OMNICHANNEL IN SHAPING DISTRIBUTION PROCESS ON CONSUMER MARKET

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Introduction

Modern distribution, especially in the retail sector has to face many challenges resulting from new market trends and consumer behaviours.

In the era of ubiquitous Internet technology that is applied in all areas of marketing activity of enterprises and other market organisations, creation of omnichannel-based business models both in the sphere of distribution and communication with market is a real challenge. Application of various traditional and modern market channels that, while permeating in their influence on customers, shape their experiences in the real and virtual space, is the essence of omnichannel. Changes observed in consumer attitudes and reactions to new distribution solutions require recognition of factors and perceived benefits prompting the use of these solutions. It is also necessary to study what forms of market and marketing activities conducive to the development of multi-channel trade are used by enterprises and what is the importance of using these solutions on shaping the business models of such enterprises.

The goal of the paper is to present the premises and the role of omnichannel in shaping consumer behaviours and influencing business models of contemporary enterprises in the sphere of distribution.

The research method used in the article are: an analysis of secondary sources and own nationwide research that was carried out by the author in the period 2017–2018.

The secondary sources were obtained both from in-depth literature sources and research reports compiled by research agencies, including Gemius, Forrester Consulting, TNS Polska, as well as such organisations as Bell Howell (American service-providing organisation), Knight Frank (consulting company in Poland) and Centiro company in Sweden is the research method applied in the paper.

In the study of research reports, a technique was used to identify manifestations of consumer behavior under the influence of services related to the multi-channel trade model used by companies. The indicated research technique also referred to the identification of forms of strategic and operational activities of enterprises focused on the omnichannel model.

The analysis of the obtained research results allowed to answer the following research question: what are the directions and manifestations of the impact of the omnichannel model on consumer behaviour when choosing their distribution options, and what is its significance in shaping business models of enterprises?

Omnichannel and multichannel retailing

There are substantial differences between multi-channel and omnichannel approaches. They translate into different strategies of influencing the market.

Multi-channel customer management is defined as designing, implementing and evaluating channels for the purpose of increasing the customer value through efficient customer acquisition, retainment and development (Neslin et al., 2006). Meanwhile, in the omnichannel approach, striving for achievement of synergy effects with benefit both for the customer, through shaping of integrated experiences, and the company that achieves better channel efficiency is emphasised (Verhoef et al., 2015).

Companies applying multichannel approach adopt two or more channels to engage their customers, but they do not focus on provision of a coherent message across all points of contact with the company, which is not conducive to optimising the experiences of customers who use different channels. On the other hand, striving to ensure coherence in influencing customers through integrated actions and personalised service in interactions with customers is the fundamental assumption of omnichannel approach to relationships and engagement of customers. Companies endeavour to enable customers to receive the same messages and experiences in every point of contact, regardless of applied channels and devices (Chatterjee, 2010, p. 10).

The analysis shows that companies that apply strategies of customer experience management (CEM) based on properly constructed omnichannel programs reach on average the rate of customer retainment higher by 91% compared to organisations with no such programs. This also allows to reach on average 3.4% of an increase in customer life value, whereas in companies without omnichannel programs, the value of customer life is actually declining by approximately 7% per year (Minkara, 2014).

Customers' use of services in omnichannel model

Studies conducted by Mobile Institute in Poland show that 72% of consumers using in 2016 more than one device with access to the internet buy the same brands in several available sales channels while expecting coherent

offer in each of them. This raises a challenge to companies operating in the omnichannel model (IGE, 2016).

The main sales service provided in the omnichannel model is Click and Collect, which allows for implementation of the new purchase model replacing e-retailing with home delivery.

According to the latest research conducted by Bell Howell, 88% of the respondents indicated the speed of purchasing process as the reason for using „click and collect” service whereas for 76% of the respondents the cost of delivery was the second most frequently listed reason for using this service (Serrano, 2018). These reasons are also indicated among most important causes for which buyers abandon their e-commerce baskets.

