

# Marketing Research in the Contemporary Consumer Environment

## Article Info:

Management Information Systems,  
Vol. 6 (2011), No. 4,  
pp. 015-022

Received 18 May 2011  
Accepted 4 July 2011

UDC 658.8.012.12 ; 659.113.25

## Summary

The modern era of information technology has seen a process of shift from traditional marketing communication to personal communication, i.e. "listening in on" the opinions, wishes and preferences of individual customers expressed by customers in their online communication through various social networks, as well as using questionnaires and online panels, and this trend is bound to rise in the future. Rather than creating products, customers are being created. What companies should realise is that their task and objective is not production of products, but consumption by consumers. The importance of relationships and stakeholders is becoming the priority. The basis of any well-devised marketing orientation lies in solid customer relationships, and the pillar of modern marketing philosophy is customer understanding, which is a step further from the widespread concept of customer knowledge. It can be argued that lifestyles figure as a sort of portraits of personalities and their interactions with the given environment. It is the individuals in a particular environment that create values, beliefs, customs and rituals forming and influencing people's behaviour and their lifestyles. Consumer culture is a response to these behaviour patterns, a social phenomenon present in the environment comprising multiple frameworks of human behaviour, where consumers' aims, wishes and needs are formed, as well as acceptable tools for attaining customers' goals.

## Keywords

social networks, individual consumer, personalisation, lifestyle

## 1. Introduction

Over the past fifty years, we have witnessed and experienced a succession of rapid changes in IT development, with a marked impact on consumers' lives. This period has seen not only changes in consumers' lives; all the segments of the world are being changed – from information availability, social networks, simplified and accelerated communication (with individuals known or unknown, regardless of spatial distance, i.e. their geographical location), online shopping, down to global business operations. Sophisticated computers and communication through the Internet and mobile telephony are becoming an integral part of people's lives from infancy to advanced age. Whenever a novelty appears, it is certain to raise a dilemma and differing views on whether such development has brought on positive or negative effects for consumers. Opinions are highly differentiated, depending on various segments, individual experiences and consumer expectations. It is often pointed out nowadays that an increasing number of customers use the Internet over increasingly long periods, even exceeding the length of time spent in front the TV set, which, until recently, used to be the dominant medium, with an unchallenged leading role in attracting consumers' attention among the multitude of

various media. However, the most recent research results (different from one source to another) share the findings that the past year has seen a dramatic extension in the length of time spent on the Internet. This trend is also present in Serbia, as confirmed by a large body of research.

Such conditions inevitably lead to the emergence of changes in both business philosophy and companies' business operations, notably marketing, for some of the markets are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and even faster than the companies themselves. The marketing research dealt with in this article has seen the emergence of, and future increase in the shift from traditional face-to-face and telephone communication to "listening in on" the opinions, wishes and preferences of individual customers expressed by customers in their online communication through various social networks, as well as using questionnaires and online panels. Rather than creating products, customers are being created. What companies should realise is that their task and objective is not production of products, but consumption by consumers. The importance of relationships and stakeholders, i.e. interest groups is becoming the priority. Business operations are thus shifted from efficiency towards effectiveness.

(Beauchamp, Bowie, & Arnold, 2009; Krkač, 2007; Salai & Božidarević, 2009; Salai & Grubor, 2011)

The aim of this article is to look into changes in marketing research enabled by new technologies, in the light of changes occurring among consumers. Apparently, it is truly worth considering whether technology has changed consumers, or the consumers have been demanding, i.e. pulling changes (pull-push strategy) in their environment.

## 2. The Contemporary Consumer in the Changed Environment

The contemporary dynamic environment determines the consumers' position in the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of life. The current world of consumers and consumption is shaped by the impact of two basic factors: globalisation and localisation. Globalisation is a continuous process and, we can freely say nowadays, an axiom of business operations in which the limiting impact of geographic factors on social and cultural links, relations and actions has been marginalised. As a phenomenon, localisation attempts to revive and preserve local values and local culture in response to the relentless wave of globalisation. Intensive interconnectedness, tight bonds and interdependence of globalisation and localisation are the features of the contemporary environment, where consumers seek, select, buy, use and assess products and services of various producers, forming, maintaining or changing their opinions, attitudes and behaviour in general.

