The Slovak Spectator (TSS): How do you perceive developments in the current labour market and particularly in the executive search segment? How has the situation changed in comparison with the period before the economic crisis? What do you expect next in terms of the recovery of Slovakia’s economy?

Igor Šulík: Consulting companies are reporting a more significant demand for their services. This is based on the fact that companies have gradually restarted their investments and are beginning to look for enhancement of their workforces. Companies that have been active in executive search and personnel management are now looking for people with specific experience and managerial potential. They are unable to fill such positions, which is why they are looking for more candidates.

Peter Paška: During the crisis there were many people who failed to succeed in finding employment and were gradually losing their jobs. Therefore, the interest in finding new employees has increased. This is why companies are looking for people who have graduated from school and who will be able to fill positions with posts for many years without any tangible results must be evaluated more realistically and in some cases must even be replaced. After the crisis companies are looking for people who can fill positions such as managers, experts, sponsors and other fields of human resources. But representatives of firms in this business say the nature of their work has changed from before or during the economic crisis.

The Slovak Spectator spoke with seven executive heads of HR firms: Igor Šulík, managing partner of Amrop Slovakia; Ľuboš Sirota, vice of the Slovak arm of Manpower; Peter Paška, managing partner of parts of firms in this business.

The situation in executive search is different from business sector to business sector. For example, the manufacturing sector was hit hardest by the crisis but here we have registered a spontaneous restart. On the other hand, there are sectors which were less affected by the crisis and are happening now. Here I would put, for example, the pharmaceutical industry, which was actually not hit by the crisis in any significant way but is now reflecting some systemic changes which the health-care sector is facing, as well as development and research. Consequently, we perceive a bigger crisis in the pharmaceutical industry than now during the global crisis.

Executive search is now used especially when changing top managers but also for managers in various divisions. Thus far, companies had been filling managerial positions mainly from within, but this was not always the best solution. Companies are gradually ending up in positions, which are returning full production after a period of reduced costs. With regards to anticipated developments, we see an increasing interest in qualified workers and experts. This means that companies are welcoming the possibility to get workers who are ‘ready’, on the other hand, that does not play in favour of recent graduates who have not yet had the chance to obtain the necessary practical experience. Erik Hudák: The interest of companies is growing. Moreover, prior to the summer holidays companies are also interested in finding short-term replacements. Compared with the crisis period, the number of leased people is increasing.

By Jana Liptáková Spectator staff

Firms are beginning to hire again, say experts. Photo: TASS

IN SPITE of the still-high unemployment rate, the Slovak labour market may face a lack of qualified labour within a short time, the Trenkwalder personnel agency warned in late April. It based its concerns on the long average period currently exceeding one year - which job-seekers seek registered with job offices, the SITA news wire wrote.

Based on data from the Labour, Social Affairs and Family Office (UPSVAR), the average period of registration was 13.83 months in March. Compared with the same period of 2010 this represents an increase of almost one month.

The group of people who are gradually losing working habits is expanding, according to Trenkwalder. There is therefore a danger that when Slovakia’s economy starts growing in earnest firms will have problems finding suitable employees in spite of the high number of jobless people.

The bad structure of unemployment in Slovakia will gradually increase the price of those who already have a job,” said Luboš Sirotá, from the Slovak arm of Trenkwalder.

UPSVAR data confirm the structure of people who are currently without a job.

“The growing economy, after taking up current reserves, will encounter the same problems it faced in the recent past - a lack of appropriate labour,” warned Trenkwalder. Moreover, the local education system is unable to satisfy increased demand for qualified workers by supplying enough quality graduates.

Simultaneously, it is unrealistic to expect the situation to change in the coming months.

“The inflow of new graduates will worsen the situation of those who graduated from schools last year and have not yet found a job.” Sirotá said. Adding that companies will prefer fresh graduates to those who have failed to succeed in the labour market so far.

To read all the comments made by these and other HR experts, please go to www.spectator.sk.

By Jana Liptáková Spectator staff

Lack of qualified people predicted