It is a very popular model on the European FMCG online market, successfully applied by leading retail chains such as Tesco or E. Leclerc. The greatest interest in this purchasing model is expressed by consumers in Great Britain and France. And so, in Great Britain the shopping basket generated in the click and collect system proves to be five times bigger than the one generated by traditional buying model, i.e. in a brick and mortar store. Although in 2014 France with 6.1% share in the market was the leader in this respect (Egospodarka, 2014), it is predicted that by 2025 Click and collect service will have reached 10% in Great Britain (23 billion pounds) (*UK online delivery ...*, 2016).

Click and collect service is gaining popularity also in Poland, and not only among big companies, even though availability of this service for customers is significantly diversified between trades and economy sectors.

According to studies performed by Knight Frank in 2017, half of the 120 surveyed brands that sell their products in shopping centres, provide Click and collect service. Leaders in this area are companies from the multimedia sectors – 100%, electronics – 85% and DIY products – 80%. In other sectors the scope of using this service is smaller, and it reaches 46% in stores with clothes and accessories, while shops of other sectors, i.e. shoe shops, furniture and furnishing shops, as well as those offering toys, kids’ clothing, books and CDs are currently at the stage of its implementation. Customers of pharmacies, chemists, chains with grocery products and FMCG products can also use this service increasingly more often. Implementation of Click and collect service by catering companies, especially Starbucks, McDonald’s, KFC, Pizza Hut, Domino’s Pizza significantly facilitates meeting customers’ needs because ordering through a mobile application on the way to the restaurant eliminates the time of waiting to be served (Knight Frank, 2017).

Modern customers expect trouble-free use of online and brick and mortar stores, however considerable differences are observed between consumers of different generations in terms of behaviour related to choosing the channel of distribution at individual stages of the buying process. Consumers belonging to the Baby Boomers generation prefer traditional brick and mortar distribution channels in the whole buying process, while representatives of generation X use the Internet channel at the stage of seeking information about the offer, but they finalise the purchase in brick and mortar channel. Generation Y

behaves in a similar way, while they are more critical towards information gained online (Lipowski, 2016, p. 228).

Execution of sale in the omnichannel model requires expansion of the scope of services for customers who use both the offline and online channel.

A vast majority of studied brands (companies), i.e. 91% provide a list of stores of a given chain on the website or through a mobile application, which allows potential customers to use it while configuring a buying model that is optimal for them. Customers often do shopping following the ROPO model. They gain information about the offer online, and this allows to make the purchase decision that is executed in a brick and mortar store. However, only 41% of the studied companies offer the customers the possibility to check, through the webpage, whether the product they search for is available in the brick and mortar store. Very few, i.e. 2% of the companies have the possibility to book a product through the website and only 36% of the studied companies offer the possibility to return the products purchased online to a brick and mortar store (Knight Frank, 2017).

The growing importance of mobile devices in omnichannel-based buying models should be indicated because moving between channels is an important feature of buying behaviours of contemporary consumers. Mobile devices are not only used to do shopping; they also became an important, as well as highly convenient source of information about the latest offers, products, and brands.

Almost every other consumer uses mobile devices in the purchasing process, more often men and people from lower age groups (mainly between the age of 18 and 24), among whom over 60% declare making purchases in this way. People with secondary and higher education also stand out in this respect, as well as people who run their own business and profession, taking into account the nature of the employment¹.

Two thirds of respondents making purchases with the use of mobile devices claim that sometimes they start shopping on the phone but complete the transaction on the computer. It is more often declared by people who assess the financial situation of their household as good. Almost 60% of the respondents admit that while they are talking to friends, they check various products on the mobile phone, smartphone or tablet. Such behaviours are declared most often by the youngest respondents because they have the ability to perform several activities at the same time. 2/3 of the surveyed mobile devices users declare that while buying, for example clothes, radio and television equipment or household appliances in a traditional store, they happen to check the prices of the same products on their smartphone (Gemius, 2018).

The observed changes in the popularity of specific sales channels for the benefit of mobile channels influence an increase in the share of these channels in income generation because mobile devices enable the companies to meet the needs of customers in a more comprehensive way through provision of highly personalised offers. This is because smartphones allow for the use of the geolocation mechanisms from GPS and Bluetooth to determine where the customers are in a given space.