The changing environment has induced the emergence of a new marketing philosophy – a philosophy advocating developing customer relationships, where interactions between companies and buyers are the key response to changes that have happened or are about to happen. The basis of any well-devised marketing orientation lies in solid customer relationships, and the pillar of modern marketing philosophy is customer understanding, which is a step further from the widespread concept of customer knowledge.

Several fundamental goals form the basis for studying consumer behaviour in the modern environment. The first is understanding and subsequent prediction of consumer behaviour; the second is adopting legislative policies aimed at consumer protection in the environment, and the last one is detecting the causal relation which raises the essential issue, which is informing and educating consumers. Drucker defined such complex activity in a very simplified way, pointing

out that there is a single valid definition of business activities: the purpose of business is to create a customer. This means that a well-conceived marketing strategy can influence consumers and their behaviour, on one condition: it must have a clear (inner and outer) picture of its consumer before its eyes. What will be offered and at what price, through which distribution channels it will be distributed and how communication will flow will depend on the targeted consumer segment, and, within it, the individuals, their motives and desires, and of course, other determinants that are the accompanying and important milestones in the decision-making process. This brings us to the conclusion that the consumers' decision-making process is of greater interest for producers and trade than for the consumers themselves.

As stated above, the modern environment and the changes occurring in it tend to change consumers' behaviour patterns, habits, beliefs and needs. Consumers are complex beings, and therefore their behaviour is stimulated and motivated by a whole spectrum of determinants. Changes occurring in the environment encompass all the levels of society, thereby forming completely independent and different behaviours in satisfying consumers' needs and wishes. Consumer study provides insight into how and in which way these needs are met, i.e. provides insight into the individuals' "total" existence, which is the reflection of a given environment.

A detailed identification of determinants influencing and determining the position of individual consumers in the environment, as well as identifying a whole range of individual behaviour patterns – from inclinations, abilities and affinities to their complete personalities – is highly complex, in addition to a large number of factors reacting interactively, influencing one another and, finally, consumer behaviour. The act of making a purchase decision is a multidimensional and multidisciplinary process, given the fact that the consumer, as a dynamic and complex person, lives in very different ways. The knowledge of the determinants and processes of the contemporary environment affecting consumer behaviour can serve as a basis for channelling this behaviour from the aspect of the whole society (asocial behaviour), but it can also serve as stimulus for socially beneficial behaviour and product consumption (organic products, recycled products, environmental activism etc), providing conditions for consumer

protection in conditions of unacceptable behaviour forms and social influences.

Apparently, how companies establish the relationship between their products and services on the one side and the corresponding consumer lifestyle of a given environment on the other depends on how the needs are met. In particular, different lifestyles present interesting challenges for companies, that is, aspects of lifestyles reflecting how consumers individualise and identify themselves in various spheres of life, starting from membership in certain groups, down to broader areas conditioning diversity and, in general, opportunities for consumption. It can be argued that lifestyles are some kind of portrait of a person, and his or her interaction with the given environment.

Each individual learns new roles during their lifetime, changing their status positions, adopting new attitudes, prejudices or interests, and adapting their experiences to the newly-arisen situations in the environment. Consequently, individuals themselves are not passive observers merely receiving influences through the socialisation process; they influence changes with their behaviour, but on the other hand, they conform to the demands of the environment they belong to. A large number of individuals view things as they are and ask the question "Why?", whereas some of them view things as they should be and ask the question "Why not?". It is the individuals in a given environment that create values, beliefs, customs and rituals forming and influencing people's behaviour and lifestyle. Consumer culture is the response to these behaviour patterns – a social phenomenon characteristic of an environment which comprises multiple frameworks of human behaviour forming consumers' objectives, wishes and needs, as well as acceptable means of achieving consumer objectives.

