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## **Prosumerism of companies – opportunities and challenges in the consumers’ opinion**

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the business model has changed from an approach focused on the company and its offerings to an approach focused on the consumer and their needs, desires and cooperation with them. Business involves consumers in the value creation process in order to respond to their needs and desires as well as to create positive consumer experiences. As a result, the relationship between businesses and consumers changes as they are increasingly active, informed, networked and open to cooperation with companies. Consumers do not want to just be passive recipients of value created by the market; they want to co-create them. This is why companies take measures to initiate and maintain consumer activity and involvement, involving consumers in their activities by, among others, encouraging them to express their opinions on products or the company, to share their ideas and experiences of using products, and to co-create products and services. Prosumers are not only consumers, but also producers, and through this, they have a sense of influence on market offerings and the company’s activities. They are more conscious consumers, recognising their position in the market. At the same time, thanks to new technologies, they can easily create communities of engaged consumers, sharing their opinions, evaluations and information. Prosumption is a creative, entrepreneurial, participatory form of consumption, assuming the participation of consumers in the co-creation of market offerings. Co-creation of products and services takes various forms, from expressing or seeking the opinions of other consumers, to tailoring products/services to their own preferences (including their modification), up to participation in the creation

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process (co-creation), sharing their knowledge and ideas, and creating new solutions. The aim of this paper is to present the importance of prosumerism for companies by showing its benefits and challenges based on the literature analysis and the results of our own research. The selection of literature was made on the basis of a bibliographic search, choosing literature on definitional issues, the role and importance of post-consumerism and prosumerism, as well as their positive and negative aspects.

### CONCEPT AND GOALS OF PROSUMPTION AND PROSUMERISM

the concept of prosumption was first presented in 1972 by M. McLuhon and B. Nevitt (Wereda, Pinzaru, 2023, p. 75), while in 1980, A. Toffler, in his book “The Third Wave,” analysed the changes taking place in the sphere of production and consumption, pointing to three waves of social development – from production for personal use, through the period of consumption and production separation as well as market development, to the period of production and consumption reconnection, i.e. prosumption (Toffler, 2006, pp. 306–324). The consumer of the third wave, i.e. the prosumer, combines the roles of consumer and producer. However, the consumer does not produce products independently as in the first period, but creates them with the help of producers. Today’s prosumers, in order to create products, need the right tools and materials, which are provided by the market, and prosumption involves the active participation of consumers in the process of value co-creation-at every stage – from product design to consumption (Rzewuska, Wolny, 2020, pp. 246–259). The process of value co-creation begins with understanding the customers and their needs, such as freedom, respect, and appreciation (Payne et al., 2009, pp. 379–389). Prosumption, on the other hand, involves creating value through consumers’ actions in producing and using goods that meet their desires, influencing their experience (Xie et al., 2008, p. 110). B. Mika also bases the definition of prosumption on the concept of value, pointing out that prosumption is a consumer action that affects not only the exchange value, but also the use value of a good (Mika, 2014, p. 90). Similarly, D. Serafin defines prosumption as a continuous and dynamic process of co-creating unique value for the consumer, which involves at least three co-creators of this value: the producer, the consumer and the consumer community, and the participation of consumers in the co-creation of value allows the preparation of solutions that meet their needs and expectations (Serafin, 2012, p. 134). Value in its definition is also referred to by J. Tian, L. Shen, and Y. Chen, defining prosumption as value-creating activities undertaken by consumers to produce the products they consume and make up their experience (Tian et al., 2017). On the other hand, according to Ritzer, prosumption is a new form of consumption that is based on the creativity, entrepreneurship and freedom of consumers who want to engage in the company’s activities, such as designing and creating solutions, rather than being forced to do so (Ritzer, Jurgenson, 2010, pp. 13–31). The term