The presented results indicate significant changes in consumer purchasing models resulting from the possibility of simultaneous use of several distribution channels. The main motive for using various forms of online and offline channel integration is the pursuit of simplifying the purchasing processes as well as a desire to increase the convenience of the modern consumer who is under the influence of a growing number of market stimuli. When tracking the purchase paths of consumers (online shopping, Ropo, inverted Ropo and traditional shopping), it should be emphasised that the models in which the search for information about the offer on the internet plays a key role, but whether the purchase will be carried out in a traditional or online store, depends on the type of buyer and specific sales conditions. The author's own research indicates that purchases in the Ropo mode were made in the period of 2017–2018 by 37.4% of consumers, more often by younger people, i.e. between the ages of 18 and 25 (45.1%), and least often by people over the age of 60 (23.7%), who prefer traditional shopping models. It is also worth emphasising that men slightly more often than women make purchases in the Ropo mode. Taking into account the level of education, people with secondary education stand out, for among them 42.3% look for information about the offer on the Internet to later make a purchase in traditional stores. Customers with high requirements are most susceptible to the Ropo effect, for the information about the offer obtained on the Internet is insufficient for them. These customers need direct, physical contact with the product to learn its sensory features (cosmetics, food), detailed technical elements (home furnishings), substantive features (books, music records, films) or aesthetic, designer features (clothing and other items especially susceptible to fashion). This category of customers is also particularly sensitive to the compliance of the online transmission of the offer with the actual features identified at the point of sale.

Achieving the benefits of multi-channel sales by consumers undoubtedly depends on the ability to use modern communication technologies, which is why trends in this area are set by consumers of generations Y and Z, who are permanent users of the Internet and fully appreciate its potential. It can be assumed that the effect of these new trends will cause, on the one hand an increase in the rationality of purchases due to expanding knowledge about the offer, and on the other hand a greater sensitivity to messages using emotional arguments due to high comparability of offers. The scope of changes in the purchasing models will be the result of shaping the relationship between the four purchasing paths, with a preference for paths based on omnichannel, which create greater chances of shaping positive experiences and the level of satisfaction.

The role of omnichannel strategy in shaping business models of companies in the area of distribution

Multichannel retailing enforces the development of traditional stores that allow online companies to adapt to expectations of customers who want to collect

products ordered online in such stores. Brick and mortar stores also offer the opportunity of interaction and inspiration that are important for customer service.

Amazon that purchased in 2017 Whole Foods Market, a chain of supermarkets with healthy food is a perfect example here. Now the customers can order grocery food products directly on Amazon Fresh and collect them in local stores. In the same period Wal-Mart purchased an online store with Bonobos clothes while gaining fashionable clothing brands for its product portfolio. It is extremely vital in the pursuit to achieve a competitive advantage over Amazon company, which is rapidly expanding its activity also in the clothing sector. This is a continuation of an aggressive trend started by Wal-mart in 2017 with the purchase of e-commerce company Jet.com, and also other online companies, i.e. the seller of ModCloth clothes, Shoe-Buy.com shoe seller and the internet store with Moosejaw outdoor equipment (*Omnichannel e-Commerce ...*, 2019). This trend of Wal-Mart strategic operations is efficient because it allows to expand the scope of impact, and to focus on brands attracting younger customers.

Business models based on multichannel retailing produce a series of benefits both for customers and for companies.

Physically located brick and mortar stores perform the function of showrooms for customers who want to test and try out a product before the final online purchase.

The benefits for retailers, related to the application of omnichannel result from the provision of Click and Collect services and include:

- stimulation of impulse buying that make majority of customers buy additional products,
- cost reduction because it is the buyer who covers the delivery costs while collecting the product in the store,
- increase in the sales due to an unintended purchase which is shown among others by Internet Retailing or Bell and Howell. According to the former, 60–75% of Click and Collect customers buy additional products, whereas according to Bell and Howell the number reaches 49% of buyers,
- elimination of online returns because the customers can use brick and mortar service centres if they want to return the product,
- decrease in the rate of shopping basket abandonment (Serrano, 2018).