An interesting approach is one pointing out that culture is conditioned by traditional frameworks and contemporary changes forming certain behaviours and pointing to culture's causal relationships. It is a fact that culture is what points to total acquired beliefs and values of a society; it is the basis of the socialisation process and individuals in a given environment. The adaptability of culture to its environment is obvious, as this segment offers the opportunity for new challenges emerging before an individual. It is the individual that adopts certain forms of manifestation, i.e. objects, objectives, ideas and

behaviours from the list of offered values. "Values are individuals' deep judgements. Cultural values are not a static but a dynamic element of a society's culture, formed and exchanged through social interaction. Changes in cultural values can create new marketing opportunities and are usually manifested as changes in consumer behaviour." (Kesić as cited in Kovač Žnideršić & Marić, 2007, pp. 10-11)

The modern environment is highly dynamic and thus determines consumers' positions in all dimensions of life, giving rise to continuous research into contemporary consumers, i.e. their needs and preferences. The range of tastes and preferences is expanding, and the list of sought, desired, or, better to say, demanded products is becoming increasingly long and complex. Through social adjustment and social limitation, social environment influences consumer behaviour by way of group norms and group via various avenues. Values channel consumer behaviour in the process of purchasing products and services; they refer to objects, objectives ideas and behaviours in general. In other words, values are individual judgements, and are exchanged through social interaction depending on interests. Changes in values can and do make changes in marketing activities, and they can also create new marketing opportunities. Consumer behaviour is modified from early childhood and adapted to the demands of the changing environment. The processes of observation, specific behaviours and evaluation lead individuals to accumulate knowledge and experience used for performing certain roles assigned in the given social environment. An individual changes attitudes and opinions, and, at the same time, adopts values and beliefs of a particular group, i.e. environment. It is the environment and functioning of particular groups within it that offers the individual various types of lifestyle, and consequently, a wide range of convictions, orientation and behavioural motives. The existing social references determine the circle of frameworks, models and benchmarks for comparing and assessing one's own behaviour, i.e. compliance with groups, changing the individual's established behaviour patterns, habits, views and needs.

### 3. Consumer Infrastructure in Serbia

The contemporary information technology influences the specific features of consumer behaviour, contributing and enabling maximal customisation of not only consumers, but also

products, services and ideas. Access to an enormous amount of information enables marketers to offer more products and services than ever before; exchange between marketers and consumers is becoming increasingly interactive, and this interactiveness is becoming the axiom of contemporary marketing business. In the contemporary environment, consumers have greater power than ever, but one must raise the issue of essence of the degree of their rationality or irrationality. Where does the digital revolution lead, whom does it help, and is it really the tool and power given to the consumer, or is the greatest part still left to marketers and companies?

The actuality of adopting new technologies results in a lot of research into their distribution and implementation. New results appear daily, pointing to a very dynamic adoption of new technologies, especially the Internet and mobile telephony. Among all of these studies, this article is based on the research whose results are presented below. When these are announced, they will already be outdated, in view of the fact that new ones have appeared. However, this information points to a trend of further, broader and deeper acceptance by consumers.

A general conclusion drawn from quantitative information is that, due to the increase in computer literacy, the number of computers and Internet connections, the number of Internet users is growing from year to year. The supporting indicators (TABO, 2011, pp. 56-69) show that:

- Over half of the population (52%) use the Internet, with access from home (51%), and two-thirds of young population aged 12-29 have a connection at home;
- Out of the total population, a little over one-third use the Internet daily, while a half never use it;
- About 10% of Internet users (of the above mentioned 52% of total population) have shopped online; their profile is characterised by greater purchasing power and they belong to the user segment aged 30 to 44;
- The use of the Internet stands in high correlation with age: out of the total number of users, 44% are aged over 45; 70% are aged 30 to 44, and 91% of the total number of users are young population aged 12-29;
- One can speak of the young population who grew up with digital technology, accounting for 26% of the total population of Serbia, aged between 12 and 29;
- Among the young population (aged 12 to 29), the “heavy” users (68%) use the Internet daily, and have access to the Web at home; the “light” users account for 22% of the total number use the Internet occasionally, while as little as 9% never use the Internet;
- About one-third of the citizen of Serbia, mostly younger urban men with higher education have access to the Internet at school, on campus, or at work;
- About 90% of Internet users (of the above mentioned 52% of total population) browse, surf, acquire information, read news (77%), use e-mail (71%) download music or other contents (62%);
- It is of importance for marketing research that 57% of Internet users (of the above mentioned 52% of the total target audience) use the Internet for participating in social networks, chat rooms, Internet forums and blogs;
- It is obvious from the times of Internet visits, which are the most frequent between 5 p.m. and midnight, with a peak between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m., that the core visitors are young users;
- Among the social networks, the majority of the young generation who grew up with digital technologies use Facebook, while the use of other social networks is negligible;
- 52% of all users, and 76% of the young population aged 12 to 29 who grew up with digital technologies are active on Facebook;
- In large urban environments, even spouses increasingly communicate through modern technology (SMS messages, e-mails or through Facebook); virtual communication is increasingly replacing face-to-face communication.

Based on the information above, the Internet user profile in Serbia would be as follows:

- Male (59% men of the total population are Internet users);
- 91% accounts for young population (aged 12 to 29) who grew up with digital technology;
- 74% have university degrees; and
- 65% live in Belgrade.

Two types are identifiable when defining typical Internet users:

- “Internet addicts”: mostly men, doing nothing, without social life, because their socialisation is limited to the Internet, neglecting their appearance, spending all their time in front of the computer:

- “Average young people”: working or studying, using the Internet and social network, but socialising in other ways as well.

The use of social networks, especially Facebook (FB) is of special importance for marketing research. In Serbia, Facebook, as the most popular and most visited socialisation website, is a synonym for social network. FB applications include activities like commenting on real-life events, games, groups, fan pages, exchanging photographs, etc. In the range of marketing communication forms, a new concept of viral marketing has emerged, which could be regarded as follow-up of word-of-mouth marketing, stemming from the development of modern information technologies. In word-of-mouth advertising, the number of persons spreading the messages amounts to about ten, and the persons who receive this message spread positive information afterwards, when they have tried out the product. If product or service satisfaction is positive, the time of forwarding positive information is relatively long, which is the greatest shortcoming of this communication form.

Unlike the above, viral marketing messages spread at an exponential rate. The person receiving information forwards it quickly, (sometimes immediately) to at least two persons, and usually more. The key instrument for this rapid information transport is the Internet and its social networks.

More than 1.56 million people in Serbia aged 15 and above use Facebook and have 200 friends on the average. FB users are daily users, communicating intensively with people from the environment, from their past (e.g. childhood friends), or unknown persons from geographically distant areas.

Teenagers tend to identify the Internet with Facebook<sup>1</sup>, where they have between 500 and 800 friends with whom they chat intensively. Young people aged 20 to 25 have fewer friends than the teenage population, and accept people they have met in person, so that they spend less time on Facebook. Users from the oldest segment have the fewest Facebook friends – mostly close persons, with whom they spend between 10 and 15 minutes in online contact on this site.

<sup>1</sup> Youtube is not regarded as social network due to absence of communication between its users, but it is used for audio and video clips. According to users, other social networks (Myspace, Twitter etc.) are negligible in terms of use.

