#WeAreSPIE: In conversation with Barbora Kutliaková

Our employees in focus

At SPIE we're proud of our employees and of what they do every day. In our #WeAreSPIE: Our employees in focus feature, we highlight our employees' personalities, stories, talents, expertise and sheer enthusiasm for technology.
Today we speak with Barbora Kutliaková, Head of Controlling at SPIE Elektrovod in Bratislava in the Central Europe Operational Division.

Barbora Kutliaková, as Head of Controlling you monitor the financial results of SPIE Elektrovod in the Central Europe Operational Division in Bratislava. How would you describe your everyday work?

Together with my three-person team, I prepare the monthly financial report for my business unit. My responsibilities also include analysing the profitability of my business unit's projects and identifying changes and potential risks. And I discuss the status of the different projects and the options for advancing them with the operational project managers. I'm also responsible for cash management – all activities related to short-term financial planning. And I'm in charge of digital development at my site, which includes implementing new software to increase process efficiency. Right now this part of my role is about integrating AI (artificial intelligence) in internal IT systems.

Can you describe this process in more detail?

The integration of AI is part of an ongoing digitalisation project in my business unit that involves rolling out an IT solution for online invoice approval. By automating intermediate steps, we're working to make our invoicing processes more efficient, reduce paper consumption, and optimise the exchange of documents within the company.
The solution, which is connected with the ERP system, uses OCR (optical character recognition) to convert scanned documents, PDF files or digital images into editable and searchable files. The scanned invoices are checked automatically and then automatically booked in the ERP system.
In the second step of the digitalisation process, we're further optimising these IT systems by equipping them with AI. The aim of this step is to increase operational efficiency, reduce error rates, and automate repetitive tasks. This is achieved by having AI-equipped software robots take over steps that had previously been done manually, like simple but time-consuming activities with high error rates, e.g. bookings or allocating invoices to certain cost centres and accounts.

What do you like most about your job?

I'm a numbers person. As a financial controller, you're deeply involved in the details of company and project results, so what I really like about my job is being able to view results from a strategic perspective. Besides that, I also like the people I work with and the atmosphere throughout the company.
Before I joined SPIE, I worked for an auditing firm. Back then I already felt a desire to get a closer look at the other side, the company's side. Now I enjoy looking at projects and balance sheets from the company's perspective. Besides that, SPIE has given me a lot of career development opportunities in my three and a half years here. Learning and experiencing new things is part of my everyday work. And I also appreciate that SPIE gives me the chance to share the things I've learned in the company. SPIE is a company that actively supports young people and their career development.

What have been your personal highlights at SPIE?

I was 28 years old when I took on a management role, and I received a lot of support from SPIE on my path from controller to Head of Controlling. For example, I received leadership training, which gave me the knowledge and tools that you need to lead a team. This training was definitely a highlight in my career at SPIE, just like the current digitalisation project rolling out AI and all of the exciting steps that are part of that. But basically I'd say it's simply my career itself – I mean my everyday work at SPIE – that is one big highlight.

What are your next career goals?

I have both personal goals and goals connected with the company and my job. I want to implement even more digital tools in my business unit to improve processes and reduce manual tasks. My goal is to completely digitalise document flow, automate processes and integrate AI within them. I want to make life easier for my colleagues by adopting modern technologies.
Since I've learned as a finance specialist to see projects and processes from the financial perspective, I'd also like to share that perspective and my financial knowledge with people on the operational side. On the other hand, I'd like to develop more technical expertise and combine it with my financial knowledge so that I can assess business processes even better.

In your opinion, why should somebody aim for a career at SPIE?

SPIE is a big, future-proof company with a presence at many locations in many countries. If you work here, you have the opportunity to work in an international environment with a wide range of personalities. Here you can develop yourself, make friends and also advance your career. SPIE pays attention to the needs of every employee and closely involves them in the company's development.
And I'm impressed by SPIE's attitude towards equal opportunity and the advancement of women. SPIE operates in sectors that many people would say are 'male dominated'. But the opposite is true at SPIE, as women are on an equal footing and are highly valued team members.