However, provision of Click and Collect services creates several challenges that retailers not always can face. They result from the reasons of using the service by customers who make their own calculation while making the purchase decision.

The research conducted in 2017 on the Australian internet market where the level of use of Click and Collect service (47% buyers) belongs, after Great Britain (54% buyers), to the largest, (in Germany 28%, and in France 36%), indicated that 68% of Australian customers faced problems while using Click and Collect. The number is significantly higher than in Great Britain (43%). The problems included too long waiting time (27%), difficulties in

location of products by store workers (27%) and the lack of a dedicated Click and Collect zone in the store (20%) (JDA, 2017).

Therefore, companies should strive to make Click and Collect service more convenient for customers. The following necessary trends of operations should be indicated:

- coordination of sales processes in offline and online channels on the basis of data about customers' purchasing paths,
- creation of clearly signposted product collection zones in stores,
- preparation of products to be collected by the customer,
- ensuring the possibility to return products in all company channels,
- trainings in the sphere of customer service provided to store workers.

Due to observed declining trends of operational income associated with application of Click and Collect. The following diverse ways of rationalisation of operations are proposed (*UK online delivery ...*, 2016):

- a) facilitation of logistic processes, i.e. storage, collection of orders, packaging, and delivery
 - sending products from stores that are closer to customers' addresses,
 - adaptation of frequency of delivery to the character of sale areas
 - application of more flexible labour models.
 - b) development of partnership between retailing companies to accelerate the processes and reduce their capital intensity.
- Practices of American companies are good examples here. In the USA, Uniqlo cooperates with 7-Eleven to offer Click and Collect services from their store. Customers can do the shopping as usual, on Uniqlo website and collect the products in the local 7-Eleven chain. Thanks to this, customers can order products all day long, which expands the scope of impact of 7-Eleven stores (Romeyn, 2016). Similarly, cooperation between Alibaba Group Holding Limited and Suning.com Co., Ltd in China allows the company to provide services to considerably larger number of customers.
- c) convincing the consumers that they should not buy online if they see on the Internet that the products they need are locally available and easy to find in the store,
 - d) implementation of uniform pricing and discount policy.

Coherence of pricing and discount policy in online and offline channels that allows for enhancement of brand reliability is the determinant of omnichannel strategy efficiency. It is one of the major omnichannel tools. Discounts are also an essential element of the pricing policy (Szreter, 2017). They also often attract customers to the store and encourage to make a buying decision. Therefore, an efficiently implemented omnichannel strategy assumes the same prices and promotions in online and offline channels.

However, in case of promotions dedicated only to brick and mortar stores or online stores, there are differences in prices, therefore, it is necessary to inform customers about the sale or promotional prices in e-stores or in brick and

mortar stores, because knowing this allows to shape buying models rationally. However, research shows that there is no such information which does not ensure coherence of assortment offer, prices and promotion between various sales channels (*Raport z badania wielokanałowości ...*, 2015).

Communication, data management and technology – determinants of omnichannel model development

Integrated marketing communication should be the starting point in the omnichannel model because skilful management of information recorded in various channels and reacting to all signals in the way that aims at solving consumers' problems and ensuring their satisfaction is assumed in the model.

Building communication with customers must be based on detailed, well-selected databases originating in the market. A solution is to create a fully integrated, omnichannel model from the combination of data, contained in the customer management systems used in the company. An important element of support should be the marketing information system, whose structure and functioning is directly affected by trends in the market environment.

Efficient implementation of the omnichannel model requires involvement and cooperation of many departments in the company, including sales, logistics, accounting and marketing, whereas understanding of the omnichannel assumptions and skilful management of data about the market and customers is the basis of this cooperation. Application of innovative technologies that allow to identify potential customers, recognise their location, monitor their shopping, and also link the data about online and offline shopping is a necessary condition.

IT and Business Intelligence, which allow for implementation of all functions in a symbiotic way, in order to constantly adapt to this dynamic market, are the key elements of multichannel approach (Gelder, 2017).

