Chapter V

Consumers on the Road from E-Communication to E-Shopping

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Abstract

This chapter deals with the effect of new forms of consumer communication on shopping behavior. New communication technologies are in a constant state of development, and much debate is taking place concerning the multi-channel communication society. However, in reality, people are continually switching from one channel to another. In this regard, what is important is from whose point of view the system eventually will be controlled. It also can be argued that the opinions and needs of ordinary people have not necessarily received the strongest focus in developing multi-channel technology. This chapter is divided into three main sections. First, the development in message volumes and new technologies within the past decade is analyzed. Second, consumer preferences concerning the means of communication when receiving marketing information are analyzed.
Third, the evolution and current state of B2C e-commerce and changes in consumers’ purchasing habits are discussed. Finally, a future vision of consumer behavior in a multi-channel world is presented.

**Introduction**

In this chapter, we deal with the effect of new forms of consumer communication on purchase behavior. The subject of the examination is the development of communication means and its wider consequences (e.g., receiving advertising, paying invoices, and consumers’ purchasing behaviors). The rapid development of information technology that began in the 1990s has had a profound influence on the ordinary consumer’s work day. The Internet and, in particular, the mobile phone have become primary tools in communication between people, and their roles also have also increased considerably in consumer marketing. Trade taking place through the Internet has increased steadily, and this development seems to be accelerating. Indeed, it seems that there is a profound digital revolution in progress that affects consumers’ lives and behaviors in several areas. Finland, on account of its advanced technology and people’s positive attitudes toward technology, is participating in the first wave of this development. However, consumer preferences tend to change slowly and may require active guidance and realized experiences of utility. The direction and speed of development in other advanced countries also can be estimated from the changes that are now taking place in Finland.

**Historical Development of Communication**

If we consider the evolution of targeted communication over the past 20 years, we will notice many interesting stages. During the 1980s, the letter experienced a period of intense growth in use. Although letter services were rivaled by the fixed telephone, the increase in communication sufficed for both forms. Furthermore, at the same time, the prevalence of electronic communication generated new forms of letter messaging (Nikali, 1998).

A new competitor to the letter arrived in the 1980s in the form of the telefax, which enabled the printed message to be sent in real time through an electronic channel. This brought about two significant changes in the evolution of the letter:
Profitability of Indian Firms in Foreign Direct Investment
www.igi-global.com/article/profitability-of-indian-firms-in-foreign-direct-investment/172818?camid=4v1a