courses, support from HR advisors and mentors, and paid internships. Photo: Karolina Obajtek.

OPENNESS OF ORIGIN

The origin of employees in the modern services sector is another element of diversity in the capital of Wielkopolska. The prevalence of this phenomenon is evidenced by the fact that 93% of companies in the sector employ foreigners. In view of the upward trend in the inflow of foreigners, employees of Investor Relations Department took part in the work of the Policy Team for the Integration of Immigrants in Poznań. In addition, together with companies they prepared lectures for foreign students. The theme was the potential and opportunities of the city. Particular emphasis was placed on job opportunities for students with niche languages, e.g. Turkish, Hebrew.

Another important initiative was the 5th edition of University of Success, coordinated in Poznań by Poznań CityLab. The programme enables girls from underprivileged backgrounds who cannot afford university or programming courses to start a career in the IT sector entering

adulthood. Participants were given access to programming and UX courses, support from HR advisors and mentors, and paid internships.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY TOGETHER

A special place in the City's calendar of events is given to those that target the diversity of the other. The first of these is Poznań Tolerance Days. This is an annual event, held in Autumn, which in 2022 included two weeks of workshops, lectures, exhibitions, meetings and discussions. All this is intended to show the diversity of cultures, beliefs and worldviews of the Poznań community.

Another event jointly celebrated by the private and public sectors is October's Values Day. In 2022, on this occasion, employees of the modern services sector and representatives of the City took to the streets together to manifest shared beliefs and values. The day culminated with those gathered creating a symbolic „Together” sign. This year's Values

Day celebrations had a much broader tone. They featured panels on the ideals of values important to business. Academic circles of Poznań's most important city universities also joined in the celebration. It was there that panel discussions were held with the participation of city and company representatives.

What is the recipe for Poznań's success? Above all, it is the shared values that unite Poznań's businesses and the city authorities. These include openness, equality, diversity, shared responsibility, dialogue, friendliness and security. Businesses and city authorities realise that the ability to manage diversity, inclusive organisational culture and workplaces that respect individual differences are essential to maintaining a competitive edge on the international market and attracting foreign investors. Hence, there are so many activities, projects and events aimed at another human being. ♦

Author: Amelia Wojciechowska

More information

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BFSI sector in Łódź – success on solid ground

Nordea, Pekao, Commerzbank, PZU, Citi, Accenture, mBank, BFF... the list of local and global BFSI leaders that trust and grow together with Łódź goes on. And, quite frankly, it's an extensive one. What encourages world-renowned corporations operating in an extremely competitive market to locate their hubs in the city? What exactly are the business ingredients convincing these companies to reinvest in Łódź year after year and thus commit their long-term future to this vibrant metropolis located in the heart of Poland?

Generally speaking, short and simple answers do not exist; however, if we are to look for the central reason behind Łódź's continuous success with corporate clients, two words should do: human capital. Over the years, it's proven to be the best and the most effective driver for the business service sector, and its holistic development is among the key activities undertaken by institutions supporting business development in the city of Łódź.

The "Business Services for the Financial Sector" report by the Office of Economic Development and International Cooperation (Invest in Łódź) published in July is an excellent starting point for a closer scrutiny of the role played by human resources. According to city officials' estimates, Łódź has over 800,000 inhabitants and approximately 10% come from all around the world. Wave of refugees from war-torn Ukraine significantly contributed to an increase in this number over the last two years.

The increasingly international feel of Łódź is also reflected in its modern business services sector. Processes are delivered in several European languages – with English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese leading the way. More than 35,000 people are already working in the sector and around 10% of them come from abroad. Correlation with the number of foreigners within the general urban population clearly

demonstrates that expats in Łódź are gradually warming to the idea of working in the modern business services sector. This represents a clear signal for businesses that may consider recruitment campaigns on foreign markets, are based on the experience of several thousand people already working in their Łódź offices.

An appealing talent pool also translates to a constantly growing number of BSS investments in the city. The "FOCUS ON Łódź" report by Pro Progressio indicates

that there were 8 brand new investments in 2022 and 4 brand new investors settled in Łódź in the opening three quarters of 2023. This means that more than 110 SSC/GBS/CoE centers are now based in Łódź and employment has increased by 100% over the past 7 years. Extraordinary growth remains at a high level despite a very demanding period, both geopolitically and socially. Łódź consistently ranks among the most cost-effective BSS locations in Poland which is a crucial contributing factor.



An appealing talent pool also translates to a constantly growing number of BSS investments in the city. More than 110 SSC/GBS/CoE centers are now based in Łódź and employment has increased by 100% over the past 7 years.



There are nearly 6,000 reading economics students at the University of Lodz alone! More than 17,000 graduate every year, and this number includes over 4,000 business, finance, and law graduates, as well as close to 500 master degree holders in a whole host of language-related courses.

The numbers above prove that Łódź has gained the resilience typical of mature markets – and companies view this as an extremely important indicator. As a result, the city can both expect a certain level of new investments' inflow as well as reinvestments by companies already present in the Łódź market. Report drawn up by Invest in Łódź together with Michael Page in 2022 confirms that the city's investment climate is extremely favorable and conducive to such expectations. As many as 95% of respondents from companies with a BSS hub in the city said that choosing Łódź was the right move. Main reasons they pointed to included: convenient location, excellent talent pool with great knowledge of foreign languages, and a very robust academic base. That last element in particular – itself the result of an innovative education program and smart internship initiatives – is a clear sign that Łódź's success is based on sound and firm ground that allow room for optimism about the future.

Human capital – comprised of young and well-educated people – comes into play yet again here. Łódź has a lot to be proud of: there are 75,000 students at 19 city-based universities, with nearly 6,000 reading economics at the University of Lodz alone! More than 17,000 graduate every year, and this number includes

over 4,000 business, finance, and law graduates, as well as close to 500 master degree holders in a whole host of language-related courses. Universities are constantly working to make their offer more appealing and adapt it to market requirements. Co-creating courses with Łódź-based employers is one way of doing it. This particular synergy resulted in courses such as "Modelling and Data Science" or "Automation and Robot Controlling", currently delivered by the Lodz University of Technology.

” As many as 95% of respondents from companies with a BSS hub in the city said that choosing Łódź was the right move.

The same applies to internship programs and postgraduate courses, which are the result of many stakeholders coming together. The "Praktykuj w Łodzi" [Practice in Łódź] program is the crown jewel among them. Running for over a decade, it brings together hundreds of companies which have thus far offered nearly 3,000 internship positions to students and graduates of Łódź universities.

Postgraduate courses in fintech or AML are another result of this cross-sectoral cooperation. With a very hands-on, practical angle, these courses see market practitioners active in the Łódź business services sector share their knowledge in interactive workshops. These projects aim to strengthen the competences of current and future employees as well as boost the general appeal of working and doing business in Łódź for potential employees and employers.

Speaking of Łódź's appeal, we have to mention the excellent office infrastructure as well as projects aimed at improving the quality of life of city dwellers. Łódź has successfully implemented a number of developments revitalizing the city center. Investments such as the Orientarium or EC1 Łódź – City of Culture play a double role, as they confirm the city's commitment to improving the quality of life as well as add to what's on offer in terms of culture and entertainment. Regarding office infrastructure, Łódź boasts over 630,000 m² of office space with over 43,000 m² of brand-new space being delivered in 2022 alone. The office real estate market was dominated by new tenants – accounting for nearly 60% of all new lease contracts – which is a testament to the fact that new investors show unwavering interest in Łódź. A case in point is one of the leading new office buildings delivered in 2022 being fully commercialized in that same year.

The modern business services sector in Łódź, including hubs delivering BFSI-related processes, can be described as a system of communicating vessels. Its foundations are very stable and robust – the mix of available foreign languages and competences is exceptionally rich; city stakeholders are working tirelessly to finetune the academic offer to cater to the market needs; and the number of domestic and global investors is well balanced. The future of the BSS sector in Łódź is definitely bright indeed.♦

More information



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International cooperation that accelerates cities

Bielsko-Biała, as a city deeply committed to international cooperation, is actively forging relationships with other centers across Europe and around the world. The city shares its experiences and drives sustainable development, thus becoming a symbol of integration and openness to innovation.

Cities decide to cooperate with each other on various levels. From cultural, educational, scientific, environmental protection, and tourism cooperation to broadly understood socio-economic development. This cooperation can take various forms. From informal integration meetings, study visits, to organizations operating under specific principles. The effect of this cooperation is the exchange of experiences and good practices between the cities, which becomes an inspiration for the implementation of future plans and projects. Moreover, the experience of other partners also allows for the implementation of specific actions that have already been successfully adopted in smaller or larger urban centers, often several thousand kilometers away. It is also worth noting that established contacts broaden horizons and enable the acquisition of new skills useful in local government work.