To maintain this consistency, it is important to use Customer Intelligence, which allows to identify areas on the customer path that impede a smooth transition between distribution channels. Removing these obstacles will allow for efficient penetration of the real and virtual world and shaping ever better experience in using individual distribution channels.

Promotional operations applied within omnichannel strategy

1. Tools of communication with customers in omnichannel strategies

Simultaneous use of various channels and tools of communication in omnichannel strategies requires their integration and implementation of the mix of tools already in the process of communication coding and de-coding. As a result the communication constitutes the sum of messages communicated in many media with the use of diverse tools of marketing communication (Gotwald-Feja, 2017).

This hypermediality results in the fact that, relationships between information recipients, especially on its last level is extremely important. Multichannel communication is most often supported by the opinion leaders who have impact on the way in which products and consumer actions are evaluated (Smith, Taylor, 2004).

In the process of communication between the company and its customers not only such instruments as helpline, e-mail or contact forms are used, but also, even though considerably less frequently, the communication channels that allow for providing consultancy services. Chat that is used by 39% of Polish retailers is such a channel. While doing shopping in the chain, customers expect advice through store website in-built or external communicator (e.g. Skype or Gadu-Gadu). 18% of consumers using chat complete their purchase, whereas customers communicating with the retailer in this way, buy in the store 35% more often than consumers who do not use this service (Mamstartup, 2016).

Thanks to such systems as SALESmango, GetResponse or Marketizator that enable integration of data coming from various sources including mobile devices, social media, search engines and product feeds among others, it is possible to react promptly to consumer behaviours in a given sales channel. Therefore, signals about abandoned baskets should encourage managers and system administrators to act in the way that will stimulate customers to complete the transaction. Firstly, there are the so-called follow-ups, i.e. automatic reminders that the purchase process has not been finished. As practitioners show, such reminders are sent in the form of e-mail messages three times, i.e. on the day the basket is abandoned, then 3 days later and finally, after a month, but this time with additional information about a special discount. Expanding these messages by product pictures and recommendations of satisfied customers increases the efficiency of such operations (Ławryniewicz, Szylar, 2016).

In the face of growing customer requirements and striving to expand the scope of online sales virtual sellers (chatbots), thanks to artificial intelligence, have a big role to play, as they allow to keep up with the pace of incoming messages and to achieve synchronization of responses to specific customer questions.

Conversational interfaces allow the access to customer service through several channels, which is very convenient for each customer, leaving them the freedom to choose the preferred distribution and communication channel. However, this requires the use of comparable solutions in these channels – more customer-friendly solutions regarding e.g. payment methods, returns of goods policy or forms of post-purchase communication.

The ultimate solution in the omnichannel model is to create a sales platform that would combine all existing online channels with the consumer's visit to the point of sale.

To make this possible, the company should move the sales base of an online store, with the entire purchase history of the customer to all used sales channels, including stationary stores. This increases the knowledge of the sellers about the customers, their behaviour, habits and shopping

preferences, which in turn facilitates the personalisation of the offer. The selection of marketing tools that stimulate sales and increase customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is also more accurate. The efficiency of sales processes is influenced by the unification of payment methods in individual channels and their adaptation to identified customer groups. It is also very important to conduct a consistent warehouse management to optimise the supply chain in the omnichannel model (Kwiatkowski, 2017)

Research conducted among clients shows that they rate the integrated service model highly, only when it combines a relevant product offer with operational efficiency (Pawłowski, Pastuszek, 2019).

Product Information Management (PIM) platforms are used to ensure consistent information about the product offer at every point of contact between the consumer and the brand, which, as part of the modern e-commerce infrastructure, allows comprehensive management of product information, such as: names, categories, attribute presentations, photographs, etc. (Kwiatkowski, 2017).

Creation of a sales platform that would combine all online channels with consumer's visit in the point of sale is a target solution in omnichannel model. Beacons perfectly support associating purchase behaviours in real and virtual space because systems based on them allow for connecting with customers' smartphones or tablets via Bluetooth Low Energy BLE technology. Thanks to personalised data about customers, history of their shopping and current location, beacons allow for proposing them the function of navigation, in a given moment, that enable to find a product in a store, as well as information and promotion forms, e.g. loyalty points or discount vouchers corresponding to current needs (*Mobile w realu ...*, 2016).

