

Transcript of interview with the Head of the Commerce in Ermitazas.It

Interviewer: Hello, Lukai. Thank you for finding some time to participate in my interview for Masters thesis. My name is Ugnė, and today I will ask you some questions about the influence of online consumer reviews on consumer buying behavior for household appliances category. I have prepared 11 questions. I wanted to let you know, that the interview is going to be recorded in order for me to make a report for my master thesis. To begin with, I would like to ask you the first question, “How do you see the importance of online reviews evolving in the current marketplace?”

Interviewee: Hello, Ugnė. Importance of online reviews are much more valuable nowadays and it's evolving by far. First they are seen as much more credible, they help you to choose where to buy from, and we can't forget to mention that it builds a trust of a brand.

Interviewer: In your opinion, how important are online consumer reviews in influencing consumer buying behavior in the household appliances category?

Interviewee: Household appliances, electronics, and tools - these are the categories which could be affected most by customers reviews, so the reviews are in fact really important and play a big role. People see other consumers reviews as a really credible source of information, since this person has already tried the product.

Interviewer: What factors do consumers typically consider when evaluating online consumer reviews for household appliances?

Interviewee: The overall rating of the product is probably what consumers typically consider the most, but I think that the specific use of details should be the priority. And by these I mean adding videos, pictures of the product – these features will be very valuable for consumer in the near future.

Interviewer: How do online consumer reviews compare to other sources of information, such as advertising, in influencing consumer behavior?

Annex 5 (Continuation)

Interviewee: Traditional commercial channels such as TV or radio, can attract already loyal customers or attract new customers with one time offers, however reviews, are better while creating long term partnership, while showing not only the good side of the products.

Interviewer: How do you see the role of online consumer reviews evolving in the future for the household appliances category?

Interviewee: The importance is definitely evolving, but such as the importance of authenticity of these reviews, and we are not only talking about for companies, but for consumers too. Companies are developing IT tools to get as much as possible valid customer reviews. Investments and costs are given to make this happen, so in near future this trustworthy and loyal based relationships will be more efficient and important.

Interviewer: Based on your experience, what are some effective strategies for businesses to leverage online consumer reviews to influence consumer behavior in the household appliances category?

Interviewee: Best strategy is to have best possible basics which are required for e-shop. It means every customer can leave the review, make his comment, add photo and leave his feedback. It's highly recommend to communicate with all customers which had negative experience and solve their problems.

Interviewer: How do you see the credibility and authenticity of online consumer reviews being maintained in the future?

Interviewee: Most efficient and influencing reviews are made from loyal customer, that's why it is so important to let only registered customers leave the feedbacks. Customers should have ratings which shows how experienced they are and this rating is the best way to understand if it's reliable or no, because most efficient and influencing reviews are made from loyal customers who can compare the quality and improvement of the company and most of their assortment.

Interviewer: What are some challenges that businesses face in effectively leveraging online consumer reviews in the household appliances category?

Interviewee: Solving negative situations and comments, getting positive feedback with also avoiding fake comments. I see having efficient rating system is also quite a challenge. Also having comments to most of the assortment, not only the top ones.

Annex 5 (Continuation)

Interviewer: In your opinion, what are some emerging trends or technologies that could potentially disrupt the influence of online consumer reviews on consumer buying behavior in the household appliances category?

Interviewee: Well, that possibly could be AI, data mining for analytical webs, scraping information from competitors side.

Interviewer: How have you seen the role of online reviews change over the past few years, and what do you think is driving these changes?

Interviewee: It became much more influential because customers are linked with better quality and brand history, not only the better price point. The reviews tells the story and these topics are escalated much more than before. To be reliable brand, you have to ensure perfect feedback and reviews from customer point of view.

Interviewer: I have the last question for you. What benefits do you see for the e-shop with the introduction of the online feedback function? Do you yourself follow these reviews and what actions do you take? Is it like a range expansion or discontinuation, restocking of popular products?

Interviewee: The main thing is that you can discover successful and unsuccessful products, understand what's missing in the descriptions, where the mistakes have been made, and what's really important to the buyer, because this is where the seller often goes wrong.

Interviewer: Lukai, thank you for your time. It was my pleasure talking to you.

Interviewee: Thank you, Ugnè.