” **Established contacts broaden horizons and enable the acquisition of new skills useful in local government work.**

Bielsko-Biała is definitely an example of a city that focuses in its development on international cooperation, especially European cooperation. One of the most important city documents, the Bielsko-Biała Development Strategy

until 2030, also draws attention to the essence of this type of cooperation. The directions of Bielsko-Biała's activities in the next ten years include

international activities aimed at attracting human resources to the city, including young talents, and activities aimed at developing cross-border cooperation.



Photo: Pics Studio Michał Kisiel.

PARTNER CITIES

Foreign contacts and international cooperation have accompanied the local government authorities of Bielsko-Biala from the beginning. This is certainly evidenced by the growing list of twin cities over the years, including the closest neighbours, as well as cities or very distant regions. Bielsko-Biala's current partner cities are: Acco (Israel), Baia Mare (Romania), Besançon (France), Berdyansk (Ukraine), Frydek-Mistek (Czech Republic), Grand Rapids (USA), Kragujevac (Serbia), Nyíregyháza (Hungary), Szolnok (Hungary), Třinec (Czech Republic), Ustka (Poland), Wolfsburg (Germany), Vienna-Donaustadt (Austria), Žilina (Slovakia). In this context, international activities are developing in almost all fields of activity and forms of cooperation. We are different in terms of nationality, geography, culture, religion, and language, but we are often united by common challenges and everyday problems related to the functioning of cities.

So far, cooperation with the partner cities of Bielsko-Biala has brought many fruitful experiences in the form of joint projects, acquired knowledge, integration events, and sports competitions. As recent events have shown, even in the face of difficult situations such as natural disasters or the outbreak of war, as partner cities, we can unite and help each other.

” **Cooperation with the partner cities has brought many fruitful experiences in the form of joint projects, acquired knowledge, integration events, and sports competitions.**

GREEN ROOFS

Bielsko-Biala also actively participates in many interesting international projects, strengthening cooperation with foreign partners. One such example is Bielsko-Biala's participation in the GRAD project, which was implemented in 2018–2020 by the Association of Municipalities Polish Network "Energie Cités", in cooperation with the German city of Hamburg. The aim of the GRAD project was to develop model strategies for the development of green roofs in eight Polish cities including Bielsko-Biala, using the experience of the city of Hamburg, which has extensive experience and implements its



Partners of the Project "U.R.IMPACT: Prioritizing Social Impact in Urban Regeneration" at the URBACT Summer University in Malmö 2023.

own strategy regarding the installation of green roofs in the city. The result of the fruitful cooperation of Bielsko-Biala in the implementation of the project was the adoption on December 21, 2021, by the City Council in Bielsko-Biala of the "Green Roofs Program for the City of

Program for Sustainable Urban Development. The aim of the program is to highlight the key role of cities in the face of increasingly complex social changes. URBACT strives to develop, together with cities, tools that combine economic, environmental, and social levels. And all this is based on good practices and the exchange of experiences with the participation of experts in the field of European urban policy.

The first project under the URBACT program implemented by the city of Bielsko-Biala in 2018–2021 was the project called "Welcoming International Talent" ("WIT"). The project was initiated by the Dutch city of Groningen (the project leader) as a cooperation network of European cities interested in the internationalization of cities and acquiring highly qualified employees for the local economy and universities. Apart from Bielsko-Biala, the project partners included cities such as: Magdeburg (Germany), Zlin (Czech Republic), Parma (Italy), Debrecen (Hungary), and Leuven (Belgium). All cities had in common that there were universities and many companies that employed employees from other countries, including those from outside Europe.

URBACT

Another excellent example of Bielsko-Biala's integration on a European scale is the city's participation in projects implemented under the URBACT program, i.e., the European Territorial Cooperation

Cities-partners in the project, struggled with similar problems in terms of the language barrier, the housing market, the availability of services for foreigners, and the integration of foreigners with the local community. By exchanging good practices, project partners looked for the best solutions that would help them become a more attractive destination for the migration of talented people from all over the world, whose presence would allow the development of modern branches of the local economy.

It is worth mentioning the most important thing – as a result of Bielsko-Biala's participation in the "WIT" project and with financial support from the commune, The Center For The Integration Of Foreigners called "myBB" was established in the city. The aim of the center is to provide information and support to foreigners, organize courses, training, and various projects aimed at integration with the local community. Foreigners benefit from free help and advice from "myBB", which is a unique opportunity to increase self-confidence, improve motivation to work, and act for the benefit of the city and its residents. It should also be emphasized that the functioning of the "myBB" center in Bielsko-Biala provided invaluable assistance during the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, as a result of which the city had to quickly cope with the influx of refugees from war zones.

” **"myBB" center in Bielsko-Biala provided invaluable assistance during the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.**

CITY REVITALIZATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNITY FUNCTIONING

The success of the "WIT" project encouraged the authorities of Bielsko-Biala to join another project under the European URBACT program. Project U.R. Impact: Prioritizing Social Impact in Urban Regeneration launched this year.

” **The success of the "WIT" project encouraged the authorities of Bielsko-Biala to join another project under the European URBACT program.**

It is a project aimed at promoting sustainable urban development by exchanging experiences and disseminating knowledge among European cities. The city of Bielsko-Biala is one of the partners in the project, the leader of which is the Italian city of Cinisello Balsamo. The other partners are such European cities as: Mertola (Portugal), Murcia (Spain), Hannut (Belgium), Longford (Ireland), Bovec (Slovenia), Broumov (Czech Republic), Kamza (Albania), and Targu Frumos (Romania).

In addition to the international dimension, each partner will also implement the project in the local dimension by establishing a Local URBACT Group engaging local stakeholders. As part of the project, each partner will create an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) focusing on issues related to urban revitalization, including the method of measuring its impact. The action plan will also include aspects related to ecological

transformation, gender equality, and social inclusion for those who are at risk of exclusion or marginalization. The joint work of the project partners will also include the creation of the Good Practice Guide.

Bielsko-Biala started implementing this project with great interest because the topic of broadly understood revitalization is a very important aspect in the development of Bielsko-Biala. The revitalization activities planned by the city are intended to contribute to equalizing the standard of living of the inhabitants of this area and spatial development comparable to the inhabitants of the rest of the city. In addition, revitalization activities are aimed at building local identity and creating favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship or the incubation of new enterprises.

” **The topic of broadly understood revitalization is a very important aspect in the development of Bielsko-Biala.**

To sum up, it is certainly impossible to list all the activities of Bielsko-Biala in the international arena. Each international initiative or participation in a larger project brings added value. First of all, it should be emphasized that the city can be proud of the activities undertaken in this area, which, on the one hand, have a positive impact on the development of the entire city and, on the other hand, create a brand that is increasingly recognizable beyond its borders.♦

More information



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Betting on Bydgoszcz

Bydgoszcz is the strongest business centre in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship and it is still developing dynamically. Diversified economy provides stable pillars for economic growth, and industry reports and rankings confirm the high position of the City among the most attractive locations for doing business in Poland. An attractive offer of investment areas, constantly expanded and modernized infrastructure, friendly climate for living and running a business, as well as access to qualified staff make Bydgoszcz a good market with great potential for further growth.

IN BYDGOSZCZ, THE POLICY OF SUPPORTING INVESTMENTS AND ENTREPRENEURS IS CONSISTENTLY IMPLEMENTED



Robert Wichłacz, Member of the Management Board of Atos Poland Global Services Ltd.:

The activities of the local government, the availability of office space, as well as the support of investment processes from the City also contribute to the development of the Atos Group, which has been operating on the Polish market since 2000. Currently, over 4,000 employees work in the Bydgoszcz office, including almost 400 foreigners from all over the world. Our mission is a real change in business achieved through innovation, the highest quality and supporting the digital transformation of our customers. IoT projects, a wide range of automation initiatives, the development of decarbonization, Digital Private Cloud, as well as OpenStack and ServiceNow are

just some of the technological areas that enrich the Atos Group's digital portfolio in Bydgoszcz, and in which our organization is a global leader and trendsetter.

Our clients appreciate the competence and potential of the Polish site. The dynamic development of the company is also based on the increasingly desirable qualifications of residents of the entire region. Cooperation with local educational institutions contributed to the creation of Atos partnership classes at the Electronic Technical School in Bydgoszcz, and also the academic community – including the Bydgoszcz University of Technology, Kazimierz Wielki University and the Higher School of Economics.

