

We wish to be the No. 1 for small and medium-sized businesses and to be able to compete with large consultancies

The ETL SLOVAKIA consultancy network has grown organically and through acquisitions. At the moment, we are fine-tuning the plans for three investments of € 2 million, said Milan Kúdela, a partner in the group.

During these turbulent times a focus on development and long-term planning may seem to be an excessive luxury. However, the ETL SLOVAKIA consultancy network considers development and planning to be key aspects of success. That is also one of the reasons that during last year the network launched projects that should bring even greater success to the group in 2023. The turnover of ETL SLOVAKIA increased by 88 % in 2022, to more than € 5 million. The growth was partially affected by acquisitions. For example, the law firm Marják, Ferenci & Partners of Košice joined the network. Through this acquisition ETL SLOVAKIA was able to enter the market of legal consultancy. Emino of Bratislava, who are an accounting consultancy group, also joined the network. Another change that contributed to this exceptional result was the foundation of the tax company ETL East Tax in Košice, where this kind of service, under a common brand, was missing. In addition, this year the group also launched the ETL Academy, a platform for in-house employee training. Moreover, it has been preparing its first conference. Milan Kúdela, a partner in the group, commented on the activities and plans of the ETL/GINALL & ROBINSON group, a member of the ETL Global international network.

How did the idea of a network of consultancies catch on in Slovakia?

It is not a new concept. It has worked successfully for several decades. The model of cooperation between consultancies who

share their capital was implemented in Slovakia in 2020 through the first acquisition. Cooperation within the network allows new forms of communication and ways of doing business between the partners that are part of the network. It also introduces, and this is my personal challenge, an endless number of variations for both the creation of business activities as well as the plans of the partners.

Can you be more specific?

As an illustration we can look at ETL East Tax, a tax firm in Košice, that was established by our partners. This project was launched to support existing business activities, broaden our portfolio of services and increase the added value associated with our client services.

This is why I mentioned the endless number of variations. Similar synergies have become part of our standard solutions.

How did the idea of synergies resonate among the Slovak owners of consultancies?

Milan Kúdela

graduated from the Faculty of Materials Science and Technology in Trnava (Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava). In 2007 he established GINALL & ROBINSON, who provide a wide portfolio of consultancy services related to taxation and accountancy. Since 2019 GINALL & ROBINSON has been part of ETL Global, a global network of tax consultants, lawyers, advisers and accountants.

Considering the progress we have made, I must say that it resonated very well. At the same time, I do not want to and cannot underrate the impact of the economic situation, energy crisis and change of generation in the ownership of consultancies. However, the major driving force behind the investment was the concept of joint ventures, the exchange of business data and experience, and collective planning for the future.

How do the synergies affect the financial results?

The organic growth of our network in 2022 was almost 20 %. That is approximately € 520,000. More than a half of this growth comes from shared services and clients within the network. Although, this year has only just started we are already fine-tuning three new and important investments which will provide additional turnover of approximately €2million. In my opinion, a very interesting future awaits us.

In general, how would you assess last year's performance?

The growth we achieved last year was the result of increases in the turnover of existing partners as well as new acquisitions. Last year, we also implemented several significant internal processes, which will help individual partners to improve the efficiency of their businesses. For instance, we have tried to make the reporting of workload even more detailed. We also focused on sharing tax models and diagrams within

the international and domestic tax consultancy etc.

Your employees are obviously crucial.

Definitely. This is also why we set up rules in 2022 to launch the ETL Academy, an employee learning platform, that has three levels: junior, senior and partner. In addition, we are also preparing the programme for the first ETL Conference. It will be an exclusive offer to our clients alone. The goal is to introduce our clients to some new legislative features.

What do you consider to be your greatest success of 2022?

It is a difficult question as we might not immediately see benefits from last year's activities. But what I consider to be my greatest success that I can already talk about, even though it is not really only from 2022, is that we have managed to put together experts under the ETL SLOVAKIA roof. At the same time, they are very fine people who have similar values and world view. We have become one big family. This is not only my opinion, it is also shared by those outside the network who are interested in joining ETL SLOVAKIA.

So is there significant interest in joining the network?

Yes, there is. Potential partners have contacted our references, they have even met with our existing partners. This human capital is very good PR but also a building block in the development of the network of ETL SLOVAKIA consultancies. The projects that I have mentioned will not be the last ones that will take part in. This is what I really consider to be success, as it cannot be planned, it has to happen.

Where are the boundaries of your expansion? We have not fixed any boundaries but our long-term goal is to become the number one consultancy for small and medium-sized businesses. And globally we wish to be right behind the big four



consultancies. So we are talking about an annual turnover of between €35 and €45million. From today's perspective it is hard to say when that will happen but we expect it will be within the next seven – ten years. Until then we are going to focus on the improvement of internal processes within the common services used by the partners, the benefits from the investment into employee development and a search for further joint ventures to expand the ETL SLOVAKIA network.

Where do you see your Slovak network in 20 years?

I believe that we will continue to succeed and continue to spread the good name of ETL SLOVAKIA. Previously I outlined some time and value goals, but the organisational plan is to have a partner in every Slovak city with a population greater than 30,000. So in total we are talking about at least 40 – 50 partners. Of course, the five biggest cities

with the largest populations are in a special position, as it might be necessary to have more partners in these cities. This can also be seen in the structure of our current partners.

What about your activities within professional circles?

Soon we wish to become, through the partners of our subsidiaries, professional guarantors in relevant specialist areas, not only for specialist chambers in Slovakia, but also for the state authorities and professional boards within interdepartmental commissions. I already see great potential, energy, enthusiasm and ideas of how we can become active in this field and hold the ETL SLOVAKIA flag high in these professional circles.

Three years on, how do you view your decision to sell a proportion of GINALL & ROBINSON and become part of ETL GLOBAL?

It was the best decision I could make at that time and within that business environment. It is easier for me to make a sincere assessment with the people I have by my side. I do not only mean my partners in Slovakia, current and future, but also those in the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, Poland and the Netherlands. Of course, I also keep in mind all our employees in Slovakia, whose daily work, be it as an accountant, consultant, auditor or lawyer, promotes the interests and ideas of ETL SLOVAKIA.

Who are the members of the ETL/GINALL & ROBINSON network?

Today, the ETL/GINALL & ROBINSON group includes the following organisations: ETL Tassa, ETL East, ETL Nitra, ETL/GINALL & ROBINSON, Emineo Partners – accounting services, Emineo Partners – financial services, Dravecký & Partner Audit, Dravecký & Partner Tax, as well as Marják, Ferenci & Partners and ETL East Tax.

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