prosumption is associated with such concepts as prosumptionism and prosumerism, which are treated as synonyms in the literature. As P. Siuda points out, they denote the orientation of enterprises to stimulate and exploit the activity and involvement of the recipients in order to attract willing people to work for free (Siuda et al., 2013, pp. 6–7). Similarly, prosumerism is defined by K. Krzysztofek, indicating that it means the practices of modern business aimed at encouraging users to multiply the resources of information and knowledge that they use in their activities (Krzysztofek, 2014, p. 49). Prosumerism also helps companies learn about buyers' needs as well as methods and opportunities to improve their offerings. It also allows them to predict trends and consumption patterns, and test and verify whether the product/service will be accepted by buyers (Siuda et al., 2013, pp. 6–7). Therefore, prosumption means the activity of consumers and the actions taken by them to co-create the market offering, while prosumerism is the action taken by companies to encourage and include consumers in the process of co-creating products and services by, among others, creating communication platforms and providing appropriate tools, etc.

Prosumption plays an important role on both economic and social levels. In the social aspect, it allows consumers and companies to connect with each other, build a community of consumers, share their knowledge and experiences, and gain knowledge and learn about the experiences of others. In addition, prosumption also has an integrating function, bringing together individuals with specific interests and passions, thereby strengthening self-esteem. On the economic level, prosumption becomes an opportunity to develop the company by introducing new solutions thanks to the knowledge and activity of consumers. It also facilitates building and maintaining relationships with customers and shaping a positive corporate image. The importance of prosumption on the socio-economic level can be perceived through the prism of its functions, among which A. Baruk includes: (1) communication function – information flow between consumers and producers, (2) educational function – consumers and producers learn from each other, (3) support function – mutual support of consumers and bidders to achieve their goals, (4) relational function – the formation of a partnership relationship between bidder and buyer, (5) image function – building the company's image as a modern entity open to cooperation with customers, (6) innovation function – creating new solutions, (7) therapeutic function – strengthening the buyer's self-esteem and the bidder's social usefulness, and (8) development function – increasing the company's potential (Baruk, 2017, pp. 36–37). Although prosumption is related to the activity of consumers and producers, it can also refer to the activity of consumers in prosumer networks, within which they design solutions, and modify products and services, adapting them to their own needs. This is pointed out by D. Tapscott, who believes that prosumerism involves the active participation of both consumers and producers in the creation of market offerings and the formation of communities with common interests, the users of which help develop, implement, and release new products (Tapscott, 2010, p. 350; Tapscott, Williams, 2008, p. 200). Cooperation

with companies and other consumers within the emerging prosumer communities gives users satisfaction and pleasure and is a form of fun (Ritzer, Jurgenson, 2010, pp. 13–31). In fact, it is all the more true because prosumers are most often young, committed, and people open to cooperation who want to contribute to the process of creating market offerings, such as creating new solutions and tailoring products to their needs (Tapscott, 2010, p. 357). Prosumers are primarily the network generation, which treats the world as a place of creation, not just consumption, and therefore they create prosumer communities, within which they share information on products, work to individualise the market offering, and modify products (Tapscott, Williams, 2008, p. 187). For this to be possible, the products offered by companies should be flexible and “editable”, offer many possibilities and reflect the individual tastes of customers (Tapscott, 2010, p. 354). With prosumption, products and services are subject not only to modification, but also to discussion, and are shared with other network members. The involvement of consumers, especially networked consumers, by sharing information and experience can change the consumer’s position in the market, who, from a consumer of products, becomes a partner for the company, and thus can influence the reduction of information asymmetry between the consumer and the producer. Prosumers become informed consumers and expect to be able to actively participate in the creation of the final product. Therefore, companies should not marginalise these issues and try to meet prosumers by providing them with the right platforms, tools or materials that allow them to engage in their activities in order not to lose such potential opportunities for broadly improving their offerings “with the help” of consumers.

