

## **CURRENT TRENDS IN E-COMMERCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Modern digital trade is replacing traditional trade, integrating into the real economy and becoming an effective strategy for maintaining competitiveness, a mechanism for redistributing and structuring the market of goods and services. The article examines the e-commerce of the European Union (EU) and the changes that have occurred in the conditions of digitalization of the economy and the Covid-19 pandemic (dynamic growth of e-commerce, the emergence of new options for communication with online stores, etc.). The purpose of the study is to identify current trends in e-commerce in the EU.

In the course of the study of international e-commerce in the EU, the following modern trends were substantiated: the intensive growth of the share of e-commerce in the overall structure of trade, the development of Internet-sales using social networks.

### **1. Intensive growth of the share of electronic commerce in the total volume of trade in the EU member states.**

Statista data indicate that the number of Internet users increased in 2020 by 5% compared to 2019 and by 11% compared to 2017 [2]. This jump is caused by the epidemiological situation in the world associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, which pushed consumers to online shopping. We assume that this trend will continue to grow as consumers gain experience and appreciate the benefits of online sales.

The share of GDP from e-commerce increased in 2020 by 1.18% compared to 2017 and by 0.36% compared to 2019 [2]. The growth rate of trade turnover in Europe has consistently remained double-digit and is expected to continue its upward trajectory in the foreseeable future.

### **2. The growth of Internet sites in the EU.**

One of the most noticeable trends that we were witnessing in 2020 was the growing popularity of online trading platforms. Compared to the US or China, Europe is slower to enter markets, but they are becoming an increasingly important online entry route for brands from all over the world trying to get a piece of the European market.

In the last few years, and especially in 2020, online markets in Europe have attracted significant traffic and demonstrated a high level of visitor engagement, which has led to sales. According to cross-border trade in Europe, they accounted for 59% of the 143 billion euros spent by Europeans on cross-border e-commerce in 2019 [1].

For a better understanding of this trend, one of the largest trading platforms in the world, Amazon, was analyzed. During the introduction of restrictions in connection with the pandemic, European consumers massively turned to the Amazon marketplace for purchases because of its delivery and prices. During 2020, the platform's traffic grew in

all European markets: from March to August 2020, the number of visits increased by 9% in Germany and by 7% in Denmark [3].

### **3. Personalization of sales and trade development through social networks.**

Currently, European online stores offer from 3 to 5 ways of communication. Telephone, e-mail and online contact forms remain the most frequently provided options for contacting an online store in the EU. Chat capability (video or chatbot) is also very popular among the leading European online stores, as almost half offer the possibility of a chat on their website. Some communication options are more popular among certain types of online stores than others. For example, online stores located in Northern Europe are more likely to communicate via live chat (58%) and less likely by email or phone (48%) compared to online stores in other European regions.

Almost all European online stores (93%) post their social media channels on their websites. Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are the most popular social networks among all EU online stores. Less commonly used social media platforms are Tumblr, Snapchat and TikTok. At the same time, online stores with more than 200 million visitors a year are less likely to show their social media accounts on the site (78%) compared to smaller online stores (94%).

Thus, e-commerce has become not only a new form of conducting foreign and international trade, but also a survival strategy of the EU member states. In addition, e-commerce is currently the driver of the scientific and technological process associated with the search for advanced technologies that contribute to the company's competitiveness in the international e-commerce arena. The cycle of innovation has accelerated rapidly; large manufacturing companies update their product range up to 2-3 times a year. Competitiveness began to be determined by new quality criteria based on new technologies, the presence of revolutionary teams, network development resources. The economy of impressions is superimposed on this trend. New generations of consumers of goods and services follow technologies, new norms and stereotypes of behavior and consumption of technologies are formed.

The further development of electronic commerce as a type of business activity carried out electronically, in which transactions are carried out electronically, will depend on the information infrastructure, legal support for electronic transactions, payment systems and delivery systems of goods, as well as other implementation mechanisms.

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## **FEATURES OF DESIGN-THINKING IN BUSINESS PLANNING**

The success of any investment project is directly related to the depth and accuracy of the plan of its preparation and implementation. In the modern business world, oversaturated with manufactured goods and services, the competitive advantage of the product comes to the fore. In such a situation, the use of analytical thinking based on the analysis of already existing information becomes insufficient. Innovation requires a creative component, the ability to synthesize and create new things.

Business needs such competitive advantages that no one else has, but which are really interesting and important to consumers. Therefore, these advantages should be innovative on the one hand, and on the other – as working as possible. Under these conditions, the design thinking approach has been actively applied in their business strategies as a practical tool for finding ways to survive and design successful development of companies, creating innovations and competitive advantages in their business strategies [1].

The purpose of the article is to define the concept of design-thinking and to identify exactly how this approach helps in relation to the development of corporate business strategies that allow them to compete effectively and achieve excellence.

Design-thinking is a user-oriented approach to product development that implies non-standard solutions to problems. Design-thinking is the sum of benefits for a person, technological capabilities and business interests [2].

The user request is in the first place, but the possibility of its technical implementation, economic conditions are in secondary positions.

At the same time, design has a broader meaning: this is an idea, a plan, the result of designing, and not only material objects, but also business processes, services, budgets or corporate strategy. That is, design in this context can be understood as a process of modeling, anticipating and creating a better future in general.

The process of design-thinking can be presented in the form of 5 stages [3].

1) Empathy. At the first stage, we need to look at the situation through the eyes of the client and understand what he wants.

2) Definition. Next, we need to analyze all the information we have and highlight the key problems.

3) Generation and selection of ideas. We offer different solutions to the problem. At the same time, we do not limit ourselves to the budget or common sense. Remember: