

## **Communication on Engagement of the Association of the European Business (Belarus)**

**The Association of European business** is a Belarusian independent non-governmental association uniting leading European companies, which plan to do or do business in Belarus. The AEB seeks to boost the competitiveness of Belarusian business climate by promoting mutually beneficial cooperation between European and domestic businesses.

### **Our goals:**

- helping European companies adapt to the Belarusian market and promoting their joint interests;
- creating a common platform for mutually beneficial partnerships of European and national companies;
- improving business climate in Belarus by building a dialogue between European, national companies and state authorities;
- providing analytical and expert support to European companies in Belarus;
- promoting Belarusian national traditions and culture in the business community;
- implementing initiatives of corporate social responsibility in the Belarusian business community.

The AEB has implemented two Corporate social responsibility initiatives from 2014-2015. There are the Job Shadow Days initiative and the project "Reducing unemployment – promoting entrepreneurship by combining business models and creativity into organic, young and promising businesses".

### **About the Job Shadow Days project:**

In Belarus the gap between universities and business continues to grow. For a long time the companies in Belarus have told that it's impossible to get a prepared specialist, he needs to be reeducated.

There are the gaps between universities and business at different levels. For example, in practice curricula don't refer to practice. Disciplines don't correspond to the up-to-date demands of professions, the subjects are too overloaded with theory, the time-management for studying isn't proportional, etc.

Even students often complain that each year they study the same subjects under different names. Or, vice versa, because of the program reduction the minimum of academical hours is given for a discipline, which covers plenty of aspects. Business points at the fact that, for example, the level of a language proficiency is insufficient for work at the international market.

Students have absolutely logical questions like: why should I study at a university if I don't satisfy the requirements of my future employer? Just for a diploma? Disappointment in the Belarusian higher education push young people to go abroad.

In 2015 Belarus joined the Bologna Process, and now curricula are actively being corrected, they are being squared with the curricula of the European universities. The challenge ahead the lecturers is to develop proper curricula in accordance with the demands of business and the tendencies of the world economy. To make such a transition, such a titanic transformation the Belarusian system of education needs to work closely with the representatives of the foreign business in particular and the main is really to make advance.

The Association of European business has promoted the CSR-initiative Job Shadow Days for three years as an example that companies and universities can easily start active cooperation to make curricula closer to the demands of business.

**What is the Job Shadow Days?** This is a popular on-the-job learning practice. It allows to familiarize a student with a profession by means of shadowing an experienced person (a mentor) in a real working environment during a standard work day. Being in a collective a “shadow” can learn more about a specific character of both a chosen job and others, to get important information and the main – to see with their own eyes what a job is like, often- in a company of your dream. The opportunity to go beyond theory and to plunge into practice allows many students to change their opinion about a job, to awake their interest in it. Sometimes having seen their job on the inside, a student comes to understanding that the chosen field doesn't come up to expectations and that he wants to develop in another direction.

The companies, which have already participated in the initiative point out that the Job Shadow Days is an effective tool for a job training of employees themselves as well as for looking for new ones that share the corporate spirit of the company. Firstly, the appointment of a staff member a mentor boosts their self-esteem and motivation. Secondly, thanks to JSD companies can engage the best and motivated students. Thirdly, it's an opportunity to look at your job from another angle and to remember the beginning of the career. Finally, work with students is white PR for a company.

The idea of carrying out such an initiative in Belarus arose at the meeting of the AEB working group on staff training challenges (HR-committee of the AEB) for international companies in 2014. Since then, the AEB has been an organizer of the Job Shadow Days in our country. Moreover, the AEB is a member of the UN Global Compact Network in Belarus, and the JSD one of the corporate and social responsibility projects.

The Association of European Business has announced the eighth admission of mentors among the business community to participate in the action Job Shadow

Days - 2019 in Minsk. Any top-manager or specialist, who represents a private company working in Belarus, can become a mentor (participation in the JSD is free both for mentors and students). To participate in the initiative each mentor should fill out an e-application and be ready to spend one day from 11 to 21 May with a student at the workplace, telling about the specific character of your job.

Every talented student of the 2d-4th courses of Belarusian universities specialized in marketing, law, economics / finance, IT, PR, HR, design, architecture and others can become a “shadow” of the Job Shadow Days.

As the experience of carrying out the Job Shadow Days shows, to obtain good results students don't always need longtime practice, accompanied and reinforced by a superfluous workflow. 1-2 days of cooperation of truly interested and open professionals and talented, hard-working, highly motivated students is necessary. After it universities can get clear answers to the questions on how it's necessary to change or correct a curriculum of specialists of varied employment- from humanitarians to digitheads.

