

Transcript of interview with the Head of the Household Appliances category in Senukai.lt

Interviewer: Hello, Simona, it has been a while! As you already know – 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. Yes, it has been a while. I'm glad you asked me to join such an interesting interview. To answer your question - more and more big manufacturers and online players put attention to customer ratings and reviews due to its importance in sales. Also, it helps to control good and not high quality assortment.

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

Interviewee: I think it plays a major role in product sales actually, similar as product description and product videos in online sales channel. Negative reviews may decrease trust of the customer and as a result of this the sales decrease. Similarly with positive reviews. Also, it helps to supplement product information that sometimes e-shop channels lack.

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

Interviewee: Stars rating, comments and products pictures. Especially real life product pictures or videos that help to create touch and feel feeling for the online customer.

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

Interviewee: When seeing negative or positive product review people tend to confirm on another person decision to buy or reject the purchase decision. Marketing channels are dedicated to spread

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awareness about the product, ongoing promotions and to generate customers flow to the shops whereas customer reviews calls customer to action to buy or not to buy. They either help to affirm possible buying decision or reject it. Customers reviews help to build trust on the purchase decision customer is making.

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

Interviewee: In my opinion, nearest future more and more internet shops will put more attention to increase rating reviews as it is not only sales dribance tool but also helps to increase products and online shop credibility. Also it will become a good marketing tool and different marketing communication channel: as an example you comment, leave review and you get a discount, some sort of gift and etc.

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: Hmm.. I would say reminding emails about possibility to evaluate products. Or giving gifts, discount coupons for the reviews and ratings as I mentioned earlier.

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

Interviewee: Institutional laws require identification of customer review to be published, therefore, only real people that made order can leave product rating and review. For the credibility internet shops will have to monitor manually or automatically the reviews if it matches the product theme and has no offensive or irrelative messages.

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

Interviewee: There are still some false or misleading comments for product reviews. Also companies will need to automatize review systems in order to publish authentic reviews, reviews without violations and etc. Some good selling items may get bad reviews for example due to late delivery, which may become possible disadvantage and decrease in sales even though the product is good. Also

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to reach a certain scale of reviews companies will have to invest in marketing channels to get the reviews and keep the customers engaged in sharing the reviews.

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: Complex of legal regulations on businesses how the reviews should be left, customer data protection. Companies will need to think of ways how not to violate GDPR and laws.

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: I think the need to increase number of reviews have tremendously increased and we see it from the interest of biggest manufacturers. It helps to create credibility, the need to “have because others have” it. There are still many unhappy customers when purchasing products, so reviews help to increase credibility, soothe the buying decision, helps to choose easier from few products as well as complements manufacturers products descriptions.

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: Currently We (senukai.lt) are in testing stage, but we will analyze products based on reviews: bad reviews product will be taken out of assortment, good reviews product will be resupplied. Also, such rating reviews number helps companies to get marketing budget from

suppliers so it will become another channel for the commerce department to increase profit from manufacturers.

Interviewer: Simona, thank you for such a deep and interesting insights on the topic. It was a pleasure hearing you and your ideas again.

Interviewee: Thank you, Ugnė. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions. It was nice talking to you.