#### PROSUMERISM – POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS

currently, there is a departure from the traditional business model, in which customers were only recipients of products/services in the market, towards a model in which customers, with knowledge and skills, have the opportunity to engage in the value co-creation process. Prosumption is a factor of change and innovation on a social and economic level, and is part of a new model referred to as the sharing economy, entrepreneurial economy, creativity, and network economy (Payne et al., 2009, pp. 379–389) or open, collaborative, partnership economy, which Tapscott and Williams refer to as *wikinomics* (Tapscott, Williams, 2008). To meet these challenges, modern companies often become open, distributed companies, i.e. cooperating with consumers who become employees of the company, and their involvement, activity and willingness to co-create value is important for companies (Tapscott, Williams, 2008, p. 30). According to Tapscott, prosumerism is beneficial to both consumers and producers, as customers receive products tailored to their needs, while companies do not have to pay for their research and development (Tapscott, Williams, 2008, p. 191). Consequently, through prosumerism, companies

can increase sales and marketing as well as promotional potential, improve their image, create communities of partners, create new solutions, improve their market position, educate buyers and increase their market awareness, and establish and maintain good relationships with buyers (Baruk, 2017, pp. 32–33). According to D. Hoyer *et al.*, the positive effects for companies include: cost reduction (inexpensive input from customers, reduced input from employees), increased effectiveness of products/services (better adapted to consumer needs, better perception, better differentiation), strengthened customer-company relationships, higher probability of success and faster diffusion (products/services tailored to customer needs and more hype around them, faster information transfer), savings on marketing expenses (more customer enthusiasm and whisper marketing), savings on customer education and other support activities, and early warning of potential problems with a new product (Hoyer *et al.*, 2010, pp. 283–296). Surveys conducted among managers indicate that they perceive a number of benefits from the prosumption activities of companies. These activities allow, among others, to establish contact with buyers, learn about their opinions and ideas and, through this, create new solutions for the company's brand. On the other hand, openness to cooperation and closeness to customers allows gaining the sympathy of customers, as well as determining the profile of future buyers (Wereda, Pinzaru, 2023, pp. 84–88). Through cooperation with consumers, a company can also shape the quality of its products and services by adapting to their expectations and needs, thereby increasing their satisfaction and loyalty (Przybek *et al.*, 2019, pp. 43–48). Prosumerism influences greater efficiency of flexible production, and allows the creation of better and, at the same time, cheaper products that meet consumer demands (Jin *et al.*, 2022, pp. 1–21). The value of consumers' prosumption activities also becomes apparent in crisis situations. This was shown, for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the actions of prosumers were particularly important for maintaining the companies' operations, mainly in the service sector – prosumers mobilised to ensure the continued provision of services, thereby increasing the resilience to the crisis and the innovativeness of companies during a difficult economic period. Prosumers helped companies and their communities in areas such as purchasing, delivery, logistics, and promotion by, among others, buying and delivering products to those in need and the elderly, making products themselves (which reduced the negative effects of broken supply chains), posting videos and information on social media on how to cope with challenges, or promoting local products (Lang *et al.*, 2021, pp. 176–189).

However, in addition to the opportunities and positive aspects of cooperation with consumers, there are also barriers to such cooperation. On the part of companies, barriers to prosumerism can be concerns about company secrecy, intellectual property, copyrights, information overload, production quality and feasibility, and the possibility of implementing consumer projects (Hoyer *et al.*, 2010, pp. 283–296). Threats to companies arise from reduced company control,

