

Branson: Technology has changed the world, but not education

As a person who left school at 16 years old, I'm probably the last person to ask for review on topics related to higher education. On the other hand, as a businessman I'm wondering, how well do universities prepare our young people to have their say in an increasingly tough business world.

It annoys me how a lot of time and money spent on obtaining a diploma. I firmly believe that in most areas (with the possible exception of medicine) duration of a University course can and should be cut at least a year, maybe more. This will enable well-educated young people faster to get to work. They don't have to pay the debt on the loan for education (especially in USA). Now, as I said above, colleges are more like warehouses of the students.

In the United States statistics of the Ministry of education shows that the average degree of the [write my essay 4 me](#) bachelor takes a very long time — 55 months (over 4.5 years). No matter how idyllic this time may seem to students, in fact it is empty it is a waste, inefficient, and costly. And if you ask why the process is so long, I have only one answer: tradition!

For many years Virgin thrives on a variety of markets where solid players become lazy and stuck in a routine of ways of doing business for one reason: "we've always done it". I honestly don't know what to do Virgin on the higher education market. But he beckons me: I think I will be able to give him a good shake.

Remember that changes in life and work led to the digital revolution and especially the Internet. I myself was a victim of this revolution, when Virgin Megastores, one of my first and favorite creations, was not needed due to the rise of iTunes and music downloads from the Internet.

Google, iPad and smartphones allow us to receive information in the blink of an eye, or as he likes to say my friend: "Let me involve in this field, my extra brain." In the offices of lawyers still have a library of law books with leather covers, but I'm sure they have long ceased to open. The world wide web has changed everything; well, almost all.

The student, who asked to write the essay, do not need to go to the library, spend hours looking for relevant literature and dig into it, to make a long handwritten notes that are then you will need to decipher and rewrite. Today, he may not go to the library and work from home or use the free WiFi at the cafe. The work that used to take all day, today, can take just a few minutes. And when the essay is written, spelling and grammar checked, it can be sent to the teacher one click.

In the business of air transport is an important indicator of good work — how many hours a day do you use your fleet. The planes are now expensive, and when they are on the ground, you still pay the bills, but they do not bring you profit. The airplane has to stay in the air for at least 12 hours a day — then the work effective, of course, assuming that the plane filled with passengers!

The same approach is applicable to the constant part of the overhead in any business. Can you justify the rent on my office, if you use them only two or three times a week? Of course not; but about the same used by most of the University campuses. And some of these are large properties with huge operational costs that have to bear 365 days a year.

In my opinion, reducing training time at least a year, we get a win-win situation for all involved parties. The airline is plan maximum use of their aircraft, and in the case of training it is necessary to solve the problem of human resource planning.

Let me once again remind you that I am no expert in this matter, but as a pragmatist I see no reason for which the usual 100-hour weeks of training, which are now distributed over three or four years, cannot be turned into 80 weeks spread over two to three years, depending on the desire of the student. Thanks to long-overdue innovation in the curriculum and all technological innovations that save time, students will be able to learn just four or five weeks a year more. They can be fit into the framework of a four-month summer break, students will be able to earn money in the summer.

I understand that for many years in the College or University last easy days before a major transition to "adult life". However, in the last 10 years the business world has accelerated, competition has intensified. So the world of education it's time to follow in his footsteps.

And yet let's be honest: it doesn't matter what diploma you can wave in front of a potential employer: if someone received it a year earlier, your crust will not impress.

It would be possible to organize a youth investment Fund… but I'll think about it later!

Richard Branson