

world of present business. The study emphasizes the importance of paying more attention to disciplines, which facilitate the development of multicultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. The improvement of knowledge can be obtained by more effective and intensive studying of English, because the gap between two groups of students (53 % of first and 18 % of third year), which was identified during the study, is threatening. It results in the problem, why third year students are alienated from communication with representatives of other cultures. The school should promote more tolerance, because third year students appeared to be less acceptable to multicultural society. In addition, school should encourage usage of social networks, especially LinkedIn, for establishing international contacts among students.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INFOGRAPHICS AS MEANS OF PROMOTING BUSINESSES

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We live in the Information Age, which has totally changed the way we think and communicate. Every day an average person consumes about 34 Gb (gigabytes) of information [2] through the Internet, social media, TV, newspapers, radio, books, etc. Trying to make sense out of the enormous amount of information is a challenge we face on a daily basis. Infographics are an excellent tool to understand the essence of the information flow not only for private users, but also for businesses. Therefore, the goal of this work is to find out how effective infographics are for businesses in order to communicate their values and promote their activities.

Infographics, or information graphics, are a laconic mix of design, text and analysis, which is perfect for representing big amount of data in an attractive way. This approach, called infographics, was first used in publishing in the USA more than 30 years ago [3, p. 26], but charts, maps, diagrams and expla-

nation pictures had been used long before. With the rise of the Internet infographics have become more dynamic and sophisticated for businesses to share it with the public.

The effectiveness of infographics can be proven by several factors.

First, they are easy to digest. When companies deliver information to their target audience through online platforms, they want to be sure that people stay and pay attention to what has been written. But according to researches made by a web usability expert Jacob Nielsen, people are not willing to read a lot online: only 20 % of a text on a regular web page [4, p. 107]. So, asking the audience to read tons of textual information can cause difficulties in its comprehension. By itself, any text is a good representation of information and a method of communication. A letter allows creating an infinite number of word combinations, but people's brains need time and significant energy costs to digest given information. Graphic images are easier to perceive, but they are not effective when it comes to describe abstract and complex ideas. In this way, the combination of text and graphic images – infographics – allows using advantages of both means of information transfer.

Second, infographics have «shareability» or viral potential. One of the most important roles of communication is to share information with other people. The same thing works for online world, where every day thousands of Internet users click «Share» button in order to tell others what interesting facts they have recently found. But the problem lies in the fact, that many businesses posting bulky texts and articles on their social networks and websites may face lack of interest of such content. Jason Falls, the CEO of the Social Media Explorer LLC, claimed that in turn infographics has high probability and little barriers to become a «shared» one. Attractiveness and briefness of visual content help businesses to promote and spread its needed information across a wide variety of digital channels [1].

Third, online infographics create a simpler promotion method. Businesses buy ad space in newspapers and magazines, in catalogs and brochures. When a company wants to describe a customer all perks and benefits of their goods, it usually requires a lot of space for a text and pictures. Infographics condense all important information and present it in a compelling way, so that it may take less space than just an article and will be more effective than just an advertising picture. When less space is taken in publications, less money is needed to be paid. That represents one of the efficient sides of infographics.

Fourth, infographics can help businesses communicate ideas which are not primarily promoting their goods or services. Such business information as history, company goals and structure, statistics (sales, revenue, etc.) can be shown via infographics so that it would create interest in customers to get to

know more about the company [5, p.137]. Moreover, products description, composition and production ways will also look more attractive in the form of static or motion graphics.

Infographics can be used by all sorts of businesses from big established companies to small new ones to engage their audience. Harvard, one of most famous and prestigious universities, can also be related to businesses. Harvard Law School created catching infographics that show the school in numbers (Pic. 2.). Without infographics it would look like a plain text: «Observing career opportunities, let's take the class of 2010, the most representative one. 97,3 % of students employed at nine months... Also, 6 of the 9 Supreme Court Justices are Harvard Law School alums... Our students have international options, 205 Harvard Law School students traveled to 52 countries in relation to courses, clinical, and writing projects during winter term and summer 2011...» Such statistical information with a lot of numbers is usually difficult to read and understand without any visual support. People who are not particularly interested would just skip such texts. On the other hand, infographics create an interest for everybody, and help them to imagine the presented ideas in a better way.

Another example of applying visual content is an infographic created by a world-famous French cosmetics company L'Oreal Paris called «The Powerful Connection Between a Woman and Her Hair» (Pic. 1.). It shows survey results how women's hairdo affects the perception of their attractiveness. When creating this infographic, L'Oreal Paris also decided to imply hidden promotion methods of company's products but not advertising itself. The infographic only consists of short statement-results with numbers and percentages like «29 % of women avoided social situations when they thought they were having a bad hair day» or «41 % of US women have avoided an event for fear of ruining their hair style». The data presented shows how important for women their hair style is, strongly emphasizing that it is a «must-have» for a woman's self-appraisal, mood and catching appearance. It's interesting to notice that the results go with the images of women with fabulous hair styling. Such a visual presentation of information subconsciously pushes audience to buy some cosmetic products from L'Oreal Paris to get the same results as were shown on the infographic. Isn't it a good promotion strategy?

Infographics today are a trend and an essential tool for businesses to communicate their values and promote activities. Being widely spread mostly in the countries like the USA, France, Italy, Germany, England, infographics in Belarus are only on the initial stage of applying development. Most Belarusian companies do not use any visual content in their promoting campaigns thereby not attracting audience attention. A clear example is a popular Bela-

rusian confectionary «Коммунарка» («Kommunarka») with several sections on their web-site. When anybody, interested in the company's history and its products, opens some of that sections, they will face a web-page cluttered with hundreds of words, dates and percentages without any visual background. It is pretty difficult to get engaged in reading tediously presented information. «Коммунарка» exports its goods to Russia, the USA, Israel, Georgia, Germany, Czech Republic, Cyprus and even to the United Arab Emirates. But no one can assess the volume of production and company's popularity because it is hardly visible.