increased complexity in managing goals, encouraging customers to continue working, submitting ideas, problems in selecting consumer ideas, and managing negative feedback. Management of customer expectations and relationships also poses a challenge for companies (Hoyer et al., 2010, pp. 283–296). This creates a presumption dilemma for companies—on the one hand, cooperation with consumers involves risk and loss of control, and on the other hand, lack of cooperation can lead to loss of reputation and valuable resources or innovative solutions (Tapscott, Williams, 2008, p. 199). An important issue affecting presumption involvement is the motivation of consumers to co-create with companies. Such motivators include financial, social, technical, and psychological factors. Companies can stimulate co-creation by increasing the benefits to consumers from co-creation and reducing the costs associated with time spent, effort, etc. (Hoyer et al., 2010, pp. 283–296). However, in order to achieve this, the activities must be attractive enough to effectively encourage consumers to do efficient (company-beneficial) activities and not cause the co-creating consumer to feel exploited. Admittedly, according to K. Krzysztofek, prosumers are motivated by the need to create, which gives them a sense of influence, participation, empowerment and self-realisation (Krzysztofek, 2014, p. 52). Prosumers are motivated not only by creativity and autonomy, but also by the skills and competencies they gain from working with companies and other consumers (Jin et al., 2022, pp. 1–21), but their “activities” can be very financially measurable for companies (revenues, profits) and it is natural that they expect to be compensated for the value they contribute. Although there are other positive effects of presumption for consumers, such as receiving a product that is not available on the market, higher levels of trust in the company, involvement of other prosumers, higher levels of decision-making, responsibility and power, building mutual loyalty and participation in a social network overseen by the company that allows building relationships with other prosumers and consumers with similar interests, and lower risks of cooperative activities compared to acting alone (Nowacki, 2016, pp. 140–141), researchers point out that prosumerism can also be associated with consumer exploitation, as consumers do the work that was previously done by employees, which in turn leads to job losses. Controlling consumers through acquired information and data about them, analysing their behaviour and learning about their lives, preferences, and needs also constitutes a problem (Fuchs, 2011, pp. 10–12). G. Ritzer points out that the prosumer model shows, on the one hand, a tendency not to pay for the work of consumers and, on the other hand, to offer products for free. Companies are not willing to pay consumers for the work they perform, but consumers also want to have access to free products and solutions. Hence, companies provide many free tools in basic versions to their consumers in order to encourage them to cooperate (Ritzer, Jurgenson, 2010, pp. 13–31). In turn, E. Comor indicates another aspect of presumption, namely its impact on the individual’s sense of alienation. Despite the fact that in the era of presumption, where individuals produce and co-

create value for self-realisation and do not use their creative potential for salaries, the majority of users are controlled by companies and remain powerless tools in the hands of capital and companies. Meanwhile, only a few, thanks to their skills, do not experience alienation. Prosumption, as Comor points out, becomes a tool for making money, and the existing labour-capital relationship is perpetuated. In addition, he argues that prosumers mostly engage in promotional, entertainment or branding activities (Comor, 2010, pp. 439–454), which often do not match the aspirations or expectations of prosumers.

B. Mika describes prosumption as a would-be revolution, as it was supposed to revolutionise the relationship between production and consumption, but has become another tool for manipulation and marketing activities by companies (Mika, 2014, p. 94), which distorts the idea of prosumption and reduces it to a kind of often costless outsourcing of certain activities/tasks (mostly less attractive ones). However, it does not necessarily have to be this way – the development of new technologies, which allow everyone to communicate and cooperate with everyone anywhere and anytime, prompts companies to change their business model. Instead of a company-centric approach, (where companies set the terms of cooperation, initiate activities, make decisions on projects and retain profits), a prosumer-centric approach takes place, where customers are partners for companies, and cooperation takes place on their terms, in their networks and for their needs, and the company shares profits with them (Tapscott, Williams, 2008, p. 217). In the company-centric model, companies take a customer-centric approach, allowing customers to adapt products to themselves, thereby maintaining control, and the company does not take advantage of the innovation and knowledge of its consumers. The prosumer-centric model, on the other hand, is based on partnership, where companies treat consumers as partners, not just customers, and share benefits with them, making it worthwhile for consumers to engage in joint activities. Obviously, the second model is a desirable one, and not only for consumers, as it is also beneficial for companies prospectively because it is the only one that can ensure that both parties can be winners in the process, unlike the first model, in which the company is usually the only tangible beneficiary.

#### CONSUMER OPINIONS ON POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF COMPANY PROSUMERISM – SURVEY RESULTS

The paper presents survey results conducted online in 2022 on consumer opinions regarding opportunities and threats of prosumerism of companies. The research tool was a survey questionnaire. Consumers' opinions on the prosumerism of companies with particular attention to the expectations, opportunities, and benefits, as well as fears and threats for companies related to prosumerism, constituted the subject of this study.