### **Job Shadow Days**

#### **Allows students to:**

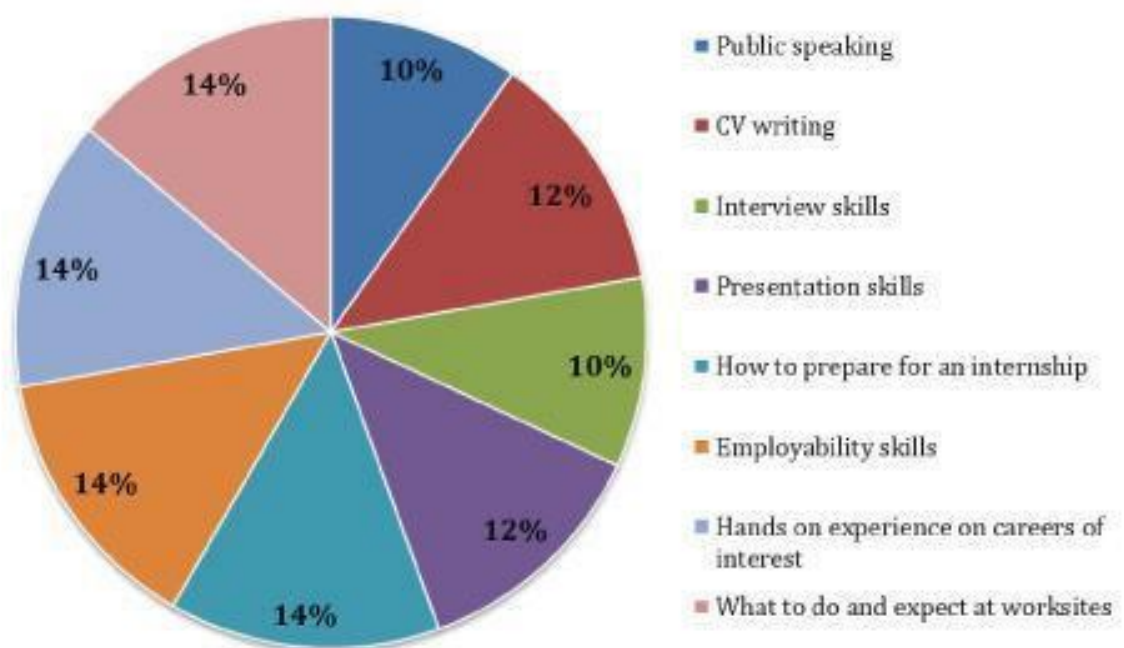
- Gain firsthand experience
- Test their interest in the chosen field
- Test their knowledge in the field
- Correct their academic plan
- Expand their network
- Take advice from professionals for the future
- Learn about the company's brand and philosophy, career opportunities
- To land a job

#### **Benefits for mentors:**

- Boost of self-esteem and motivation
- Improvement of presentation skills
- Engagement of the best students with fresh ideas and opinions
- Obtaining of future efficient and loyal employees
- Opportunity to look at your job from a different angle

- Better understanding of each other's work
- Successful brand building by showing pro-active attitude to the development issue
- White PR and the goodwill of the student community to the company

### Skills offered during job shadowing program



### Feedback from participants.

We collected opinions of students-“shadows” about their internship in companies:

Job Shadowing - a great example proving that a picture worth a thousand words.

Irina Golubich:

And this is me again on Job Shadow Day :) This time I ended up in the legal firm Legaltax. I was lucky to be a "shadow" of great lawyers, and at the same time to

learn a lot of new and interesting things. # JSDBelarus2019 s worth noting that this is a great opportunity to see what you want to do in the future and whether this profession really suits you. It was great! Thanks a lot to the organizers!

Pavel Tyshkevich:

I would like to thank the Association of European Businesses and DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Minsk for the internship opportunity. I am sure that this experience will be useful in professional development. # JSDBelarus2019

Ann Vysotskaya:

The Job Shadow Day program gave me the opportunity to dive into finance and consulting. For one day, I became a "shadow" of such interesting, knowledgeable people as Alexander Babuk, who is the managing partner and author of the MS Excel Professional Skills program, and Yan Malashenok, Project Manager at FIN.by - consulting and software solutions in the field of finance. Thanks to mentors, I learned how important financial consulting is, as it allows company owners to find effective management methods, evaluate investment projects, make economically sound decisions, and also got acquainted with financial models. During the day we had meetings with clients, discussing the further promotion of the program. Thanks for an interesting day # JSDBelarus2019 #finby #finby\_career.

Margarita Kozlova:

Thanks to the Association of European Businesses for the opportunity, within the framework of the Job Shadow Days 2019 program, to become a part of FIN.by - consulting and software solutions in the field of finance. Previously, for me, as for many, consulting was associated with a consultant in a store. Now the understanding of the importance of financial consulting for business has come, since it is it that allows company owners to find effective methods of managing financial resources, make economically sound decisions, and evaluate investment projects. Among the consulting companies, FIN.by stands out favorably by the presence of corporate training programs in the field of IFRS, management accounting, business planning and MS Excel. One of my mentors was Alexander Babuk, managing partner and author of the MS Excel Professional Skills program. The second mentor was Yan Malashenok, the project manager, and after spending a busy day with them, I can say that the day of a financier goes not only sitting at a computer. During the day, we had 3 meetings with clients, a discussion of the further promotion of the program for students and the opening of a corporate MS Excel training program. But despite such a load, FIN.by is actively developing its corporate culture. Therefore, working at FIN.by is not only interesting, but also fun! Being the "shadow" of such cool mentors, you know, Great things never came

from comfort zone! Thank you very much to Alexander, Jan and Danuta, who tried hard and made the day eventful, interesting and useful! # JSDBelarus2019 #finby #finby\_career