#### 4. The Social Environment of Young People in Serbia

Research conducted among second- and third-year students of undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Economics in Subotica and Novi Sad in April 2011 on a sample of 336 respondents (52% females and 48% males) have produced the following results contributing to the confirmation of the above mention results. The key conclusions are that:

- Two-thirds of those communicating through social networks have used Facebook over a longer time period (over 4 years), while a negligible number use other social networks, such as Skype, MSN, Twitter or Myspace;
- One-third (35%) of the respondents do not use social networks at all;
- In most cases (63%), the respondents use social networks daily; 26% of them use them 2-3 times a week, while 11% use them only seldom;
- Most young people use social networks at home (61%); others use them on campus, (16%), Internet cafes (15%) or other venues.
- Communication takes place primarily with friends and relatives, for entertainment, obtaining college-related information and shopping;
- Communication is aimed at gathering information on shopping venues and methods; the places where respondents do their shopping include shopping malls (31%), corner shops (6%) and high street shops (61%), whereas the Internet (1.5%) and open-air markets (0.5%) take up a very small share; purchases are mostly planned (72%), and seldom impulse based (28%);
- Before doing their shopping, young people gather information through promotional TV messages (49%), the Internet (26%), print media (11%), radio (9%), and finally through billboards, flyers and catalogues (5%);
- Young people primarily find humorous, innovative, unaggressive, natural and spontaneous promotional messages appealing, and a smaller proportion prefer shocking promotional messages.
- Their expectations and suggestions regarding the promotion of preferred products in the future include social networks (66%), billboards (22%), television (9%) and other (periodicals and flyers).

A large body of research conducted in countries with developed markets on Generation Y finds

partial confirmation among the members of the same generation in Serbia. The differences in market behaviour patterns stem from limited purchasing power (which is at a low level despite the fact that parents tend to indulge their children beyond their purchasing abilities). This is the reason for price being the key determinant of making purchase decisions in Serbia. The respondents agree that social value systems are disrupted, and express nostalgia for family shopping trips that they used to perceive as family events. In addition to the fall in the purchasing power affecting all social strata except about 10% of population, the difference between Generation Y, Generation X and baby boomers is manifested in different needs, preferences and shopping methods.

Generation Y wants to obtain information by means of television and social networks, as the cheapest and most available information sources. They prefer and buy products reflecting a communal lifestyle, without building individual value systems. Due to limited purchasing power and price consciousness, shopping methods are oriented mostly to shopping malls and well-known, highly regarded and prestigious brands, which they consider to be their source of values. For them, brands are tools for self-identification and avoiding risk from wrong purchase, but also for establishing special emotional attitudes to the brand. Through this, they want to relate to other people using the same brand, and create “value plus”, i.e. a consumer segment with the same values. It can be concluded that our young people are persons in search for their own identity, and in this sense, they behave the way they want to be seen by others.

## 5. Information Gathering Prior to Making Purchase Decisions

In gathering daily information in Serbia, the Internet is second to television, and ahead of radio. Young Internet users, however, put it in the first place as their essential information source. It must be conceded that, while browsing the internet, they use other media simultaneously – television in the first place (60%), radio (24%), dailies (8%) and periodicals (4%). Viewed across segments, television is predominant among the population over the age of 40, while the Internet is the most important to the younger generation aged 12 to 24.

Users in Serbia spend approximately 3 hours a day on Facebook. The young spend twice as much time as 40-year-olds. Depending on the Internet, women tend to spend more time on Facebook

than men. Is this due to information gathering before making a purchase decision?

In order to at least attempt to answer this question, one must bear in mind that 21% Internet users always browse the Web before making a purchase decision, 53% do it occasionally, while 26% never do it. Whether the search will be done through the Internet depends on the price of product or service (45%), product group (63%) and experience gained during Internet shopping. The Internet is used for buying technical products, hospitality services, cars, furniture and household equipment, preceded by searching through available information. Purchasing products on the Internet without prior browsing and some search for information on the Internet includes real estate, clothing, banking and health services, makeup, cosmetics, food, drinks, and household chemicals.