The survey was conducted online using the CAWI method in a consumer panel with a sample of 1,000 adults (18 years and older), by the research company. A total of 510 women and 490 men participated in the survey. In terms of education, about 44% each consisted of individuals with secondary and higher education (including a bachelor's degree), with the remainder with vocational education (11%) and primary education (2%). The largest percentage of the respondents were individuals in the 30–39 age group (30%); about 1/4 of the respondents were each aged 18–29 and 40–49, and the remainder (about 1/5) were those aged 50 and over. Among the respondents, 72% were employed, 12% were pensioners, and about 8% each were students/pupils or unemployed.

The aim of this study was to get to know consumers' opinions about the prosumerism of companies, the opportunities and challenges, and the risks associated with it and their conditions. The results presented in the paper are part of a broader study of company prosumerism. This paper is the beginning of a series of subsequent papers devoted to analysing consumers' opinions about companies' prosumer activities, and currently focuses only on analysing the benefits and risks of prosumerism.

Following A. Baruk, the study adopted three dimensions of prosumption: innovative, image and relational. Through cooperation with consumers, companies have opportunities to introduce new solutions, build a positive corporate image and form close relationships with consumers (Baruk, 2017, pp. 88–111). It was assumed that prosumptionism, based on the respondents' evaluation, is beneficial for companies in all three of the above-mentioned dimensions. Consumers perceive many positive aspects of prosumerism for companies, but also point to problems of threats associated with it.

Respondents recognise many benefits for companies from cooperation with consumers in relational, innovative, and image dimensions. Respondents point primarily to gaining feedback on products and services (64%), new ideas and consumers' perspectives on market offerings (40.9%), greater consumer satisfaction (41.4%), and thus consumer loyalty (32.2%). According to respondents, thanks to such activities, companies eliminate market-unsuitable products/services (30.3%), and by gaining feedback from consumers, they can eliminate product defects (20.5%) or have the possibility to modify their offerings in accordance with consumer expectations (24%). In addition, cooperation with consumers deepens relationships with consumers (14.4%) and enables the company to build a positive image (11.7%). Respondents also indicate that companies become innovative and create new solutions thanks to consumers' ideas (21.7%), thus increasing the chances of market success (15.1%). The fewest respondents (only 4.4%) indicated cost reduction and less use of their resources. This may result from consumers' belief that their activities are insignificant, not generating high costs, or ignorance about companies' processes and the costs they generate.



Table 1. Benefits for companies resulting from cooperation with prosumers

Indications of respondents	TOTAL		Men		Women		Chi-square test	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	$\chi^2$	p
deeper relationships with consumers	144	14.4	77	15.7	67	13.1	1.35	0.246
positive corporate image	117	11.7	48	9.8	69	13.5	3.37	0.066
elimination of market-unsuitable products/ services and thus reduction of costs	303	30.3	141	28.8	162	31.8	1.06	0.304
consumer loyalty	322	32.2	171	34.9	151	29.6	3.20	0.073
possibility to modify according to consumers' expectations	240	24.0	102	20.8	138	27.1	5.34	0.021
possibility to anticipate changes concerning consumer preferences	93	9.3	47	9.6	46	9.0	0.10	0.755
less use of own resources/cost reduction	44	4.4	28	5.7	16	3.1	3.95	0.047
establishing relationships with consumers	61	6.1	26	5.3	35	6.9	1.06	0.304
gaining feedback from consumers to eliminate product defects	205	20.5	88	18.0	117	22.9	3.81	0.051
gaining new ideas from consumers and their view on market offerings	409	40.9	184	37.6	225	44.1	4.46	0.035
acquiring consumers' opinions and knowledge	640	64.0	314	64.1	326	63.9	0.00	0.958
increasing innovation and creating new solutions	217	21.7	99	20.2	118	23.1	1.27	0.261
chances of market success	151	15.1	75	15.3	76	14.9	0.03	0.858
greater consumer satisfaction	414	41.4	202	41.2	212	41.6	0.01	0.912

