

Z. Dylko

З.Е. ДЫЛКО

БГЭУ (Минск)

Научный руководитель Т.К. Кирильчик

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF ONLINE SHOPPING

Воздействие интернет-покупок на окружающую среду

The research is devoted to online shopping that may not be as green as you think and how it can have a surprisingly large carbon footprint.

In the past few decades, the way we shop has changed dramatically. We used to buy our goods in traditional shops, on the high street or in department stores. Now, customers are increasingly buying online, where they can order whatever they want directly to their door with the click of a mouse. One in seven sales are now made online and studies suggest that by 2021, global online retail will reach an enormous US\$4.8 trillion. As companies race to improve their internet shopping experience, the trend towards shopping online is predicted to continue.

However, the reality is slightly more complex than that. Many home deliveries fail the first time and the driver has to make a second or third attempt to deliver the purchase. Customers who choose speedy delivery or those who buy single items from different places also contribute towards increasing the carbon footprint.

The carbon footprint also goes up if the customer chooses to return the item. A study in Germany showed that as many as one in three online purchases are returned. According to another study, merchandise worth nearly US\$326 million is returned each year in the USA. Two billion kilograms of this ends up in landfill, leading to 13 tonnes of CO₂ being released.

Clothing is one product that has high return rates. Unlike in a walk-in store, the online shopper can't try things on before buying. So, companies offer free returns to make it easier for shoppers to purchase the same item of clothing in different sizes and colours. Customers try them at home, keep one and return the rest of them. However, when clothes are returned, they are not always cleaned and put back for sale. This is because many companies have found it cheaper to simply throw away the returned items than to pay someone to sort the damaged goods from the unwanted ones. In these cases, the returned clothes, which might be in perfect condition, end up in landfills or burnt.

To come back to what I was saying when we take all these factors into consideration, we realise that online shopping isn't necessarily as green as people might think. That last kilometre to your door is costly, for companies and for the environment. There is some positive news, as various online retailers are starting to lower their carbon footprint by investing in electric delivery vehicles. However, the question of how to deal with returns efficiently and without waste is a challenge that

many companies have not wanted to face. As online shoppers become aware of what companies are doing, and campaign groups demand urgent action in the face of the climate and ecological emergency, there is increasing pressure for companies to take responsibility for the environmental impact of their activities.

D. Zudilkin

Д.П. Зудилкин

БГЭУ (Минск)

Научный руководитель Ю.М. Савчук

KEYS TO BUSINESS ETHICS IMPROVEMENT IN BELARUS

Пути улучшения деловой этики в Республике Беларусь

To begin with, business ethics is the group of rules of conduct applied specifically to business activities. Ethics is not the same as law. Many ethical beliefs are formally reinforced by law, but many are not. Thus, *the object* of our research is to define the background of business ethics principles and behaviors. *The main goal* of the study is to explore the international experience of business ethics and implement its core principles in Belarusian business. So, we set the following *tasks*: to analyze what actions are considered to be ethical and unethical in business, to investigate the international experience of business ethics and to understand how to make the Belarusian business more ethical.

In practice, ethics is expressed and felt as a combination of pressures that direct one to take or skip certain actions. Decisions must be acceptable to many different elements of society. Firstly, they must be acceptable to the conscience of the decision maker. Secondly, managers must consider the potential effects of their decisions on people and companies directly involved in the business operation: customers, suppliers, competitors, employees, investors, and creditors. Recently business has become aware of how it affects individuals and the whole society. The laissez-faire business environment of the nineteenth century promoted the belief that almost any practice that increased profits, in the long run, is good for the country. The result was cutthroat competition, fraud, deceptive marketing, price and market manipulation, worthless and dangerous products, exploitation of workers, and other practices that today are generally considered unethical. We can't but mention a few examples of international experience – Nike and Reebok, taking voluntary measures through the US Fair Labor Association to increase the transparency of their supply chain, they published the first independent audits of their supplier factories on the Internet; Costco's Decision, paying fair wages; Volkswagen, reducing its workforce without layoffs.