2. The use of social media and influencers' potential

The role of social media in shaping the omnichannel strategy increases with the dissemination of these media in the lives of increasingly larger groups of consumers. Who sets the tone here, are younger generations of consumers, for whom the recommendations of friends and aspirational reference groups are important premises for making market choices, but there is also an increase in the interest of representatives of older generations in using various types of social media. This is the result of the strategy these media apply, which is focused on providing broad information about the offer and the creation of favourable purchase conditions, while at the same time some media simply become sales places.

Launching the recommendation mechanism effectively stimulates the purchase of specific brands on social media.

The author's own research shows that among social media used by consumers, social networking websites have relatively the greatest impact on their purchases, e.g.: Facebook and Instagram (46.6% of respondents), as well as internet forums (34.6% of respondents) and price comparison websites, e.g. Ceneo (30.7%) and opinion and recommendation services, e.g. Opineo (24.3%). Only 19.2% of respondents do not use social media in the purchase process at all.

Research shows that while making purchase decisions, 49% of e-consumers follow influencers' recommendations and 40% of Twitter users purchased a product under the influence of a tweet. It is predicted that influencers will have increasingly bigger impact on making buying decisions (IGE, 2018).

Being aware of the importance of the relationships with customers, retail chains invest in actions on social networking portals. They do not limit themselves only to brand profiles, but they propose content engaging users, encouraging them to continue discussion. Almost all studied brands (91%) had their profiles on social networking portals (Knight Frank, 2017).

A research conducted by Mobil Institute shows that every third social media user makes purchases there, and liking the brand increases the likelihood of such a purchase five times. Social media effectively inspires shopping, especially people who "like" and "follow" brands in these media. In addition to sharing information about products, social media users actively consult their purchasing intentions, asking for professional advice on various products, both specialised and everyday use, in order to make the right choice not only of a given product, but also of the sales channel. This is declared by 56% of Internet users actively using social media. However, despite high expectations of users, among whom 61% consider the "buy it" button very useful, presently only 28% of companies allow their customers to buy products or services directly through the social media channel (Mobil Institute, 2016), but this percentage will increase.

For social media, creating opportunities to personalise the message, are perceived by users as an increasingly important potential purchase channel, which translates into the sales results of brands present in these media.

When assessing the role of social media in shaping shopping decisions, it should be emphasised that their potential in encouraging customers to buy is enormous, not only due to attractive presentation of products in the form of photos, but also thanks to telling stories about products and brands that stimulate customers' imagination and feelings. Adding to this the highly developed mechanism for recommending products by friends from social networking sites, further expansion of these media in shaping consumer purchasing decisions and the development of the omnichannel model can be expected.

Conclusions

The omnichannel model is a response to challenges of the contemporary market, new technological trends and growing expectations of customers and enterprise efforts to achieve a competitive advantage through linking the world of online and offline shopping.

The results presented in the article indicate significant changes in consumer purchasing models resulting from the possibility of simultaneous use of several distribution channels. Considerable differences are observed between consumers belonging to different generations with respect to behaviours when choosing distribution channel at individual stages of buying process.

Achieving the benefits of multi-channel sales by consumers, undoubtedly depends on the ability to use modern communication technologies, which is why trends in this area are set by consumers of generation Y and Z, who are permanent users of the Internet and social media and fully appreciate their potential.

Companies that apply the multi-channel approach adopt two or more channels to engage their customers, but they do not focus on providing a coherent message across all these multiple points of contact with the company which is not conducive to optimisation of experiences of customers who use different channels.

A condition for creating integrated customer experiences is implementation of a consistent marketing policy that shapes user interactions with the company, brand and service.

The sources of advantage over previous distribution models lie in providing the customers with broad access to the offer through the possibility of choice of when, where, and how they want to have the access. Everything depends on consumer and buying preferences and habits of customers because the choice and providing consumers with the possibility to decide about their own experiences is an extremely important determinant in omnichannel.