Source: own research. Answers do not add up to 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Women more often recognise opportunities in prosumption for eliminating products that are not right for the market, the possibility of modifying products, gaining feedback to eliminate product defects, as well as gaining new ideas from consumers and their perspective on the company's offerings, which leads to increased innovation and the creation of new solutions, and thus shapes the company's positive image. Men, on the other hand, more likely indicated that prosumption allows building deeper relationships with consumers, which influences their greater loyalty. A similar percentage of women and men are of the opinion that prosumption leads to greater consumer satisfaction and enables the acquisition of consumer opinions and knowledge, which gives the possibility of anticipating changes and consumer preferences, and thus provides opportunities for market success.

In general, gender does not significantly differentiate respondents' opinions, however – for a significance level of  $p < 0.05$  – a significant relationship occurred for three statements. Women were more likely than men to perceive that cooperation with prosumers provides the opportunity to anticipate changes in behaviour and consumer preferences ( $p = 0.021$ ), and the opportunity to obtain consumer feedback ( $p = 0.035$ ), while men were significantly more likely to perceive less use of their own resources ( $p = 0.047$ ) (Table 1).

Respondents most often pointed to the benefits of companies' cooperation with consumers in the relational dimension, but they also perceived them in other dimensions. The relational dimension affects them directly, which is why it is so significant to them. Consumers believe that they are important to the company, and that sharing their opinions is an important part of the company's business. At the same time, by sharing their opinions, knowledge and ideas, they become a partner for the company, thanks to which the company can develop its business, both in the innovative dimension by creating new solutions using the consumers' ideas, as well as in the image dimension – building a positive company image open to the environment and consumers.

Prosumptionism also means specific challenges and problems for companies, as the respondents also point out. According to them, prosumptionism is mainly related to the need for constant innovation (33.5%) to meet consumer expectations, and slightly fewer respondents (28%) point to the costs of such cooperation. Other threats included the need to prepare and offer tools for cooperation (20.4%), loss of control over ongoing processes (19.7%), and a shorter product life cycle (18.5%). In addition, involving consumers in a company's activities can bring such problems as consumer disloyalty, difficulty in maintaining consumer involvement, and a lack of consumer trust in other consumers' knowledge of products and services.

**Table 2. Problems and threats for companies related to consumer activity**

Indications of respondents	TOTAL		Men		Women		Chi-square test	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	$\chi^2$	p
lack of sufficient customer knowledge and skills	170	17.0	79	16.1	91	17.8	0.52	0.469
need to offer collaboration tools	204	20.4	104	21.2	100	19.6	0.40	0.526
cooperation organisation costs	280	28.0	130	26.5	150	29.4	1.03	0.310
shorter product life cycle	185	18.5	101	20.6	84	16.5	2.84	0.092
need for continuous innovation	335	33.5	171	34.9	164	32.2	0.84	0.359
risk of disloyalty of the consumers involved	239	23.9	116	23.7	123	24.1	0.03	0.869
difficulty in maintaining customer engagement	153	15.3	71	14.5	82	16.1	0.49	0.485
loss of control over ongoing processes	197	19.7	84	17.1	113	22.2	3.97	0.046
lack of trust in other consumers in their knowledge of products and services	211	21.1	101	20.6	110	21.6	0.14	0.711

Source: own research. Answers do not add up to 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

Women slightly more often indicated the costs of cooperation organisation, difficulties in maintaining customer involvement, loss of control over the processes carried out, or lack of trust in other consumers, and their knowledge of products and services. Men, on the other hand, more often indicated the need to offer tools for cooperation, a shorter product life cycle, and the need for constant innovation. As in the case of benefits, gender does not statistically significantly affect the answers given by respondents. With a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ , significant differences can be observed only for the threat concerning consumer activity and the resulting loss of control over the processes being carried out, where such a threat was perceived most often by women and less by men. The difference is statistically significant only for this indication ( $p = 0.046$ ) (Table 2).