BYDGOSZCZ IS DEVELOPING

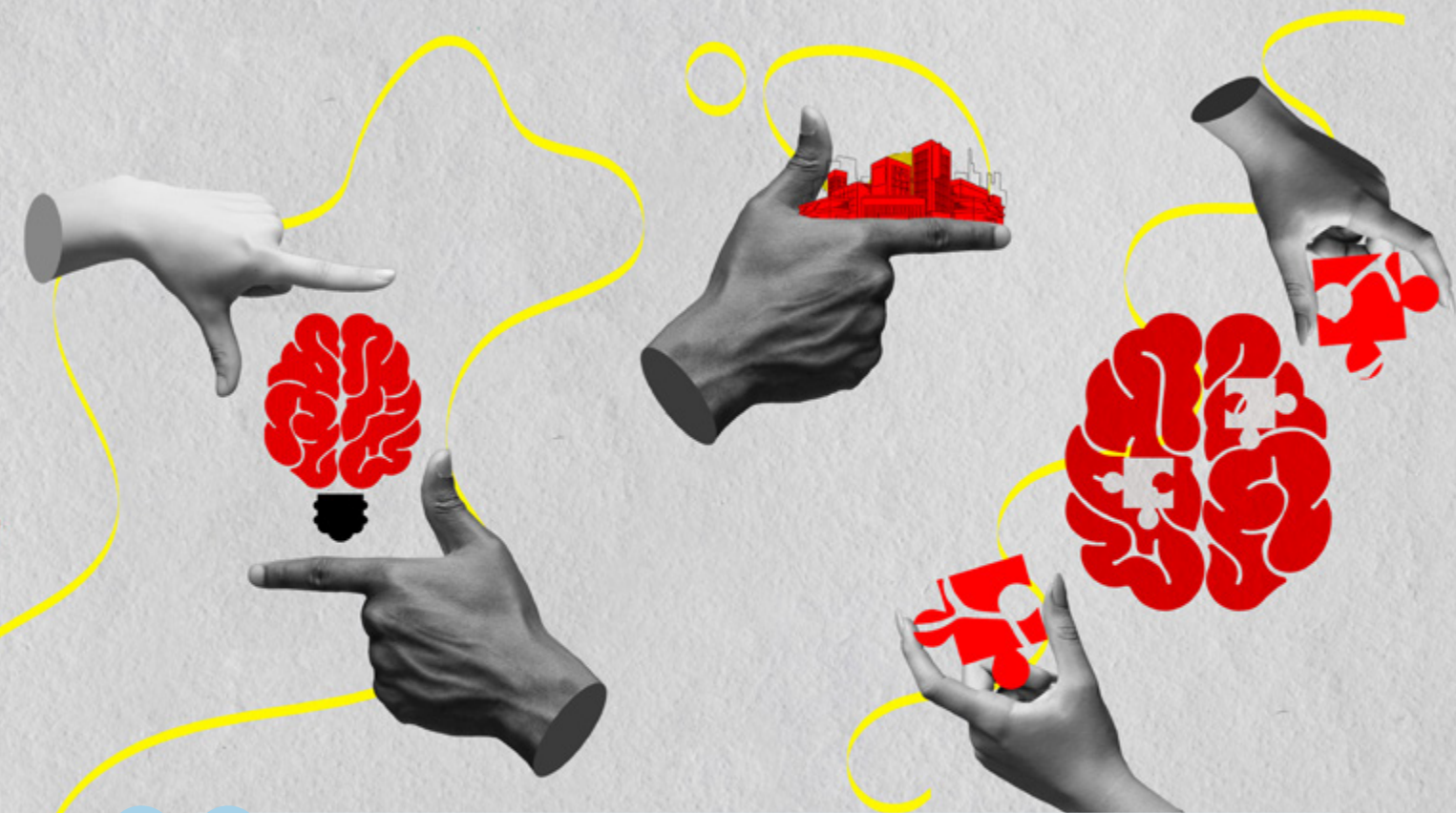


Rafał Radwański, Plant Manager TE Connectivity:

Bydgoszcz is a city that is developing dynamically, creating better conditions for doing business. This is not only influenced by the location and transport possibilities, but also by the high level of education at universities that provide qualifies specialists.

Tight cooperation of local entrepreneurs brings very good results, with the city – thanks to the activities of the Bydgoszcz Regional Development Agency, and with each other, thanks to Bydgoszcz Industrial Cluster. The best proof of how

much the city has to offer is the development of companies, that have been operating on the market for many years. TE Connectivity, as a world leader in industrial technologies, has focused on the development of Bydgoszcz plant, making it a strategic production location in Europe. Currently we have 2 factories in Bydgoszcz that offer components and solutions for leaders in many industries around the world. The visible development of not only our company, but also of the entire region is also appreciated by our clients and contractors, who confirm that this is the right city to invest and conduct business in.



WE GET FANTASTIC PEOPLE EAGER TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS

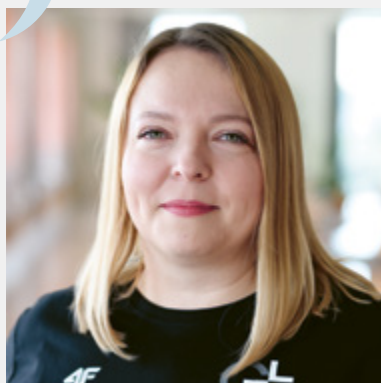


Marcin Stańczyk, Managing Director at Wunderman Thompson Technology:

Bydgoszcz is a dynamically developing agglomeration with a solid technical background. As a company from the new technologies industry, we particularly appreciate access to good education, committed students and a thriving environment of IT enthusiasts who drive initiatives such as ŁuczniczQA and JUG or the BITconf

conference. The City can be proud of the access to qualified experts and support provided to investors. Bydgoszcz is – next to Poznań and Katowice – one of our stationary offices, always important despite the era of remote work. Our specialists help to create advanced web applications for global brands such as Ford, Coca-Cola or Shell. They are also involved in nurturing partnerships with the social and technological community.

A MULTITUDE OF POSSIBILITIES IN THE COMFORT OF A LOCALITY – BYDGOSZCZ IS HOME TO INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS AND EXCEPTIONAL ENGINEERS



Beata Napieraj, Senior Manager, Engineering z GlobalLogic:

Operating in the field of digital engineering, GlobalLogic can implement its

chosen development strategy and meet the needs of customers in Bydgoszcz. This also opens up numerous career opportunities for local specialists.

Our Bydgoszcz team creates a unique space where creative ideas and various passions blend together, resulting in innovative IT solutions for companies in the automotive, medical, and telecommunications sectors. Together we write software that impact safety and changes the experience of drivers, doctors, patients, and users of telecommunications solutions. What sets us apart is our family-like atmosphere, which fuels the desire for personal growth and motivates us to take

action. That is why both engineers with significant experience who want to have a real impact on the world around them, as well as graduates of technical universities from the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, find their place in our company.

For many engineers, the development of Bydgoszcz and the presence of leading IT companies in the City is a chance to practically develop their skills without the need for relocation. They can cooperate with experts from around the world on projects for the largest representatives of different industries.

IN BYDGOSZCZ, WE FOUND DIGITAL MARKETING EXPERTS



Agnieszka Tobys, Sales Director of the Shoper Group:

We opened a new office due to the growing demand for online marketing services, and we chose Bydgoszcz, due to the fact that there are many experts here who specialize in this branch. Looking at the results of more than 30,000 merchants using the Shoper e-commerce

platform, we have insights about consumer behavior and what forms of digital advertising perform best nowadays when promoting businesses on the Internet.

We want to support entrepreneurs, including those stationed in Bydgoszcz, in their digital transformation and, above all, help them achieve sales and business success.

BYDGOSZCZ WITH GROWING DEMAND FOR MODERN INDUSTRIAL SPACE



Dorota Jagodzińska-Sasson, Managing Director Panattoni:

In 2021 and 2022, Panattoni experienced unprecedented demand for warehouse space in Bydgoszcz and it continues to surge.

To date, we've delivered over 600,000 m² of industrial space in Bydgoszcz, including the 110,000 m² Panattoni Park Bydgoszcz IV, which quickly reached full occupancy upon completion. Through collaboration with local authorities and the rapid growth of the Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, we've created an ideal environment for modern enterprises.

Bydgoszcz's rich industrial heritage positions it favorably to attract international investments during Europe's reindustrialization era. The city's strategic location, nestled between the thriving markets of Greater Poland and the Tricity, coupled with excellent road connectivity (S10 and S5 expressways, A1 and A2 motorways),

facilitates efficient access to seaports and Germany, Europe's largest economy.

During the prestigious MIPIM real estate fair in the first quarter of this year, Bydgoszcz once again earned recognition in the "European Cities and Regions of the Future 2022/2023" ranking, underscoring global interest in the city's development.

The coming years hold exciting prospects for Bydgoszcz, and Panattoni is committed to actively contributing to the creation of modern, eco-friendly, strategically located spaces suitable for various purposes, including production, logistics, e-commerce, and warehousing.