In this context, the condition for the success of the omnichannel business model is the use of Customer Knowledge Management, i.e. the concept based on customer knowledge as a key variable in shaping the decisions of enterprises and other organisations on the modern market. The dispersion of this knowledge in four perspectives, i.e. knowledge about clients, knowledge from clients, as well as in the perspective of knowledge for clients and knowledge co-created with clients, allows to create a comprehensive, coherent basis for making decisions aimed at coordinating actions in the omnichannel model. The knowledge generated in each of these perspectives is crucial in shaping strategic and operational decisions in the omnichannel model. Thus, acquiring knowledge about customers (first perspective) allows explaining and understanding their needs, deep motivations and expectations, as well as mechanisms for responding to market stimuli, and adding to this knowledge from customers (second perspective) regarding their satisfaction and loyalty or reasons for post-purchase dissonance, gives the decision-maker the basis for designing relevant marketing activities in distribution channels and market communication.

Based on the patterns of customer behaviour in individual market channels, the company should create solutions that allow integrated management of all channels. The effectiveness of the omnichannel system depends on this knowledge and the ongoing monitoring of consumer behaviour, as well as the course of sales processes in individual channels.

Managers' efforts should go towards the optimal use of the potential of each distribution channel, and this requires creating right conditions for customers to familiarise themselves with the offer and the ability to compare and evaluate products to choose the best option. It is therefore necessary to include the omnichannel approach in the customer experience management process (Cus-

tomer Experience Management) because the possibility of using it by various sales and communication channels has an impact on shaping the customer's positive experiences.

Finally, the role of technology and digital managers' competences should be emphasised because the effectiveness and efficiency of implementing the omnichannel model in an enterprise depends on it. Customer Intelligence analytical platforms facilitate the exploration of data about customers and sales processes, creating analytical content and coordinating the transmission of messages between channels and devices used by customers. In this way, as well as thanks to personalised interactions, it is possible to skilfully adapt the strategy to the identified channels and extend the range of multi-channel sales.

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Endnote

- 1) The research was nationwide and was conducted by the author in the period of 2017–2018, on a population of 1328 Polish consumers, in the following voivodships: Dolnośląskie, Lubelskie, Łódzkie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Pomorskie, Podkarpackie, Śląskie, Wielkopolskie, and Zachodniopomorskie. The samples used are comparable according to the basic criteria, i.e. age, sex, education, place of residence (city-village) and main source of income. The method of quantitative sampling was used, selecting respondents under the above – mentioned layers.

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Sprzedaż wielokanałowa (omnichannel) w kształtowaniu procesu dystrybucji na rynku konsumpcyjnym

Streszczenie

W dobie rozwoju gospodarki cyfrowej rośnie znaczenie modelu omnichannel w oddziaływaniu na zachowania klientów przy dokonywaniu wyboru form dystrybucji, co znajduje wyraz w modelach biznesowych przedsiębiorstw. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie przesłanek

i roli omnichannel w kształtowaniu zachowań konsumentów oraz w oddziaływaniu na modele biznesowe współczesnych przedsiębiorstw w obszarze dystrybucji. Obserwowane zmiany zachowań zakupowych konsumentów wskazują na wykształcanie się nowych modeli zakupowych coraz bardziej korzystnych dla współczesnych konsumentów, którzy doceniają rolę nowoczesnych technologii informacyjno-komunikacyjnych. Zmieniają się też modele biznesowe przedsiębiorstw, które dążąc do sprostania oczekiwaniom konsumentów, realizują sprzedaż w dwu lub więcej kanałach dystrybucji. Jednak słabością stosowanych rozwiązań sprzedażowych jest brak spójnego przekazu we wszystkich tych wielu punktach kontaktu z firmą. Dla zachowania tej spójności ważne jest stosowanie analityki Customer Intelligence, aby identyfikować obszary na ścieżce klienta, które utrudniają płynne przechodzenie między kanałami dystrybucji.

Słowa kluczowe

handel elektroniczny, multikanałowość, wielokanałowy handel detaliczny, konsument, dystrybucja