

THE LIGHT BULB EFFECT (ЕФЕКТ ЛАМПОЧКИ)

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У доповіді йдеться про так зване заплановане застарівання, що визначає хід нашого життя ще з 1920-х рр., коли виробники почали зменшувати довговічність їхніх товарів із метою збільшення попиту серед споживачів. Ефект лампочки – це один із найперших проявів цієї ідеї, тому саме йому приділена увага.

Planned obsolescence is the secret mechanism that drives our consumption society. Our role is to buy unwanted commodities on credit. This society is dominated by the economy of growth, the point of which is to grow for growth. Unless consumers buy, the economy will not grow. It is beneficial to companies to have their lamps bought regularly. So it's economically inappropriate to produce the durable lamps. Originally, the producers aimed to increase the lamps' lifetime. In the 1920s they noted that they were able to create a lamp with a lifetime of 2500 hours. But people in business suits, who controlled the companies for the production of light bulbs in Europe, the USA and Africa, decided to reduce the lamp lifetime to 1000 hours. In the 1940s this goal was achieved.

Ironically, the light bulb, which has always been perceived as a symbol of technological innovation, became a touchstone of planned obsolescence. In the following decades inventors registered many patents of new lamps, including those ones with a lifetime of 100 000 hours, but none of them was gone on sale. The machine production reduced the cost of production of goods, which was a benefit to a consumer. The economy flourished. In 1928 American magazine warned: "Product which is very durable is a tragedy for business".

Unfortunately, the light bulbs effect works in our modern society as well. But a new generation of consumers rose against the producers. Is it possible to create a strong economy without planned obsolescence? Time will tell. However, we, as the representatives of the new generation of consumers, must do everything possible so that the light bulb effect would be just a part of the history of Economics, which we left behind.