GREAT PLACE TO DO BUSINESS



Waldemar Jasiński, VP, GTM Operations Europe and Asia, Livingston International:

The city offers not only a stable business environment with skilled resources, but also creates a good climate for new investments and the development of existing businesses. Competitive costs of employment,

combined with low attrition rates make it attractive compared to other, bigger BPO cities in Poland. Considering that, we have built main European Livingston division around talented individuals and very well-educated and experienced management staff in this location. Bydgoszcz is a really great place to do business.♦

More information



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Invest in Bydgoszcz



1st place in rankings
of investor-friendly Polish cities



Strong economy
industry, logistics, IT



150 ha
of investment areas



1 million of inhabitants
within 50 km radius



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close to the city center

investin.bydgoszcz.eu



Pomerania and the new era of Artificial Intelligence

— By | **Radosław Młynarczyk** —

The Polish IT sector is developing dynamically when it comes to modern technologies. Many startups and companies are focusing on AI and the related ideas, offering solutions for various industries, from finance to medicine. One of the main centres attracting foreign business includes Tricity.

Already a few years ago, analysts from McKinsey&Company, a global strategic company, predicted that artificial intelligence (AI) and automation would reduce the number of jobs by approx. 30% by 2030. In turn, experts from the World Economic Forum estimated that as a result of automation, 85 million jobs would disappear by 2025, but it would also create 97 million new jobs in that same period. There is one thing that everyone agree on: we are on the threshold of a great transformation that requires attentiveness, competence development and constant willingness to acquire new knowledge, and most new professions are not yet known.

Pomeranian universities are aware of these challenges; therefore, they have already revised syllabuses, offer new degree programs, and cooperate with global companies as well as with research centres. Mechatronics, automation and robotics: these fields of science are entering a new path of development. The fourth industrial revolution has already begun, and dynamic changes are taking place not only in technology itself, but also in the way people work and roles they play. The construction and development of machine systems is undergoing transformation, which requires greater automation of such systems. At the same time, research and development activities are growing in importance.

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Universities from Gdańsk and Gdynia have been focusing on research in the field of computer science and technology for

years. Let's take the STOS Competence Centre as an example: thanks to the Gdańsk University of Technology, it is to become one of the most modern IT centres in Europe. The Centre is located on the university campus at Traugutta 75 St. It consists of two buildings with laboratories for scientists and engineers, a conference room and technical rooms. State-of-the-art server rooms and supercomputer named "Kraken" lie at the heart of the facility. By the end of the year, Kraken is expected to become one of the most

powerful supercomputers in this part of the continent. Its enormous computing powers will provide invaluable support for scientists in fields such as medicine, pharmacy, nuclear energy, environmental protection and artificial intelligence.

The introduction of specialist programs dedicated to AI, such as deep learning, natural language processing or robotics, attracts young talents from all over the country and abroad to Pomerania. The openness of Pomeranian universities to cooperation with business also

” **The introduction of specialist programs dedicated to AI, such as deep learning, natural language processing or robotics, attracts young talents from all over the country and abroad to Pomerania.**



Illustration generated by AI.

contributes to their growth. Thanks to the program known as “Excellence Initiative – Research University”, four research centres were established at the Gdańsk University of Technology, namely: Bio-TechMed Centre, EkoTech Centre, Digital Technologies Centre and the Centre for Future Materials. Moreover, in 2018, the AI Bay club was established at the University of Technology. The University of Gdańsk is also dynamically developing in the field of AI by introducing various courses, including one known as “Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Humanities: from Text Simplification to Automatic Humour Analysis”, which was run last year.

THE POMERANIAN TECHNOLOGICAL VALLEY

In recent years, Pomerania has become one of the key centres for AI development in Poland. The Province has seen a lot of innovation in the field of artificial intelligence, including a speech synthesizer. This is an extraordinary achievement of Polish engineers from the Gdynia-based startup called Ivona Software. Their innovative speech synthesizer became so popular that it caught the attention of Amazon. The global giant bought the company in 2013 and created Alexa, which was developed out of its predecessor originally invented in Poland. Currently, Alexa is the world’s leading device in its category. Pomerania is also home to such companies as SentiOne, VoiceLab, Quantum CX, Nlightnin Production, BrainScan, EduSense, Neoteric and DLabs.

SentiOne is another example of a global brand born in Pomerania. It was founded over ten years ago in a garage by four programmers as a startup that initially developed an algorithm, which selectively downloaded data from the Internet. The idea of searching marketing-useful insight amidst the ocean of information has evolved into a fully automated customer service environment. SentiOne Listen monitors discussions, articles and all on-line mentions of a given brand, and provides data that help create the brand’s image. SentiOne Automate, on the other hand, is an AI-based tool that converts chatbots and voicebots and optimizes contact with the target customer.



Illustration generated by AI.

Such big companies as T-Mobile or LG use services provided by SentiOne.

THE FUTURE BELONGS TO STARTUPS

Startups that are capable of multiplying AI applications are the biggest beneficiaries of rapidly developing artificial intelligence. As part of ventures focused on attracting innovative projects, Invest in Pomerania has established cooperation with over forty startups.

” **In recent years, Pomerania has become one of the key centres for AI development in Poland. The Province has seen a lot of innovation in the field of artificial intelligence, including a speech synthesizer.**

Many of them use artificial intelligence-based algorithms on a daily basis. An American company Tokenalysis collects and analyses data on the cryptocurrency market. Benchmark Games, a Hungarian startup, uses short on-line game-based assessments to monitor cognitive abilities across multiple candidates in recruitment processes. Turkish-American startup named Findaso uses AI to connect service providers and service recipients of the technological world in a B2B model. The above entities are only several examples of companies that have found Pomerania to be an attractive region to develop their business models. As artificial intelligence continues to grow and evolve, and there is no indication that it will slow down in any way, it

can be expected that the cities of Gdańsk, Gdynia, and Sopot will become home to even more companies providing solutions for technologies of the future.

– In order to earn a permanently high position among the popular centres for the development and implementation of information technology, we must develop in parallel on all fronts. For many years, Tricity’s universities have been educating excellent professionals, which has attracted

the most popular global IT brands to us for over a decade. Their dynamic growth and the opportunities associated with it are also attracting hundreds of professionals to Pomerania from outside the region. In order to make the IT environment complete and progressive, Invest in Pomerania supports indigenous companies in their development and fight for international contracts and expands the Tricity’s offer for international startups to encourage them to relocate here (e.g. by advertising the region at major international technology conferences), which will significantly increase the innovative potential of our location – comments Marcin Grzegory, Deputy Director, Invest in Pomerania. ♦

Author: Radosław Młynarczyk, PR & Marketing Project Manager, Invest in Pomerania

More information



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Częstochowa: A bee in the city

— By | Anna Tymoshenko —

A bee – a small creature that the world has paid attention to because it is more important than it might seem. But is it every bee, everywhere, or is it just a seemingly cheap CSR play by many companies? In Częstochowa, we have the answer to this and we help teach children how to beautify and respect the world that will remain after us.

AN IMPORTANT and necessary PROJECT was created in Częstochowa a few years ago on the initiative of the city as part of the *Better Job Now* [PL. Teraz Lepsza Praca] program and W.S. Reymont Fashion Industry and Advertising School in Częstochowa [PL. ZS Przemysłu Mody i Reklamy im. W.S. Reymonta]. The students created the entire visual identification of the project, then we went to our entrepreneurs, who approached the topic with great enthusiasm, and... the pandemic came. It significantly limited the activities of schools, offices and entrepreneurs; there were more important problems than planting flowers along roads and building hotels for bees.

EDUCATION THROUGH ENTERTAINMENT

However, the organizers did not give up and returned in 2021 with a slightly modified idea. The project was held under the Honorary Patronage of Mayor Krzysztof Matyjaszyk, and the Faculty of Management of the Częstochowa University of Technology and the Secondary Culinary School [PL. Zespół Szkół Gastronomicznych] joined the group of institutions responsible for promoting respect for pollinators with a whole range of honey-based dishes and baked goods. The project invented by officials and teachers is now created by students of Częstochowa technical schools, students, primary school children and preschoolers. At the beginning, the aim of the project

was to help bees in urban space, today it is primarily about intergenerational integration and education through joint play. Thanks to these activities, more pollinator-friendly places are being created in the city, which, not by accident, also become friendly places for students, students and residents.

Of course, this is not the only such project in the city, because one of the three programs determining the directions of Częstochowa's development is *Friendly Częstochowa* [PL. Przyjazna Częstochowa], which includes many initiatives aimed at ecological education and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, as well as the creation of infrastructure enabling all these activities.





