

# News Release

## **1,000 decision makers around the world: Consumer experience increasingly important in company purchase decisions**

Helsinki – 17.3.2014 – [Avanade](#), a global business technology solutions and managed services provider, released results from a large-scale global survey on the changing sales process and buying patterns of business and IT decision-makers. The main finding of the survey is that the role of consumer experience has increased significantly in companies' purchase decision-making processes. Over half (56%) of the respondents had bought a 30 percent more expensive product or service in order to receive more positive consumer experience within the last three months.

The increased importance of consumer experience has also affected companies' information search processes. 80 percent of respondents had asked advice and experiences of third parties such as partners, other companies and social channels to support their purchase decision. Of these 61 percent said that information gathered from business partners, industry peers or social channels had more effect on purchase decision than conversations with a company's sales teams.

The research also reveals that companies improve the consumer experience by investing in new technologies. 70 percent of the respondents believe technology will primarily replace human interaction with customers in the next 10 years. Four out of five respondent companies had changed at least one business process within the last three years to better interact with customers.

Avanade's latest research reveals the "consumerization movement" as enterprise buyers begin to mimic consumer shopping behaviors. In future, current business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) separation should rather be communicated through a unified business-to-everyone (B2E) model.

### **Rautakesko – Finnish example of a successful B2E consumer experience provider**

Rautakesko develops retail and B2B sales of building, renovation and home improvement products and services in eight countries. It is part of Kesko Group and a Finnish forerunner in investing in technologies improving customer experience. A remarkable amount of Rautakesko's customers are SME's and entrepreneurs. This makes combining B2B and B2C models essential in providing positive service experience for all customers. In collaboration with Avanade Rautakesko developed a Windows 8 application which provides consumers with easy-to-use self-services. It enables customers to check the location of each item and to plan their shopping round effectively. Separately ordered products can also be presented via this application. According to Rautakesko personnel, the application and touch screens placed near to the store entrances have been approached well by the customers and their usage is increasing.

"As a consumer-oriented company we are constantly aiming to improve our customers' service experience. We are simultaneously serving both companies and consumers, so it is important for us to find functional and easy-to-use solutions that answer the requirements of both of these segments. Touch screens and applications are so "today" that it would be odd if we weren't using them", **Ari-Pekka Kaskela**, IT Director, Rautakesko, says. "Windows 8 user interface is familiar to the Finnish consumers via Windows Phone, so the interface has been easy to adopt. Our IT-solutions at Kesko are based on Microsoft technologies, which made building Windows 8 application with Avanade a natural choice."

The Windows 8 application has been added with a reporting function, which helps the stores to collect information on the product groups where the searches are mainly done. This helps monitoring the sales and seasonal variation as well as locating the seasonal items and enhancing other promotion activities. The application has been so successful that Rautakesko aims to widen its usage to 50 stores in 2014.

"The application provides us easy and quick information on which products our customers are searching for. This helps us to compare this to sales. This information helps us to improve our services even further. I believe investing in B2E customer service is the best possible investment made today. A satisfied customer

will come back to us because of the positive experience and will probably recommend us to others too, be it an SME, entrepreneur or individual consumer”, Kaskela says.

### **Customer experience correlates with business growth**

The Avanade research shows that businesses investing in technology to support better customer service and modifying internal roles are seeing positive results. Over 60 percent of the respondent companies answered that making these changes have increased customer loyalty, revenues and customer base.

”The consumerization of IT has dramatically transformed the traditional ways companies sell products and services to other businesses and consumers”, **Petri Ketola**, Avanade Country Manager Finland, says. “B2B and B2C buying models are merging – it’s no longer business-to-business or business-to-consumer, it’s business-to-everyone. Meeting the future expectations of consumer needs requires innovative insight and courage to renew the company’s internal processes, ability to adopt new technologies and in-depth understanding of the importance of consumer experience for the company’s overall business.”

To learn more about Avanade’s views on the new customer journey, please visit <http://avana.de/CustJourney>.

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### **About the Global Survey**

Avanade’s survey was conducted in October 2013 by Wakefield Research ([www.wakefieldresearch.com](http://www.wakefieldresearch.com)), an independent research firm. It surveyed 1,000 C-level executives, business unit leaders and IT decision makers, at the top companies in the following countries: U.S., Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.K.

### **About Avanade**

Avanade provides business technology solutions and managed services that connect insight, innovation and expertise in Microsoft® technologies to help customers realize results. Our people have helped thousands of organizations in all industries improve business agility, employee productivity, and customer loyalty. Avanade combines the collective business, technical and industry expertise of its worldwide network of experts with the rigor of an industrialized delivery model to provide high quality solutions using proven and emerging technologies with flexible deployment models—on premises, cloud-based or outsourced. Avanade, which is majority owned by Accenture, was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 20,000 professionals in more than 20 countries. Additional information can be found at [www.avanade.com](http://www.avanade.com).

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