As for individual communication, the predominant means of communication in Serbia is the telephone (35% by wire telephony and 24% by mobile telephony). Mature consumers prefer wire telephony, while the younger ones prefer SMS and social networks. Two out of three young persons in Serbia list Facebook, forums, blogs and other social network as a relevant information source used when making purchase decisions about products.

On the psychological map, the young people's evaluation of the image of individual media was researched on the scale inertia-forcefulness, and the scale entertainment-information, and the findings are as follows:

- The Internet is the only medium based on elements of forcefulness, focus on entertainment and information; the young deem that the image of the Internet comprises the following elements: contemporaneity, interactivity and speed;
- The image of television: information and influence;
- The image of radio and periodicals: spontaneity, entertainment and friendship;
- The image of dailies: information and seriousness, while billboards are boring.

As for promotional messages, their attraction is drawn by those that are humorous and entertaining.

## 6. New Marketing Research

The rapid development of information technologies, computers and Internet communication, online shopping, social network and various content downloads have contributed to

changes not only in consumers but also in marketing research communication and methods. Easy and fast connection between consumers via the Internet, propensity and spending increasing amounts of time in such communication have contributed to the fact that exchanging experience and communication between individuals in general is gaining breadth, pace and depth, as shown by the above information. In addition, consumers are freer and more open when they are anonymous, i.e. when they are not facing the surveyor, like in the traditional customer survey methods. "Listening in on" individual consumers in such situations provides valuable information for customer understanding. Observing consumers' opinions, feelings, intentions and wishes "dictated" through the Internet provides companies and all stakeholders with valuable information which simultaneously enable and demonstrate appropriate ways of understanding and approaching customers.

Consumers increasingly do their shopping online, downloading digital versions of tangible products, so that shopping is becoming a matter of experience, ambience and service. After home and work, retail outlets are becoming the third most important places in consumers' lives. Modern technology is becoming a basic need (like food and clothing), thus becoming more than luxury or pleasure. Consequently, modern technology, particularly the Internet, is gaining importance as consumer environment.

Traditional consumer research through structured and unstructured personal communication, mailed questionnaires and telephone surveys are undergoing transformation due to the use of Internet. Traditional face-to-face consumer research is shifting towards Internet surveys. Telephone surveys are being replaced by mobile phone inquiries. What else is different? Defining the basic set and choosing the sample is being shifted to computer owners, computer-literate consumers, and those who use it intensively, spending hours in front of the screen and choosing whether they will reply questions or simply skip them. Similar to (but not the same as) written communication, there is no "obligation" to provide information. In this freedom of choice, decision and sincerity, there are no awkward situations in which customers must explain why they have declined to participate in providing information.

Panel research, i.e. information panels are shifting towards online panels, and thus marketing research provides not only speed but cost cutting,

which is definitely not negligible. Saturation with face-to-face surveys is increasingly present, and telephone surveys are taking over due to their speed and cost-effectiveness. The use of wire telephony is also slowly losing importance (less than 70% Europeans use wire telephones, and in some countries mobile telephony is present in over 75% households), with younger consumers using mobile telephones only. Accessing this consumer segment requires marketing researchers to employ well thought-out approach to requesting and obtaining their opinions and replies.

This modified marketing research should understand that consumers are no longer respondents. Consumers are becoming decision makers on products and brands. This is something completely different in relation to earlier approach. This is consumer understanding rather than mere consumer knowledge. Consumer understanding is a step forward from consumer knowledge. In order to understand consumers, it is necessary to understand their needs, habits, attitudes and thought patters, being always with individual consumers, following how they think, what they want and how they live, because consumers very easily move their hands up or down the supermarket isle or shelf, i.e. change their behaviour.