AID FOR THE POLLINATORS

POLLINATION is a more important process than we think and it should be not only impressive, but above all effective. Effective pollination determines the ability to reproduce flowering plants, which are the basis of most ecosystems on our planet. 90% of all plants use animals for pollination, so the lack of pollinators means the slow extinction of plants, including crops. We must be aware that 1/3 of the food we eat is produced by pollinators.

HONEY IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT thing in our urban project. The most important thing is the ability to recognize insects because, apart from the bred honey bee, there are hundreds of wild species flying around the world. Bees also help pollinate plants with other insects, such as flies, bumblebees, beetles and butterflies. All pollinators that children encounter in the gardens they create at schools and kindergartens operate locally, which is what makes them different from honey bees, which is why activities should be carefully differentiated towards specific species. Since in the children's project we mainly deal with wild species, we do a lot to improve

” **At the beginning, the aim of the project was to help bees in urban space, today it is primarily about intergenerational integration and education through joint play.**

the places where they live, because wild bee species are the best pollinators.

Children have a special affection for mason bees, for whom they prepare "hotel" places. It turns out that the mason bee can carry several times more pollen on its body than the honey bee, which is much more beneficial from a global point of view.

PLANET FRIENDLY CITY

WHAT HAS MAN DESTROYED? Unfortunately, we must be aware that quite a lot of our activities, or even the vast majority, endanger pollinators. Man is changing the world around him extremely intensively, degrading or irreversibly destroying animal habitats, and therefore also pollinators. Widespread urbanization,

often unsustainable expansion of agricultural land, use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides, and climate change are only part of what we have given to our planet.

WE SHOULD HELP pollinators because, as in every company also in every ecosystem, diversity is the basis of success. To support the proper functioning of pollinators, we must provide them with food, a friendly environment and breeding places. So we plant flowers of various species, often considered wild. We establish flower meadows throughout the city, and for several years we have also been educating the youngest residents of the city and surrounding areas about the seriousness of this topic, but not only that. Because it is best to learn through play, we show children how to eat healthily and how to responsibly use the resources of our planet – just like the animals around us do.♦

Author: Anna Tymoshenko, Head of Investor Service Center, City Hall of Częstochowa

More information

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Kielce: How to effectively communicate with entrepreneurs?

In the age of ubiquitous information available on the various channels it seems to be difficult to communicate effectively. It is not easy to catch the most essential news in the stream of others, to distinguish reliable sources from unreliable ones, to effectively verify the news provided. So this gets a little challenging for those, who want to communicate with their customers. How to do this effectively?

WHY LINKEDIN?

Maintaining a website is obviously necessary today, yet limiting yourself to a mere business card on the Internet is definitely not enough. Today you should also be present on Instagram, TikTok, X (Twitter), Facebook, depending on the audience you want to reach.

However, from the point of view of local government communication with the business world, the most interesting

medium is LinkedIn. This platform enables to quickly reach a variety of professionally connected people. It makes it easier to find specialists in specific industries, companies and institutions connected to the broadly understood economic world. Thanks to a consistently built network of professional contacts, you can easily arrange a business meeting, get an employee or find a contractor.

INVEST IN KIELCE: NEW OPENING

– The world of social media is constantly changing and developing... We have so far used Facebook to contact entrepreneurs and people interested in the economy and entrepreneurship – says Karolina Kamińska-Maślarz, head of the Investor Service Center of the Kielce City Hall. – For many years, this platform worked well, but we struggle with more and more limitations. It is also





increasingly clear that the profile of the average user is changing, so we decided to broaden the circle of existing supporters. LinkedIn works much better in this area, allowing us to build a network of valuable contacts from the world of business and science.

The City of Kielce debuted with its new channel *Invest in Kielce* quite recently. However, this was preceded by content planning and the creating a coherent graphic concept. Gradually built network makes it is easier to reach potential investors with information as well as local entrepreneurs.

KIELCE ON LINKEDIN

On the channel one can find information about conferences, projects implemented and those planned in Kielce as well as solutions designed for entrepreneurs. Moreover, one can get to know local companies. For those looking for land or an office Investor Service Center of the Kielce City Hall presents offers available in the Investment Property Database covering Kielce and the surrounding municipalities. It presents individual companies operating in the city and their investments and achievements, such as the recent launch of a new 2,600 sq. m. FedEx distribution headquarters. Here you will find invitations to economic, sports and cultural events, such as the annual Competition for Designers

and Fashion Enthusiasts and the prestigious competition of international European Rover Challenge.

JOIN KIELCE

Invest in Kielce's profile on LinkedIn has been well received, yet cooperation with observers brings a lot of satisfaction. It gives a sense of striving for a common goal, that is, seeking reliable and verified information. What is the most importantly, it allows to effectively reach an audience that is deeply interested in business and economic issues. The circle of contributors to this area is growing day by day, with interesting discussions and up-to-date content.

Join Kielce!♦



More information



Kielce



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Jacek Lewandowski, Coventry University branch in Wrocław.

Innovative Wrocław: synergy of business, science and local government in creating the ecosystem

The role of cooperation between the three sectors: business, science and local government is key to the comprehensive development of a modern city. We talk about activities in Wrocław, cooperation with the city and the Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency, as well as experiences, activities and further development plans with Jacek Lewandowski, director of the Coventry University branch in Wrocław, and Aleksandra Hamryszak, managing director of Helbling Technik Polska Sp. z o.o.

FOCUS ON Business: Coventry University has been educating young people in Wrocław for 3 years now. How has your business developed in the capital of Lower Silesia during this time?

Jacek Lewandowski, Coventry University: The Coventry University Wrocław branch, opened in September 2020, has admitted its first students to study at the undergraduate level in 4 majors: Aviation Management BSc, Business Management & Leadership BA, Computing Science BSc and Cyber Security BSc. This year, the first group of graduates left the university's walls receiving their diplomas at a ceremony at the Wrocław City Hall. The ceremony also included the presentation of the first honorary doctorate outside the UK to former Wrocław Mayor Dr. Rafał Dutkiewicz, in recognition of his significant contribution to the city's development.

During the 3 years of operation in the capital of Lower Silesia, we have not only expanded our teaching offer from four to eight faculties, but also established the Coventry University Research Institute Europe (CURIE), which is a partner in European and national research and development projects such as WRO4digitAl EDIH.

We have also strongly developed our cooperation with the world of business and science in Poland by signing a number of partnership agreements with such companies and institutions as Collins Aerospace, BioInMed, the Future Industry Platform Foundation and the Lukasiewicz

Research Network, among others. Together with the Foundation for the Development of the Education System, we organized the national qualifiers for the Euroskills 2023 competition in the IT for Business category, and then our experts organized this competition at the main European competition in Gdansk.

” **Coventry University has strongly developed cooperation with the world of business and science in Poland by signing a number of partnership agreements with such companies and institutions as Collins Aerospace, BioInMed, the Future Industry Platform Foundation and the Lukasiewicz Research Network, among others.**

As a British public university with a branch in Poland, we are also a member of the academic community, which is why, among other things, we co-organize a yearly student carnival – Juwenalia. We also belong to the educational community, which we actively support by cooperating with educational clusters at the Legnica and Walbrzych economic zones.

Helbling Technik has extensive experience in technological innovation, engineering and business consulting. What is your business based on in Wrocław? What, in the case of your company, influenced the decision to run the project precisely in the capital of Lower Silesia?

Aleksandra Hamryszak, Helbling Technik Polska: In our Wrocław branch, we focus primarily on developing the technological area with an emphasis on embedded systems programming and applications. We have the same focus, technology stack, processes and software development methodologies as our

colleagues in Switzerland, the US or Germany. In this consistency lies our strength and competitive advantage.

The capital of Lower Silesia, on the one hand, is already a very technologically mature region, the Polish Silicon Valley, which over the years of development has educated thousands of experts, primarily in the IT sector. This makes our local labor market very attractive from the perspective of new investors. In addition to technical competence, Wrocław specialists are distinguished by their knowledge of foreign languages, but above all they have experience in international projects and effective work in distributed teams.

On the other hand, the level of Wrocław universities and the popularity of technical faculties among local students completes the whole, as it provides constant and stable access to experts. Our motto is "Employees form markets", and it is this huge employee potential that was the main argument for us to do business in Wrocław.

activities were carried out even before the final decision was made as to our location in Wrocław. ARAW representatives presented to our company's delegates the local Wrocław market, its potential, opportunities for development, networking, but also, above all, opportunities for cooperation and offered support. On the other hand, once Wrocław was chosen,

A.H.: The current cooperation takes place on larger projects organized by ARAW, such as the past Made in Wrocław. Additionally, I am personally involved in an initiative connecting Wrocław women active in STEM.

Given the very positive experience, I think there will be more and more of these joint projects. We would definitely like to address the topic of sustainability in technology companies, and I can't imagine doing it with anyone other than ARAW.

