

## Austria

### Trends in times of crisis: What the consumers expect now

The financial crisis is casting its shadow over many countries of the world. Globally, the consumers are reacting to the changes, which in some cases are very real and cutting, which have arisen as a result of the crisis. In global terms, 84% of the consumers say that they have had to make savings of a wide range of types as a result of the crisis. Popular savings measures are to be identified in the area of visits to restaurants or habits of heating in their homes. In the CEE area the Hungarians feel themselves to have been particularly hard hit. Only for 28% of them has the crisis had no effect on their income whereas in Austria the comparable figure is 68% - a notable difference. This is the framework within which the technology branch has had to operate in 2009.

### What does the consumer demand in the crisis?

Even in Austria, where the crisis has had comparatively little effect so far, 18% claim they intend to save on the costs for their telephoning. Overall, 19% want to make savings on their mobile phone use, 15% for their landline and 8% for their internet use. What chances are there, then, for the manufacturers of mobile terminal devices? What is the consumer demanding in the crisis?

Fundamentally, even the financial crisis and its economic effects have not been able to stop some developments. The mobile phone purely as a device for making telephone calls has served its time, and not only amongst the younger members of society. If the mobile phone is perceived as a medium and a comparison is made with other media, then we find that in Austria the internet is in first position followed by the television in second place ahead of the mobile phone – all having overtaken the daily papers and radio in terms of importance. For 45% the mobile phone is very important and for a further 33% quite important. This also explains why many simply cannot envisage ever getting by without their mobile phone, never mind doing without it for today. Worldwide, only 13% claim they do not need a mobile telephone – last year that figure still stood at 34%. The mobile phone manages to unite various functions in one platform in a way no other device does. The trend started with the camera and today has reached the format of the Smartphone which functions as music player, diary, photo and video camera, e-mail administrator, television and the gate to the internet. The best example of how the functionality of this device which can already do almost everything could be widened even further is embodied in the iPhone with the Apple App Store, where any useful and less useful application you can imagine, is on offer for the user to employ effectively for “customising”. Who can be surprised then, that this development is already in use by 16% of the population, primarily for fun and entertainment. The mobile phone has grown up into a mobile Entertainment Centre. Smartphones enjoy a steadily increasing popularity worldwide and in 2009 21% of the world’s population already make use of multifunctional mobile devices. The user, therefore, also wants to use the opportunities for communication that the modern Smartphones offer. The user wants to be “connected”, whether to make their day-to-day work tasks simpler or simply for private enjoyment. But: not at any price and under any conditions. Worldwide, 34% are no longer prepared to pay a lot for new technologies, even if they can afford them (this figure was only 29% in the previous year). At the same time, more and more are losing interest in new technology, at present 28% (in 2008 20%), if they are not immediately functional. The users are becoming emancipated. Technologies are no longer being used the way they were expected to be. Examples here are the social networks. They may well still be booming, but the way in which people use them has changed.

Whereas previously profiles were set-up in order to have a profile without really knowing why, and then countless hours were spent looking for information which was often incorrect, not to be found or useless, nowadays the user weighs up what exactly it is he or she needs and exactly how much time they really want to invest in it, since the previous disappointments are still fresh in their minds.

That is to say, the focus has turned onto utility. Consumers are becoming increasingly demanding and want better technology which functions at lower prices. In terms of utilisation, it is the utility which is to the fore. It is all about finding information and not about seeking it. The objective is the goal and not the pathway there. For all technologies, the consumer demands a new simplicity which is to be characterised by simplicity of operation, functionality and utility.

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