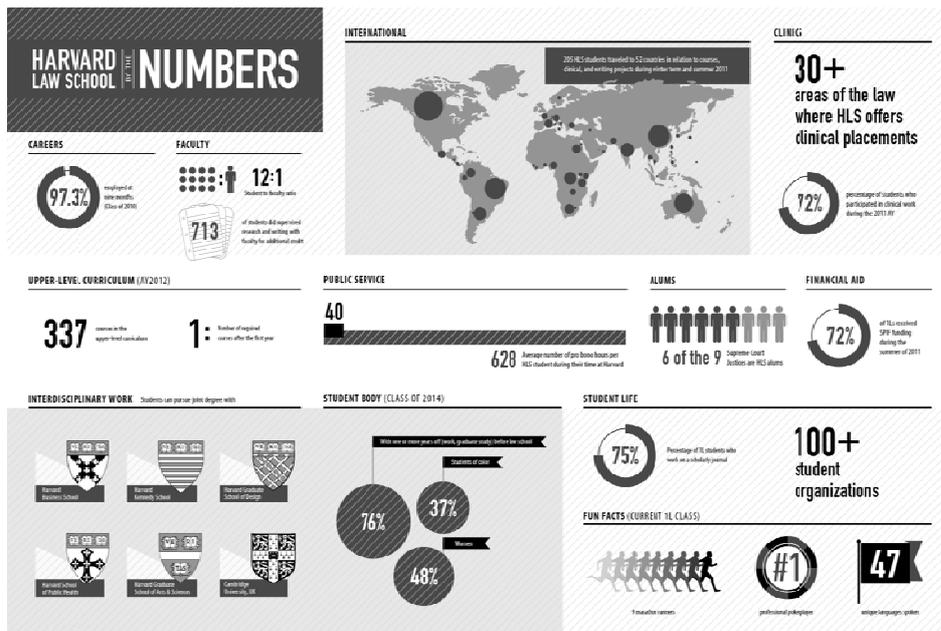
Nevertheless, some companies feel that trend and try to make information more readable and attractive. Velcom, a mobile provider, made infographics called «Velcom likes» as a summary of the news for the month for several times. Even though, that news covered not particularly Velcom's operations, but selected events in the country and the world, the infographics attracted readers by its simplicity and clarity. One more infographic provided by Velcom was made for the 14th birthday of the company in 2013. The infographic was made as a comparison between company's operation facts and history facts. For example, the total height of SIM cards put side-by-side is bigger than the height of the Eiffel Tower. Thus, the infographic appeared to be interesting not only for current users of Velcom, but for the other customers.

We have also decided to create an infographic for our SBMT to demonstrate how it can be used in promoting university's activities (Pic. 3.). Having collected major general information and added some graphical images, we got an attractive visual presentation for everyone who gets interested in education in SBMT.

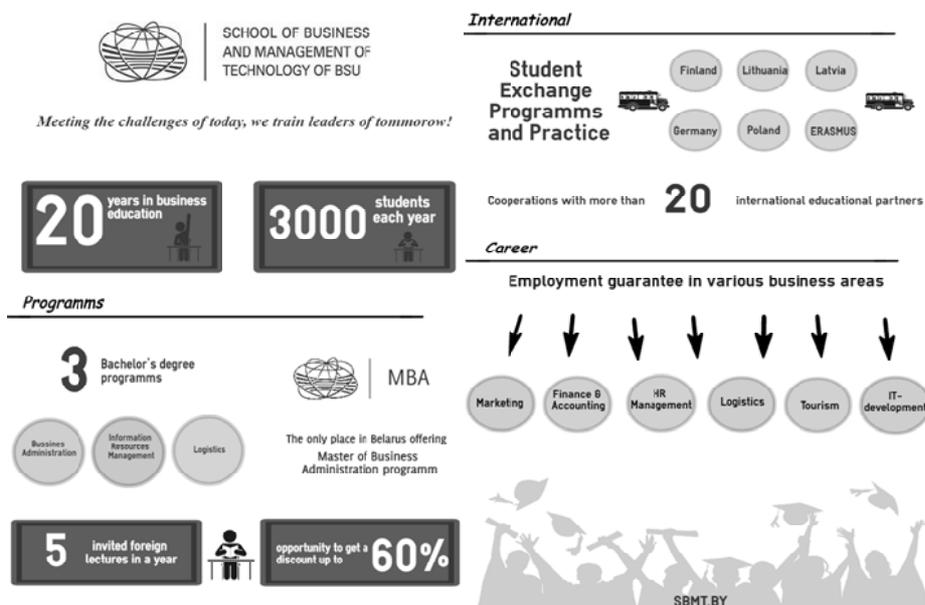
In the end it's necessary to mention that today, the brands which develop and apply infographics as a tool to convey their messages and impact the audience leave far behind those that are not following the trend. The research let us find out that infographics are really an effective way of promoting businesses. Infographics are widely popular abroad and used by such businesses as L'Oreal Paris, Harvard University, Lego, Skype, Epson and many others. At the Belarusian market most companies have not been using infographics yet. Anyway, there is a positive tendency and some of them like Velcom, Spartak, Mark Formelle and many event/advertising agencies try to implement modern techniques in promoting their products and communicating their values.



Pic. 1. L'Oréal Paris infographic



Pic. 2. Harvard Law School infographic



Pic. 3. School of Business and Management of Technology of BSU infographic

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