99 The level of Wrocław universities and the popularity of technical faculties among local students provides constant and stable access to experts. Our motto is "Employees form markets", and it is this huge employee potential that was the main argument for us to do business in Wrocław.

What is your experience in terms of cooperation with the city and the Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency?

J.L.: ARAW as well as representatives of the city played a key role in the decision to locate the campus in Wrocław. The tremendous support and advice at the early stage of the project enabled us to settle quickly and "painlessly" in the capital of Lower Silesia.

We are part of the *Study in Wrocław* project where together we promote this place as a great academic city. Over the course of three years, we have jointly implemented and continue to implement a number of events and events such as Made in Wrocław, Evolutions: Meetup and Showcase and Feminitywa Festival. We also co-authored publications on the IT market in Wrocław, including a report on the Game Dev market, the presentation of which took place at our university. We are extremely grateful for all the support we receive from ARAW, as it is crucial to the operation of our campus.

A.H.: ARAW has actually been with us from the very beginning. The first joint

we could count on constant assistance and very high proactivity on the part of ARAW, including invitations to networking events, direct "matchmaking", support in marketing and recruitment activities. We really were and still are impressed by how resilient this entity is, with what openness, creativity and speed it implements ideas and projects.

Are you currently engaged in any joint activities?

J.L.: Currently, we are jointly preparing the Feminitywa Festival organized by the city library with the city. One of the events of this project will be held in the library of our campus. It will be open to all residents of Wrocław.

We have also prepared this year's Made in Wrocław. We are also supporting ARAW substantively with educational offers aimed at foreign investors such as Intel, Ryanair and Natwest, who are looking for talent among the region's communities. Our cooperation is long-term and based on mutual understanding and support. I am convinced that there are still a number of exciting new projects ahead of us.

What are the further plans for your activities in Wrocław?

J.L.: In the coming years we want to further develop and intensify our activities in every aspect of the university mentioned above. We plan to significantly expand our educational offerings including master's degrees, doctorates, implementation doctorates, as well as our offer of postgraduate studies and short forms of education (upskilling/reskilling), which are of particular interest to business. We also want to pursue more research and development projects in areas such as Clean Growth, Digital Transformation, Future Mobility, Cyber Security, and Knowledge Exchange and Innovation. We also plan to engage more with the startup community and support their creation and acceleration among our students by building an international ecosystem with our branches around the world.

A.H.: This is a full focus on building permanent, stable teams. In the future, we will gradually expand our competencies and expand our existing infrastructure to take on increasingly complex and innovative challenges.

Thank you for the interview and we keep our fingers crossed for further success.♦

More information



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Aleksandra Hamryszak, Helbling Technik Polska.

Katowice – a city with tremendous potential

In an interview with Marcin Krupa, the Mayor of Katowice and an avid reader of FOCUS ON Business, we are wrapping up our series of interviews with investors published in 2023 on our pages. Through those conversations, we have gained insight into how entrepreneurs in Katowice perceive the city. What are the most valuable assets of Katowice from the perspective of its leader, and in which areas will the city flourish most prominently?

FOCUS ON Business: How does the Mayor perceive the city?

Marcin Krupa, Mayor of Katowice: Katowice is a combination of various areas that create one unique organism. Several elements make our city special. We take our commitment to sustainable development goals seriously, and we care about air quality and nature. The residents of Katowice know this, but the rest of Poland may not realize it, and it is worth emphasizing: we are one of the greenest cities in Poland with nearly half of the area made up of parks, forests and green spaces.

We invest in the future, that is why we are a dynamically developing center of new technologies and modern business services employing, in Katowice City alone, over 26,000 people. We also host large international events, such as the UN Climate Summit or the World Urban Forum (WUF11), as well as regular business, cultural and sports events. On top of this, let's not forget that Katowice is the heart of the Metropolis: a huge urban organism that regulates the lives of over 2 million people.

Promoting the city during large events is an obvious benefit, but are there any others? What do residents and local investors gain from large events held in Katowice?

Many people who come to Katowice for business come back here with their families to see a concert of the Polish

National Radio Symphony Orchestra (NOSPR) in one of the best concert halls in the world, conducted by the world's most eminent contemporary female conductor, Marin Alsop. It is an experience worth remembering. Otherwise, you can also go to one of the music festivals known throughout Europe. I would like to emphasize that a conference participant who uses accommodation "leaves" over PLN 837 in Katowice, while those who do not stay overnight leave PLN 172. In 2022, it made up a total of over PLN 150 million!

And what about the future? What are Katowice's plans for itself?

Katowice was the first city in Central and Eastern Europe named the European City of Science 2024 – that's why we focus on science so much. At the same

time, we are applying for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2029. In addition, we continue the construction of the city stadium and sports hall, and next summer we will open the Five Ponds Valley (a bathing beach and recreation area).

We are working on New Technology District – Katowice Gaming and Technology HUB, which is another huge undertaking that is now moving from the stage of concept and design to reality. It will be located on the site of a former coalmine, which means that we will symbolically bring back to life an area that is inactive but historically and emotionally important for the local community. We are securing the financing for this huge investment with a total value of approximately PLN 1 billion. I am convinced that it will take Katowice to the next level.

FACTS ABOUT KATOWICE:

2nd place in the Business Insider ranking in Best City to Live in Poland (2023)

4th place in the Business Insider ranking in the Best City to Live for Students category (2023)

Silver for sustainable development in the cities with over 400,000 daytime population category in The International Awards for Liveable Communities LivCom Awards 2023

6th place in "Top 10 Large European Cities of the Future 2023 – fDi Strategy" ranking: the area awarded is the City's strategy for attracting foreign direct investments (2023)

1st place in the ranking of Business-Friendly Cities by "Forbes" in the cities and communes of 150,000 – 299,000 inhabitants category (2022)





Photo: R. Kazimierczak.

” Our role on the international arena is expanding, but we want Katowice to permanently become a notable player. We are prepared for this and so are our residents.

” **Katowice was the first city in Central and Eastern Europe to receive the title of the European City of Science 2024 – that's why we focus on science so much. At the same time, we are applying for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2029.**

Is Katowice an ambitious city?

Very ambitious. Our role on the international arena is expanding, but we want to become a notable player. We are prepared for this and so are our residents. Katowice is one of the most important academic centers in the country, providing a wide and diverse educational offer for children, teenagers and adults. Every year, our 18 universities introduce over 22,000 well-educated people to the labor market: we have the human capital to meet any challenge. For years, we have been investing in the development of our residents. Students can take part in cyclic educational activities, for instance the P-TECH Program intended

for high school students interested in IT. For college students we have the prestigious Corporate Readiness Certificate (CRC) Program, for secondary school pupils there is a "Katowice, the business and my future" project, and together with our partners, we have been implementing a project called "Katowice: The City of Professionals", which encourages young people to take up learning in vocational and technical schools.

Is Katowice also a SMART CITY?

Absolutely. Because, what is a smart city? In short, it is a city that uses technology to improve the services and well-being of its residents, focuses on sustainable



We invite you to read the *FOCUS ON Katowice 2023* report prepared by Pro Progressio:



FOCUS ON
Katowice



development and economic development, by making the urban space more friendly for people, entrepreneurs and tourists. For years, we have been implementing the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, and Katowice's long-term strategy is shaped in this spirit. It's the effect of our deep belief that a modern city is sustainable for everyone without exception. Our ambition is to create a place that learns about its inhabitants and their needs.

And what does this mean in practice?

It's about the improving quality of life, e.g. the fact that the availability of apartments in Katowice is increasing and when comparing the average salaries of residents to the purchase costs, Katowice is still more affordable when it comes to purchasing real estate than other Polish cities. What else? Safety – we

have the Katowice Intelligent Monitoring and Analysis System, which uses artificial intelligence to help detect events in the city and assist road inspection. We are introducing the Katowice Intelligent Transport Management System, which ensures, among others, a smoother flow of traffic in the city. Environment – we monitor air quality, subsidize the replacement of furnaces, focus on public transport where more and more buses are hybrid, electric and NGVs. And then our superhit: the city bike system with 125 bicycle stations, 1,010 rental bicycles, and almost 200 km of bicycle infrastructure, 85 km of which are paths in green areas (forests, parks).

I have already mentioned the high quality education. Let's also not forget about civic participation: the Civic Budget and Green Budget. If you are a resident of

Katowice, you have many privileges, including Katowice Resident Card which offers discounts and bonuses from swimming pools, to cinemas, theaters and everyday services. So far, over 115,000 people have received the Resident Card.

In a nutshell, this is the path chosen by Katowice. It's a really good city to live in, and it's only going to get better.

