

## Transcript of interview with the Head of the IT Product in Senukai.lt

**Interviewer:** Hello, Raminta. Thank you so much for finding some time in your schedule for this interview. 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. The interview is going to be recorded in order 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. It's my pleasure. I think, that the importance increases as the number of people shopping online increases. Now people are looking not only for price, but also for a trustworthy seller and quality, and it is the reviews that say the most about quality.

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

**Interviewee:** Well, reviews are increasingly important in the purchase decision, with more and more people looking first at the reviews and then at the seller's description of the product. It does not matter if it's a household appliance or some electronic device. Customers not only want to know what others have to say, but also – to ask questions. This is because product descriptions often do not answer customers' questions, do not correspond to reality, or are more "salesy" than actually presenting the product. Reviews are seen as more credible.

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

**Interviewee:** It has to be quantity and the relationship between good and bad reviews. And reasoning. People always look up whether the reviews are not written by the seller.

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

**Interviewee:** Often this is information from actual practice or experiences, and often negative qualities are identified. That would never be shown in the advertisement.

### **Annex 3 (Continuation)**

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

**Interviewee:** It will only grow! With time video testimonials, unboxing, videos of use in practice will become more and more important. Especially after used for some time "time tested testimonials" will be useful. The importance of descriptions I would say will diminish, with the exception of technical specifications.

**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:** Putting feedback first in advertising, using strategies and reviews to gather quality feedback and deliver it to customers. Focusing on building a community of shoppers, with easy and simple communication between customers in e-shops.

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

**Interviewee:** By identifying those who write, limiting the number of people who leave a review to those who have bought a product. Only registered and identified customers should participate in the community. Transparently publishing the rules on how feedback is collected is also very important.

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

**Interviewee:** The quality, completeness, quantity and quantity of reviews. Also the number of negative reviews, because sellers avoid those.

**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:** Web site security, data protection vulnerabilities against hacking and data leaks. Also, stringent regulations that complicate the customer journey before a review is submitted - vendors are not yet able to find the most convenient way to leave feedback.

### **Annex 3 (Continuation)**

**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:** Oh, it changed radically! From irrelevant, possibly falsified info from the sellers, to reliable, transparent, up-to-date information about the product. This has been influenced by new regulations, customer demand for quality and the seller's reputation, as price is slowly becoming a secondary consideration and new demands are being made by customers.

**Interviewer:** Amazing. Raminta, I have the last remaining 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:** Well, you can easily discover what has worked and what hasn't, understand what's missing in the descriptions of the products, where mistakes have been made, and what's really important to the buyer. Because as the sellers we are often wrong here. And of course such info is tracked and not only the assortment is shaped by it, but also the IT functionalities can be improved by providing info about the products. For example: when the sound or the real-life pictures are important for the customers, not just the catalogue image.

**Interviewer:** Raminta, thank you again for such a great insights. It was a pleasure hearing your ideas and talking to you!

**Interviewee:** Thank you for having me here! I had a blast. And good luck with your Masters thesis!