Polina Cherenkevich:

One day in the life of @pwcbelarus lawyers together with # JSDBelarus2019: - friendly team - a lot of work - joint recreation - negotiations - feedback - experience and new skills - many smiles and wonderful people Good job! I wish everyone the same Association of European Businesses ♥ ☐

Efremenko Evgenia:

I would like to express my gratitude to the Association of European Businesses for the opportunity to become a part of the travel company "Around the World" LLC for a day as part of the "Job Shadow Days 2019" project. Participation allowed me to get acquainted with the activities of the travel company, I received answers to all my questions, I was able to plunge into the friendly atmosphere of the team. # JSDBelarus2019

At the moment the Association of European Businesses is implementing the project "**Reducing unemployment – promoting entrepreneurship by combining business models and creativity into organic, young and promising businesses**".

The project will engage young people directly and indirectly. We will directly involve at least 240 young people in the project activities and bring participants together for a collaborative effort to build viable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We call them young entrepreneurs who plan to open up new horizons in their lives by exploring the possibility of starting their own business or becoming self-employed (up to 240 young entrepreneurs, counting only those who join the BETTER stage, up to 500 young people who will participate in motivational trainings).

Project activities will be carried out on the territory within the framework of the Program. Opportunities to participate in project activities will be provided to all who apply and fit the target group. The geographic coverage of the project will be distributed evenly between regions in Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus under the Program. We plan that the project activities will be held in the cities of Alytus County, Utena County, Vilnius County, Kaunas County, Panevezys County, Grodno Region, Vitebsk Region, Minsk Region, Mogilev Region, Minsk, Latgale and Zemgale regions. Some of the activities will mainly focus on urban and rural areas.

The project has enormous potential to increase employment, while at the same time helping to increase the number of young people who start their own businesses.

The project will have a positive impact on young people who start their own business: interactive project activities will provide deeper knowledge. The project is aimed at creating a strong and stable network of cross-border communication, coordination of joint actions, exchange of experience and knowledge. A cross-border approach will help to more effectively solve common problems (youth entrepreneurship, youth unemployment, youth emigration) and ensure extensive long-term use of the project results (project implementation methodology, international alliance, cross-border initiatives / trainings).

These results cannot be achieved without cross-border cooperation, because the project is aimed at solving common problems in different regions. The methods for solving these problems are based on cross-border cooperation, ensuring that the best practices of each country are used to carry out activities, create international teams and an alliance, creating an international methodology for the implementation of the project.

The implemented activities will have a positive impact on the sustainability of national and local policies in the following aspects:

1. Ensuring the constant growth of entrepreneurship in the cross-border region, creating an effective business launch ecosystem, etc.
2. Promotion of entrepreneurship, strengthening of regions, fight against unemployment and assistance to SMEs.
3. Creation of favorable conditions for business and sustainable socio-economic development.

The project takes into account the following effective measures to avoid negative environmental impacts:

1. The main source of information will be the interactive web portal.
2. The least number of trips was chosen to minimize the negative impact on the environment.

### **Success stories:**

- On the public procurement procedure (Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade - as a result, pesticides are excluded from the List of goods of foreign origin, in respect of which the conditions for their admission to participation in public procurement procedures are established (Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 206).
- Indirectly through the Foreign Investment Advisory Council under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, amendments to the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 134-3 “Public-Private Partnership (thereafter - PPP)” were supported:

- infrastructure facilities can be transferred to private ownership, use (including for free) for the implementation of projects in the field of PPP;
- PPP can be implemented in relation to infrastructure in the field of information and telecommunication technologies;
- reasonable expenses of private legal entities in preparing a proposal for the implementation of a PPP project (feasibility study, legal services, etc.) shall be reimbursed by the winner of the tender;
- the participants of the competition have the right to appeal the actions (inaction) and decisions of the commission for the competition.
- The adjustment of the Tax Code entered into force:
  - The size of penalties is limited by the amount of unpaid taxes - earlier in practice often the amount of accrued penalties for non-fulfillment of tax obligations significantly exceeded the amount of taxes payable;
  - Suspension of operations on accounts - only for the amount of unfulfilled tax liability / unpaid interest - earlier, due to the small amount of unpaid taxes, all operations on company accounts could be suspended;
  - The offset / refund of excessively paid taxes is possible within 5 years previously within 3 years.
- The initiative of AEB on expanding the participation of citizens and legal entities in the legislative process was supported, the relevant amendments were made to the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 130-3 “On regulatory legal acts”:
  - institutions of public discussion;
  - forecasting the consequences of the adoption of regulatory legal acts;
  - legal monitoring;
  - the requirement is established on the conformity of the adopted regulatory legal acts sustainable development goals contained in international legal acts and legal acts of a program nature.