EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES IN IT SECTOR – CASE OF MICROSOFT CORPORATION

of these factors put pressure on universities, which most of the time are not ready for the changing environment and try to maintain conservative scenarios that worked in previous decades.

Microsoft works with universities on complex infrastructural projects that help to adjust to a rapidly changing environment, integrate with a number of other technologies and solutions and so enable new teaching methods and educational outcomes. Most important are cloud projects that utilize the collaboration and productivity platform Office 365, integrate social networks through Yammer, help with other solutions on Microsoft Azure.

Another set of projects is related to academic transformations with upgrade of curricula, certification of faculty skills, certification of students to be better prepared for the labor market. We support the Microsoft IT Academy and Microsoft Virtual Academy, which bring great benefits to both educational institutions and individual learners.

What innovative educational projects and programs does Microsoft Corporation offer now, and which of these are the most popular with students?
Microsoft is a leader in IT world, and students appreciate access to our technology through IT Academy, DreamSpark program for STEM departments, ImagineCup contest, BizSpark program to foster entrepreneurship and support start-ups. Our stack of technologies, ones like Office 365 for faculty and students, OneNote Classroom Creator, Windows-based tablet devices also allow for new scenarios for student learning and provide a set of necessary competences for subsequent employability.

Could you identify the difference between projects offered by the Microsoft Corporation and similar ones from other global leaders in the IT sector like Google, IBM, Yandex? What are the advantages and specific nature of your programs?
Microsoft has a long history, wide portfolio of products and expertise in the education industry.

On this occasion «University Education» took an interview with Olga Svyrydenko, CEO Education Lead, Microsoft Ukraine, who is responsible for cooperation with educational and scientific institutions.

To start with, could you tell us what role educational projects play in the corporate strategy of Microsoft.
Microsoft has always acknowledged the special role that education plays in people's lives. As a leader in technology world, we also see how technology can help students to better reveal their academic potential and for educators to realize their full pedagogical potential. For this, Microsoft created Partners in Learning programs over 10 years ago, which currently works in over 100 countries throughout the world, including Ukraine.

In what directions and forms does Microsoft cooperate with universities?
Microsoft is a strategic partner on the path of educational transformations. We see the world around us changing, the demands of the labor market increasing, the amount of student devices booming and cloud technologies flourishing. All

The company's core business is different from that of others and it allows us to offer the best combination of technology that can foster the learning outcomes of educational institutions. Microsoft does not use its educational programs to collect user data, which is crucial for development of other business. Neither is Microsoft tied to only on-premise or cloud solutions, because our technologies enable us to create all types of infrastructures. Having this wide set of technological capabilities allows us to be universal. On the other hand, Microsoft has nourished an education vertical and has a great team of experts who know how technology can be applied in education setting and drive new forms of teaching and learning, thereby supporting every participant of the process, be it a school administrator, teacher or student.

What are the chances for employment within your corporation for those who participated in such programs and projects?
Microsoft is always hiring talented team members. There are two programs, one for university graduates and one for experienced professionals. Both are publicly available at http://careers.microsoft.com/

From your point of view, what are the key IT competencies that students who plan careers outside the field of ICT should concentrate on now?
Look around us and see the numbers of consumer devices, social networks, online accessibility and other trends. I would say it is highly unlikely that there will be many jobs that are not related to information and communication technologies. A recent study forecast that in the coming 5 years 77% of jobs will require IT skills. An IDC study from 2014 showed that 80% of vacancies require knowledge of Microsoft Office. So basic IT skills are a must for any student.

Do you believe that the government should provide support in the creation of high-technology laboratories at universities?
Government support is absolutely necessary and Ukraine needs to take the long path of transformations. On the other hand, universities need to invest in upgrading faculty competences, become more transparent towards external partnerships and businesses will play a greater role in giving support to such projects.

How often do professionals of your company participate in and organize such educational events like master-classes, open lectures etc. which take place within universities?
We constantly organize various events, both online and offline. The most well known are DevDays, TechDays, SWIT, Innovative Teachers Forums. Updated schedule is always available on Microsoft.ua/events

What are the strategic priorities in development of Microsoft's educational projects at Ukrainian universities?
Microsoft's overall priority is the cloud and mobility. In Ukraine's universities we still see a lot of challenges in terms of unification of infrastructure and setting up IT services as such. Once university infrastructures become more mature it opens up immense opportunities to develop academic potential through the adoption of cloud technologies, increasing faculty and student collaboration through Office 365 and other cloud services with the use of the existing variety of faculty and student devices.

Does your company support student projects?
Microsoft supports a few global projects for students. YouthSpark ensures the employability of university graduates, while BizSpark supports start-ups and entrepreneurship, ImagineCup contest helps teams to create innovative technological solutions and promote worldwide.

Your company runs an IT-academy. Could you tell us about its features and which hard and soft skills Microsoft offers to students there?
The IT Academy is a set of over 400 courses on the eLearning platform that enables students to get firsthand learning experience and study Microsoft technologies. It is also a set of methodological resources for a faculty if they teach a physical course in their universities. Both a faculty and students can then confirm their competencies by passing international certification. This ensures that students are better prepared for the labor market on graduation, and the faculty stays up to date on knowledge. Students develop team work, collaboration and presentation skills, critical thinking, time-management and another set of skills which are crucial for a good professional.