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BOOK REVIEWS

Robert B. Cialdini, Steve J. Martin, Noah J. Goldstein, *Mała wielka zmiana. Jak skutecznie wywierać wpływ* [The Small Big. Small Changes that Spark Big Influence], Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Sopot 2016: 282, ISBN 978-83-7489-648-1

For many years R. Cialdini, in collaboration with other authors, has been conducting his own research and gathering conclusions about the ways of exerting influence on other people. In the latest book the authors share their reflections on how to introduce various small changes into the modes of operation in order to achieve better outcomes. Reading this interesting book, illustrated with examples, may lead to increased effectiveness. In order to solve the problems defined it is important to apply the appropriate instruments.

According to the authors using homogeneous stimuli brings better effects than using heterogeneous stimuli. Therefore market norms should not be mixed up with social norms. The maintenance of voluntary service makes it possible to accomplish the goals set. Providing volunteers with a small financial gratification reduces their interest in a given activity. As regards the motivation of employees those persons who can train the newly employed people should be appreciated. The appreciation of an individual sales results of a trader may discourage him/her from sharing their knowledge and training others because this diminishes their own results. Combining the financial and non-financial motivation is also less effective. Setting the rules of remuneration makes it possible for the em-

ployees to perform tasks and to concentrate on the work. Motivating by means of bonuses gives rise to reflections as to how much bigger that bonus will be in the future. It is far more effective to motivate by means of indicating the purpose of the work, praising employees, thanking them for their efforts, supporting their personal development (subsidizing their studies, organizing useful training). It should be emphasized, however, that such an approach may be effective only when the employees' earnings have already reached an appropriate level. A Polish construction company which will employ workers from Ukraine should know that the financial motivation will be the most significant for them.

A customer and his/her interest in the product increases when they have a direct contact with the product or service. The author of this review experienced this in person. When he had classes with post-graduate students he arrived at the lecture hall 20 minutes before the time his lecture was supposed to start. He unlocked the door and greeted each student entering the lecture hall handing him/her a set of the previously printed materials. The students expressed their satisfaction. They evaluated the lecture and its usefulness highly. In that case a small change produced a really significant effect.

In the area of health service patient queues are a problem in many countries. It turned out that the waiting time could be shortened by using a relatively simple tool, namely by making a phone call to the patient one day before the scheduled time for his/her visit to the doctor in order to confirm it. Some patients may inform the health care unit that they will not be able to come. Then the health care unit can invite other patients occupying further positions on the waiting list. This makes the queues shorter and facilitates a better exploitation of the working time of the medical personnel. The patients who confirm their visit a day before keep their word.

Studies conducted in the area of behavioural economics prove that people have a limited tendency to visualize themselves in a longer perspective. It is possible to help them plan their future by means of appropriate instruments. When an employee receives a pay rise or a reward, he/she is reluctant to allocate part of that money to the pension fund. In such a situation it is worth asking the employee to sign a written commitment that in case of another pay rise he/she will earmark, e.g. 30% for the pension fund. In this way people are more willing to give their consent. Presenting people with their photograph, altered with Photoshop software to show what they will look like in 20 years' time also exerts some influence on their decisions. In December 2015, in a modern consumer research laboratory at the Poznań University of Economics and Business, a group of students were dressed in so-called "ageing suits" which made them look older. They could find themselves in the situation of people aged 60 plus suffering from various diseases. This experience let them look from a different perspective upon the adaptation of products and their packaging to meet the needs of the elderly.

When offering products to customers better results can be achieved if appropriate tools are applied. For example, in order to rationalize the consumption of water or energy in a housing estate its inhabitants may be informed how much they pay on average for a given product. Then, within a period of a few months, the households paying higher bills will reduce the consumption of water or energy. On the other hand, those who paid less will increase their spending. It is more effective to suggest some changes within a given period of time instead of quoting a concrete value. Thus a pharmacist may ask a patient to lose from 0.5 to 1.5 kg of weight within a month. This gives better results than asking the patient to lose 1 kg of weight. A promotion where the price of a product is reduced from 21 PLN to 19 PLN raises the interest in purchasing that product more effectively than a reduction in price from 27 PLN to 25 PLN (although it is 2 PLN in each case). The left/front digit is important. In this example the change from 2 to 1 is more effective than leaving digit 2 before and after the reduction. Therefore to encourage customers to buy healthy food price promotions can be planned accordingly.

Using smaller plates in a cafeteria makes the consumers eat less. A timely placed positive online review ("I've had my meal here today") is more credible than general information ("It's a good restaurant"). In the cities where more cleaners can be seen at day time people drop less litter. On the other hand a restaurant which put a scooter (???) on the menu as a first course sold very few of them but the customers were willing to accept slightly higher prices for other meals (as compared to those offered by competing restaurants). Using an anchor, i.e. quoting the price of a product offered by a salesperson, reduces the willingness of the buyer to

present his/her own proposal. Resorting to an expert means that the propensity to take a critical look upon the trade offer submitted becomes smaller.

The new creative ways of exerting an influence on other people are also worth mentioning. A pastor of a small historic church in England no longer had enough courage to ask the congregation for donations to finance successive renovations of the dilapidated building. He took 500 pounds in new ten-pound notes from the bank. When mass started, he went around the church asking each person to take one banknote. The members of the congregation were surprised but they took the money. In his sermon the pastor said he had given each person 10 pounds because he wanted everyone to make a good investment of that money and share the profit with the church. This triggered an avalanche of entrepreneurial initiatives. One lady baked a cake, sold it and gave the profit to the pastor. School children bought some vegetable seeds, cultivated the vegetables, sold them and gave the profit to the pastor too.

The idea of learning from one's mistakes is also worth considering. The authors refer to the experience of a consultant who compiles and analyzes his own and other people's mistakes. He thinks that there are many factors which influ-

ence the success of a company but are difficult to identify. However, as a rule, it is possible to identify a reason for defeat, or failure. This idea is quite interesting because a detailed analysis of the causes of each air crash leads to increased safety of aircraft.

As regards an increase in the effectiveness of activities the examples and instruments described in the book may be inspiring for readers. However it should be emphasized that it is not always possible to achieve the expected results. From this point of view the expression from the title of the book – „the small big change” seems to be exaggerated. It may encourage people to buy that book but the application of the instruments discussed there rarely results in big changes. The title suggesting that small changes may trigger minor changes seems to be more appropriate. Another critical remark is that some of the instruments described in the book were already presented in the earlier works by Cialdini and his team. Regardless of these critical remarks the book may be very useful for students and entrepreneurs who are interested in improving the skills necessary to create a better world.

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Aims and Scope

Economics and Business Review is the successor to the Poznań University of Economics Review which was published by the Poznań University of Economics and Business Press in 2001–2014. The Economics and Business Review is a quarterly journal focusing on theoretical and applied research work in the fields of economics, management and finance. The Review welcomes the submission of articles for publication dealing with micro, mezzo and macro issues. All texts are double-blind assessed by independent reviewers prior to acceptance.

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