

TRINITY BANK — A Blueprint for Financial Success

According to the OECD, the Czech banking sector is outperforming the rest of Europe. It is almost 50% more profitable than the EU average and its total capital ratio of 23.5% is close to its long-term high. The healthy state of country's financial sector could be one reason why foreign direct investment into Czech surged by 130% in 2023, to reach \$6 billion.

While much of the capital investment now pumping into the country will be funneled through the foreign-owned banks, the Czech banking sector's underlying solidity owes much to the faith and trust that the local consumer has in the domestic banking institutions. One Czech bank that is blazing a trail in that regard is the Trinity Bank, the fastest growing bank in the country's history.

Established in 1996 as the Moravian Monetary Institute savings cooperative and based in the small south-eastern town of Zlín, it changed its name to Trinity Bank 13 years later after it was granted a banking licence. Trinity Bank has come a long way since then. In its 28 years on the market, the bank has built up a customer base of more than 150,000 satisfied businessmen and private individuals to whom it has loaned a total of approximately \$850 million. It grew by 74% in 2022.

The driving force behind the bank's success is its Zlín-born founder and chairman Radomír Lapčík. Also a majority shareholder in the highly profitable SAB Finance forex brokerage, Lapčík is rightly regarded as one of the Czech Republic's most successful businessmen. His view, therefore, that long-term relationships built on trust are the key to the success of both these ventures needs to be taken very seriously.

"I am still personally in touch with hundreds of clients from those early days in Zlín, and I am immensely proud that some of these are the fourth generation of the same family" Lapčík says. "I still think of Trinity Bank as the community-based organization it started out as, only on a much bigger scale now. Maintaining communications remains absolutely vital."

It is a philosophy he extends to relations with his staff too, and, as something of a visionary, Lapčík has gone to great efforts to surround himself with a team to whom he can communicate that vision and who are able to



Radomír Lapčík
Founder and Chairman of Trinity Bank

help him realize it. The introduction of the four-day working week is a case in point.

"It is the best management philosophy ever," he says. "It means that people focus fully for four days then recharge their batteries." He is also a firm believer in the power of teamwork which, he contends, can only really work if his staff are happy and motivated both mentally and physically.

The effectiveness of this management philosophy has surely made Trinity Bank classic material for an MBA case study, and the high motivational level among its staff certainly played its part in pushing client levels past the symbolic 100,000 mark at the end of 2022. At the same time, the combination of its account managers' highly effective personal approach and their product development teams' capacity to create quality solutions for their clients is also helping Trinity Bank establish a strong market presence in the real estate market. By extending conservatively secured loans against quality properties, this is expected to act as a shield against a repeat of the turbulence that has buffeted the regional economy in recent years.

High-profile real estate acquisitions can also make a statement about a company or financial institution's status and ambitions. This must surely have been on Lapčík's mind when Trinity Bank pulled off the largest transaction on the Czech office market last year when it bought Commerzbank's former Prague HQ from the German multinational for a sum reputed to be somewhere north of \$85 million.

Located in Na Příkopě, one of Prague's most expensive streets, the 1930s listed building was previously the headquarters of the Czech Social Democratic Party after the Prague Uprising. "We want to revive the building and bring it closer to the people of the city," says Lapčík, who intends to use the majestic building to host VIP Trinity Bank clients.

Lapčík is clearly convinced that Trinity Bank has the potential to become an even greater force in the Czech banking sector and while organic growth looks set to continue at pace, he is also always open to discussions with potential partners who have the same in-depth knowledge of their own markets as he does of his. And, of course, who share his vision and ambition.

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