

BUSINESS OR ECOLOGY: WHICH COMES FIRST TODAY?

KRAMAR IRYNA

PhD, Associate Professor

Ternopil Ivan Puluj National Technical University

Ternopil, Ukraine

One of the most popular topics for discussion on mass media, everyday lives, meetings at different levels are: global ecological problems and business. Is there any relation between two of them and which one influences which? So, today it will be relevant to rephrase a popular saying «Egg or chicken: which comes first?» in: «Business or ecology: which comes first today?» And what are the spheres of their responsibilities?

Business-ecological relation today creates a definition of «environmental business ethics». In a business sense, environmental ethics deals with the company's responsibility to protect the environment in which it operates.

Businesses have traditionally shown egregious indifference towards the environment. Environmental protection was rarely seen as an issue. A company would harm the environment to whatever extent was profitable, and they often harmed the environment despite the fact that it was unwarranted to do so. Shaw discusses the attitudes of businesses that lead to unwarranted environmental damage. In particular, people saw the «natural world as a 'free and unlimited good'». People at one point thought that the world's resources could be taken without end and without any morally significant harm done. Pollution could damage the environment, but the damage done was considered to be insignificant because the world was seen as such a large place [1].

However, we understand that resources are limited and so when we use we have to keep that in mind to follow the principle of sustainable development. Moreover we do understand that both people and animals suffer from environmental damage. That's why it becomes even more relevant to pay attention to the fact how modern businesses can save the environment and in the same way satisfy people needs. Today small enterprises should pay great attention to the fact that consumers and government demand from businesses to sustainability standards. Sustainability refers to the ability of ecosystems to remain healthy and productive over time. A positive side of environmental business ethics is the creation of new opportunities centered on repairing existing environmental damage and developing new technologies to enable people to conduct their business without further damage to the environment. Environmental technologies will provide a path to profitability for small business for the foreseeable future [2].

Moreover environmental awareness has made many consumers to lead environmentally friendly lifestyles, which affect businesses around the world. One of the biggest movers in the market today are green packaging, environmentally friendly products and eco-labeling. They are biggest movers due to consumers' increasing environmental awareness. Companies produce these products to prevent degradation of the environment. A survey conducted by Yale University few years ago showed

that most americans were willing to buy products that were environmentally friendly, such as automobiles, computer printer paper and laundry detergent. Although these consumers also considered the quality and price of the product, many americans were willing to pay more for green products [3].

The fact that company accepts its responsibility for environmental ethics can be demonstrated through the development of corporate environmental strategy. As an example – environmental strategy of Marriott International: «Both in our hotels and beyond, we seek to understand and act on the direct and indirect environmental impacts of our business operations» [2]. Businesses around the world, regardless of size, must make such a strategy part of their business model in order to protect of the natural resources they use to make a profit.

For many enterprises environment can be the primary source of raw materials. Companies across the globe are integrating environmental interest with business and are becoming proactive in finding ways to reduce environmental impact [3]. Additionally, consumers are favoring businesses which protect the environment. The fact how the company addresses environmental issues affects the turnout of the business. Small businesses should adopt environmental business ethics to reduce environmental impact and increase operating efficiency. Such practice includes dealing with environmental regulations, conserving water, reducing greenhouse emissions and practicing reduce, reuse and recycle.

Thus, the environment is one of the most important moral issues today which arise in business activity. The ignorance of the environment while doing business affects the latter and not in a positive way as we already understood. That is why it is a relevant and emerging topic of discussion how to integrate both working together and not harming each other. This is where «environment» and «business» come together.

References:

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