Thank you for the interview.♦

More information



Investors Assistance Department
Katowice City Hall
www.invest.katowice.eu





KATOWICE
for a change



photo: Jeremi Astaszow/Katowice City Hall

Do Business >>>>>

>>>>> Find Balance



photo: Jeremi Astaszow/Katowice City Hall

Katowice City - live, work & invest



1 OUT OF 10 EMPLOYEES DOESN'T EAT A SINGLE MEAL AT WORK

According to Antal and Sodexo report titled "How Poles Eat at Work", as many as 53% of employees eat meals alone, and 20% don't even take a break for lunch. According to Eurostat, Polish workers spend an average of 41.1 hours per week at work – for this reason, the way an employee nourishes themselves at work is crucial for their health.

The difficulty in maintaining a healthy diet stems from various factors that depend on an individual's situation, awareness, and attitude towards work. What do the eating habits of Poles at work really look like and how can employers help improve them?

Slightly more than 50% of employees eat meals at work alone. Among managers and directors, about 60% of respondents eat meals alone. The tendency to eat alone at higher professional levels is noticeably greater, which might be due to the pressures and demands placed on leaders.

– The choice to eat alone can be driven by various factors, and in many cases, it might be a result of the workplace atmosphere. If there are no good relationships within the team, employees often choose to spend their lunch break alone instead of with their colleagues. In such a situation, it might be worth considering organizing a joint breakfast or lunch for the team, recognizing the integrative potential of such an activity. In the summer season, a group meal can take the form of a barbecue, which also provides a less formal, picnic-like atmosphere – says Marcin Grabiwoda, Food Transformation Director.

At work, about half of the respondents eat breakfast, a second breakfast, and lunch. At the same time, it's worth

noting that every tenth respondent doesn't eat a single meal at their workplace. This situation most often concerns directors and interns. Almost 40% of those surveyed also reach for snacks at work. Managers and directors do this more frequently compared to those in lower positions.

– The data presents an interesting picture of the dietary habits of Poles at the workplace. There's a clear distinction between white-collar and blue-collar workers when it comes to consuming lunch – the former more often eat their main meal at work. At the same time, although most employees don't follow strict diets, there's a growing awareness of

nutrition, emphasizing healthy eating and monitoring nutritional components. Vegetarian and vegan trends seem to be popular among younger people and those above the age of 43, which indicates a diverse approach to diet depending on age – comments Katarzyna Sławińska, Team Manager at Antal, Engineering & Operations.

Employees eat more meals when working remotely than at the workplace. This is especially true for meals like breakfast and lunch. Interestingly, none of the respondents said that while working remotely they missed having even a single meal – in contrast to the 9% in the office.

Source: Antal



THREE NEW MANAGERS STRENGTHEN THE ALTO TEAM

Three managers with diverse business backgrounds have recently joined ALTO's rapidly growing accounting service line. This is an important step towards further diversifying and adapting the company's offering to clients from different industries, as well as towards an even better coordination with other company departments, in particular the Personal Tax Services team.

The new managers joining the team are:

Monika Anaszko – Senior Manager with many years of experience advising real estate companies. Her addition will enable us to support the automation and optimisation processes for handling the ever-growing portfolio of real estate companies. Monika's strengths lie in her focus on building long-term partnerships with clients.

Anna Borowska – Senior Manager with extensive experience in outsourcing companies, and in setting up the accounting department at a major law firm. She will be responsible for developing cooperation between the accounting and tax departments, which is one of the pillars of ALTO's strategy for 2023-2026. Her knowledge and skills in the area of team



management and maintaining client relations will enrich the competence of the entire team.

Jolanta Salamonik-Trzeciak – HR and Payroll manager with over 20 years of experience. Jolanta joins the team to strengthen the international client service area. Her expertise and planned close working relationship with the Personal Tax Services team will be key to handling big companies in need of a truly wide range of HR and payroll support.

For ALTO, joining of Monika, Anna and Jolanta means an even better diversification of talent in the team. It will also strengthen its competence to solve diverse and interdisciplinary problems and to take on ever newer challenges – the kind of challenges faced by their clients' modern businesses.

Source: ALTO

RESULTS OF THE ACCA GLOBAL TALENT TRENDS 2023 REPORT

ACCA has published the latest report on *Global Talent Trends* – the largest study of the professional landscape among finance and accounting specialists in Europe. Its findings offer a broader perspective on the well-being and ambitions of employees.

One of the most significant changes in the financial sector is the growing popularity of remote work. Only 31% of all respondents in the study work permanently in offices. Fully remote employment is at 13%, while 56% work in a hybrid mode. Interestingly, it's the younger employees, those below the age of 25, i.e., Generation Z, who are most inclined to work in a physical office. As many as 64% of individuals in this age group choose to work in this mode.

The report has also revealed concerns that are recurring among Polish specialists. The most significant of these

is the fear of the impact of inflation on earnings (54% of those surveyed) and the associated decrease in employment opportunities or job loss (33%).

Mental health and the risk of burn-out are becoming increasingly prominent challenges. Over half of the respondents (57%) feel work-related pressure, and a staggering 77% struggle to maintain a proper work-life balance. In response to these needs, effective change management and the use of technology to streamline processes and relieve specialists are part of the ACCA Certificate in Global Business Services program.

Every second respondent also indicated a desire for more support from their organization in managing mental health, while 39% believe that the mental health of employees is not a priority for their organization. Improving these metrics will be particularly important for employers now.

The full version of the ACCA *Global Talent Trends* report is available for download here:

Source: ACCA





Awaiting a stabilization

*The businesses remain cautious, limiting risk and investments and planning in a short time window. The flexibility and ability to quickly adapt to market conditions are key, and the sphere of recruitment is no different. Acquiring cadres with necessary competences reflecting the current business needs remains a challenge. We talked about challenges faced by the labor market with **Anna Wesołowska**, Managing Director at Gi Group Poland S.A.*

**You can read the full article
in the magazine version available
on arena.proprogressio.pl**

As education benefits often require another important factor, though, we spoke to managers in the talent team, compared to the last year, the importance of training, education, education and other career paths has increased. It shows highlighting that a third of all employees are pointing out the lack of promotion opportunities as their number one place of improvement. That's not good news and needs the talent team to be also supported by the business from the past few years, the importance of career or talent would have increased as well and the question is where in the office is more noticeable.

How are talent building with the increased budget period?

The number one solution is a lot better supporting the efficiency of talent, increasing their living skills and decreasing their budget period. Increased price targets and services associated with management of household budgets is selling additional jobs.

According to our latest research, over 40% of professionals within people have picked up side jobs outside their job more full-time jobs. Moreover, almost half of them agree to long their side jobs over the next six months. Working harder isn't full-time job is becoming, become high retention is talent, with a fourth of all people picking up extra hours in the same company and a third would find place of improvement.

The employees should also consider alternative solutions, such as changing or increasing their qualifications. This is generally more noticeable, as it could lead to increasing work engagement later matter effectiveness and the skillful opportunities are more available than ever. Talent teams, internal training and professional growth programs could be employees to give flexibility, adjust in their specific work.

To what extent does learning and changing work qualifications solve the problems facing the talent market?

This remains an important factor in facing the needs and challenges of the talent market. There are more ways that also contribute to the context of the increasing pace of technology, new systems, including digitalization and automation. According to the "Manufacturing Industry - Global HR Trends 2022" research, carried out by the IFP Group Holding, as many as 10% of managers globally believe that implementing modern systems would increase productivity, a fourth claims it would increase effectiveness and a third hopes for cost reduction.

As many as 10% of managers globally believe that implementing modern systems would increase productivity, a fourth claims it would increase effectiveness and a third hopes for cost reduction.

From the employee perspective, increasing work qualifications or skills they are given more time and more new opportunities. Increasing work engagement with new skills leads to increased engagement in accordance with the current business needs, strengthening work chances for a promotion or career path position. Increasingly often, they will give resources for meeting employer needs and work better career. Another important factor concerns qualifications courses and training building confidence and engagement of team, which is more bottom the effectiveness and productivity of the entire organization. This also increases the market competitive rate of solutions.

In this context, the growing importance of the employees to increase or change their qualifications is a relevant topic. According to our "Talent market

perspective" research, 10% would not offer such an option, knowing there are several other their ongoing improvement in planning work things. The percentage exceeds 10. This results an increase of 10 percentage points as compared to the last year. The reason of this could be attributed not only to the current economic situation but also to the increased employee awareness as to the noticeable changes in the talent market.

To what extent are businesses supporting their employees in this area?

Building and upskilling are an important part in right changes. The technologies are being developed as a development process, business investment in changing work

qualifications is also in creating insight through - and a necessary element of business strategy. Employees increasing their qualifications are more productive, flexible and ready for challenges facing the market. It also helps to create ideas and promote innovation.