In addition to observing consumers and trends in macro- and micro-environment, new marketing research has the task to forecast and predict changes that will happen in consumers, consumption, products, services, as well as in competitors. This is possible when observing trends, megatrends and metatrends emerging and dominating in the environment. Admittedly, it is the task of futurology as well as corporate marketing research. Similar to defining previous eras by raw materials such as the Stone, the Bronze and the Iron Age, and then by fields of expansion such as the Industrial, the Space and the Information Age, it is now predicted that human potential, as the key development determinant, will distinguish the forthcoming era as the Mankind Age. Transformations caused by technological revolution and changes in consumers will also require changes in the area of business models. The paths of change are directed towards defining new value systems and devising social systems. Experts deem that the pressure stemming from the economic crisis in the first decade of the millennium can be resolved by accepting talent as the key distinguishing feature of each individual employee or human being in general.

The “war for talent” will be replaced by the “war for talents”. This also applies to new marketing research. In addition to capital (in capitalism), talent is gaining significance, heralding the emergence of the Age of Talent, or “talentism”. Talented marketing researchers are becoming increasingly important, because power will be shifted from organisation towards power of individuals. Liberation of the energy and innovation of the human spirit will contribute to achieving more with less effort.

Marketing research should be channelled towards a new marketing mix instrument, which could be termed as one of the new P’s – Personalisation. Based on information gathered by marketing research, companies can extend 4P’s to 5P’s and 7P’s to 8P’s. Companies are thus enabled to offer consumers “unified product and service” based on individual wishes of consumers and prospects.

## 7. Conclusion

The rising education and information levels, increasing competition, globalisation and new technologies, particularly the Internet, connect and empower consumers, thereby causing a shift of power on the market from producers to final consumers. Consumers expect to be preferred as individuals rather than market segment members. Rather than being known as “numbers”, consumers want to be known by their full names. This means that they expect personalisation and adapting the offer to individuals. The traditional marketing mix is therefore extended from 4P’s and 7P’s to 5P’s and 8P’s, where personalisation features as the new instrument. Owing to the Internet, the role of consumers is being changed; they are becoming interconnected, more active and demanding in the process of defining the concept of unified value.

The young people in Serbia have demands similar to those of all young, sophisticated, urban and modern consumers. Understanding the significance and power of online social communities can make an impact on all dimensions of life and economy.

It can be concluded that our young people are persons in search for their own identity, and in this sense, they behave the way they want to be seen by others. Consumers increasingly do their shopping online, downloading digital versions of tangible products, so that shopping is becoming a matter of experience, ambience and service. After home and work, retail outlets are becoming the third most important places in consumers’ lives. Modern technology is becoming a basic need (like food and clothing), thus becoming more than luxury or pleasure. Consequently, modern technology, particularly the Internet, is gaining importance as consumer environment.

## References

- Beauchamp, L. T., Bowie, E. N., & Arnold, G. D. (2009). *Ethical Theory and Business*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.
- Kovač Žnideršić, R., & Marić, D. (2007). *Društvene determinante ponašanja potrošača*. Subotica: Faculty of Economics Subotica.
- Krkač, K. (2007). *Uvod u poslovnu etiku i korporacijsku odgovornost*. Zagreb: MATE.
- Salai, S., & Božidarević, D. (2009). *Marketing istraživanje*. Subotica: Ekonomski fakultet Subotica.
- Salai, S., & Grubor, A. (2011). *Marketing komunikacije*. Subotica: Ekonomski fakultet Subotica.
- TABOO – u i o svetu marketinških komunikacija. (2011). Retrieved March 17, 2011, from TABOO: [http://www.taboomagazine.org/upload/documents/ntv/nedeljne\\_taboo\\_vesti\\_40.pdf](http://www.taboomagazine.org/upload/documents/ntv/nedeljne_taboo_vesti_40.pdf)

---

### Suzana Salai

University of Novi Sad  
Faculty of Economics Subotica  
Segedinski put 9-11  
24000 Subotica  
Serbia  
Email: salais@ef.uns.ac.rs

### Ružica Kovač Žnideršić

University of Novi Sad  
Faculty of Economics Subotica  
Segedinski put 9-11  
24000 Subotica  
Serbia  
Email: znikor@ef.uns.ac.rs

---