Significantly, our results suggest an option on taking different, customized action. Many of them state recruitment difficulties and recruitment conditions improvement. They need to realize that approach, especially given an employee during well-probable market influence.

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DE&I policies as a way to ensure equal opportunities in the workplace

— By | **Aleksandra Tyszkiewicz** —

Equal opportunities for women and men in the work environment are among the key objectives of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion policies in organisations. Awareness of inequalities is growing among employers and employees, who often experience discriminatory actions or observe them in their surroundings. These are the conclusions of the Hays Poland report "Women in the Labour Market 2023. DE&I policies in practice", created in collaboration with the Research Centre for Women and Diversity in Organisations at Kozminski University.

**You can read the full article
in the magazine version available
on arena.proprogressio.pl**



organizations and increase the value of equity among female professionals. On the other hand, corporate women's roles are becoming increasingly central to the challenges facing their boards and leaders and are shaping the role of their offices. However, it is also possible that women who perceive the importance of their organizations to increase the representation of women in business are not making their voices progressive.

There is also a high degree of the perception of the importance of the organization. The data shows that 70% of women in large organizations and 70% of men in large organizations believe that their own and their colleagues' work and performance are highly valued by the organization.

Women's roles in organizations are becoming increasingly central to the challenges facing their boards and leaders and are shaping the role of their offices. However, it is also possible that women who perceive the importance of their organizations to increase the representation of women in business are not making their voices progressive.

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Regarding women's roles in organizations, the data shows that 70% of women in large organizations and 70% of men in large organizations believe that their own and their colleagues' work and performance are highly valued by the organization.

THE IMPACT OF WOMEN'S ROLES IN ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of women's equity and diversity in the work environment and are working to address the challenges of an increasingly diverse workforce. According to the data, 70% of organizations and 70% of men in large organizations believe that their own and their colleagues' work and performance are highly valued by the organization.

The importance of women's roles in organizations is becoming increasingly central to the challenges facing their boards and leaders and are shaping the role of their offices. However, it is also possible that women who perceive the importance of their organizations to increase the representation of women in business are not making their voices progressive.

In general, the data shows that 70% of women in large organizations and 70% of men in large organizations believe that their own and their colleagues' work and performance are highly valued by the organization.

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Author



Aleksandra Tyszkiewicz | CEE Executive Director – Enterprise Solutions at Hays

HAYS Working for your tomorrow



The development of the modern business services sector in Poland is also a challenge: The competition race for talent

The development of the global modern business services sector has been doing very well for many years now, and neither the COVID-19 pandemic, nor the war in Ukraine, nor the all-time high inflation have stopped it. What factors are behind the boom in this sector, which brings together companies providing services in the fields of BSS, SSC, BPO, ITO or R&D? Certainly the continuous globalization of the economy, the growing popularity of outsourcing and its benefits, the accelerated digital transformation, the high demand for knowledge, especially technological knowledge, and the strong demand for intangible services.

In this year's ranking of the international consulting firm Kearney's "Global Services Location Index 2023" Poland ranked 2nd (in Europe) among the countries most attractive to investors developing modern business services. This was certainly influenced by the noticeable trend of moving investments from distant locations to Central and Eastern Europe, but also important are the assets of the Vistula River country, such as its attractiveness for technology investments and access to high-class specialists. SSC or BPO centers in Poland primarily serve the technology, banking, finance, insurance and commercial or professional services sectors.

According to data from ABSL's report "Modern Business Services Sector in Poland 2023", there are already more than 1,800 business service centers in operation and employment in the SSC industry in Poland is growing all the time – the prediction for 2024 (according to an optimistic scenario) is a 9.5% increase, or approaching 476,000 employees. The vast majority of companies in the modern services sector will continue to recruit new employees in 2023 and 2024.

All this data and information is fantastic! Nevertheless, there is also the other side of the coin – in the ongoing race for

talent in the local market, the pool of top professionals is shrinking at a rapid pace.

SSC/BPO LEADERS FACE CHALLENGES

The main challenge for Poland's growing modern business services sector has become a shortage of skilled workers. The best specialists receive as many as several professional offers per month or drift away to Western European countries.

Competition for talent is already high and will intensify even more in the coming years. How can employers face this situation victoriously? There are several scenarios.

The first thing that comes to mind is enticing employees with higher pay, more interesting benefits, a modern office in a good location or flexible working conditions, such as hybrid.



The main challenge for Poland's growing modern business services sector has become a shortage of skilled workers.

The situation related to the shortage of specialists in the company is detrimental to its future – the lack of a properly built team of specialists threatens, first of all, the organization's position in the market, reduces the effectiveness of its operations, competitiveness and slows down the pace of development.



**You can read the full article
in the magazine version available
on arena.proprogressio.pl**

An important aspect of planning a recruitment strategy abroad is to take more general and long-term measures, such as Employer Branding for the entire Polish labor market, resulting in a noticeable increase in foreigners' interest in coming to Poland.



The important aspect of planning a recruitment strategy abroad is to take more general and long-term measures, such as Employer Branding for the entire Polish labor market, resulting in a noticeable increase in foreigners' interest in coming to Poland. When talking about Employer Branding in this regard, we are talking about the overall image of the company, which is visible to all stakeholders. It is not only about the company's name, but also about its values, mission, and vision. It is about the company's culture, which is reflected in its policies and procedures. It is about the company's reputation, which is built over time. It is about the company's brand, which is the result of all these factors. In short, Employer Branding is a long-term strategy that aims to create a positive image of the company in the eyes of its stakeholders.

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- **The company's culture, which is reflected in its policies and procedures, is a key factor in Employer Branding.** A company with a strong culture will be able to attract and retain top talent.
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The company's reputation is built over time, and it is a key factor in Employer Branding. A company with a good reputation will be able to attract and retain top talent. It is important to remember that Employer Branding is not a one-time activity, but a continuous process that requires constant monitoring and adjustment.

The challenges facing Employer Branding are many, and they are constantly changing. One of the main challenges is the increasing competition for top talent. Another challenge is the changing expectations of top talent. It is important to stay up-to-date on the latest trends in Employer Branding and to adapt your strategy accordingly.

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The article has been created in cooperation with

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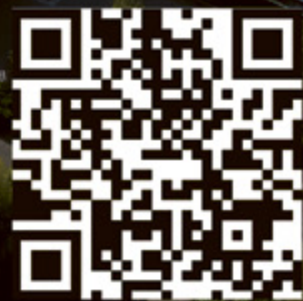
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work in the BPO/SSC sector



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WE PRESENT: **ALPHAMOON** – A STARTUP OFFERING AN AI-BASED INTELLIGENT DOCUMENT AUTOMATION SOFTWARE



MAIN PROJECT IDEA:

Intelligentna e-Teczka [Eng. *Intelligent e-file*] is a solution designed for HR teams, which helps users with the automated classification of employee documents and pulling key information from these files. The project also allows companies to remain compliant with regulations regarding employee file storage.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Intelligentna e-Teczka is a complete solution for companies that want to digitize employee files and maintain a digital library. Users get access to a platform where files can be processed and stored, and thanks to a network of partners, Alphamoon also helps with scanning physical documents. Files are divided between pre-defined categories and receive a label with each file type. When the implementation is complete, the HR team can easily find information about each employee and upload any new document to keep each file updated.



TARGET GROUP:

- Leaders of HR teams
- Leaders of Operations teams
- Business owners who hire people



PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TIME:

The implementation of Intelligentna e-Teczka depends on the company size and the complexity of its operations. However, the standard implementation time is around one month (from agreeing the scope to production).



BENEFITS FOR THE USER:

- Alphamoon introduces full automation of the document classification process, enabling HR teams to devote significant time to other tasks.
- The solution empowers HR teams to access employee documentation much quicker.
- The digital documentation reduces the risks of documents damaging and information loss.
- HR teams spend less time finding information in employee files.



PRODUCT/SERVICE COMPARED TO THE COMPETITION:

Intelligentna e-Teczka is a complete offering for HR teams – most of the available software is single-point solutions, which target only one step of the process. Alphamoon helps with the entire process that begins with digitizing physical documents through classification (the most time-consuming part of the process) and reading key information (such as personal or contact information).



SALES MODEL:

The solution is available as a SaaS subscription model. Depending on the anticipated monthly volume of new documents added to the employee folders in the organization, the client has the option to opt for various pricing packages. Additionally, Alphamoon offers a comprehensive service for digitizing physical archives, covering all elements of the process, from scanning folders to importing the digitized and digitally signed folders into the client's IT system.

MORE INFORMATION:

www.alphamoon.ai



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Talks&Drinks 2023

Pro Progressio Club Networking



Kraków

November 21st, 2023

Loftmill, Fabryczna Office Park



Warszawa

December 7th 2023

Loftmill, Lixa C, Kasprzaka street

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