It is important to keep in mind that the opinions expressed concern one party, i.e. consumers, and may differ from the actual threats perceived by the companies. Nevertheless, taking these opinions, consumers direct *de facto* to companies on what they should pay attention to when engaging in cooperation with consumers, especially when it comes to behaviours typical of consumers such as those related to, e.g. loyalty or consumer knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

Cooperation between consumers and companies is important for both companies and consumers, although its forms have been changing over the years. Previously, it mainly consisted of collecting opinions on products/services or testing products released to the market. Currently, in the age of digital society, it is taking on more and more interactive forms. This cooperation can have positive and negative effects for both parties. Research shows that consumers overwhelmingly recognise the need for both parties to cooperate in areas related to the creation of market offerings. Although consumers perceive threats to companies, they believe it brings more benefits. Consumers expect companies to be open to cooperation while expressing their readiness and willingness to engage in value co-creation, but they do not want to do it for free. Consumers unequivocally indicate the necessity of such cooperation on the part of companies, which, according to them, is a condition for keeping up with the market.

Consumers' opinions are important for companies and their planned activities to involve them in the company's operations. There is a need for companies to open up to cooperation with consumers, as it is associated with a number of benefits, such as obtaining information, opinions, and ideas from customers, greater consumer loyalty, and reduced costs by eliminating market misfits, or the ability to modify market offerings in accordance with consumer expectations. This is why it is so important for companies to create platforms and tools that enable and facilitate cooperation with consumers in sharing their opinions, knowledge, and ideas. Companies should also involve consumers in the process of product development, which requires companies to use certain skills to cooperate with consumers at various stages, not just limited to obtaining information or ideas. Through companies' activities aimed at consumers, their involvement can be increased, as they will feel that they co-create the company. This means that companies should create an incentive system for consumers – not only non-financial motivators, but also financial ones, which are important for prosumer behaviours. At the same time, companies should take measures to reduce the disadvantages of such cooperation. The challenge for companies at this point is the proper organisation of cooperation, including the provision of appropriate tools and materials, the security of the company due to the possibility of disloyalty of active consumers, maintaining their commitment or difficulties in cooperation due to insufficient knowledge and skills of consumers and the lack of trust in them.

The paper presents consumers' opinions, i.e. only one party. Therefore, it is justified to conduct a study among companies and learn about their opinions, including the opportunities and threats arising from cooperation with consumers. Nevertheless, these results already indicate the areas to which companies should pay attention when deciding to cooperate with prosumers.

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### Summary

Prosumerism refers to the practices and activities of companies aimed at including and involving consumers in the co-creation of value and market offerings. The involvement of consumers takes various forms, from encouraging consumers to share their opinions and knowledge, modify the market offering, adapt it to their needs, and participate in its creation. Companies, through such activities, respond to the expectations of consumers who are active and do not want to be just passive recipients of the market offering. The paper addresses the issue of prosumptionism of companies in the consumers' evaluation. It presents the research results on the prosumptionism of companies – the benefits, opportunities and threats related to it, as well as consumers' expectations regarding the activities of companies. Although prosumption and prosumerism have become more common and consumers are increasingly prosumers (even though they are often unaware of it), in addition to the perceived opportunities and benefits, problems or threats to companies are also apparent.

*Keywords:* prosumption, prosumerism, consumer, social opinions.

## Prosumeryzm firm – szanse i wyzwania w opinii konsumentów

### Streszczenie

Prosumeryzm to praktyki, działania firm mające na celu włączanie, angażowanie konsumentów we współtworzenie wartości, oferty rynkowej. Angażowanie konsumentów przyjmuje różne formy od zachęcania konsumentów do dzielenia się swoimi opiniami, wiedzą, modyfikowania oferty rynkowej, dostosowywania jej do swoich potrzeb, po udział w jej tworzeniu. Firmy poprzez takie działania odpowiadają na oczekiwania konsumentów, którzy są aktywni i nie chcą być tylko biernymi odbiorcami oferty rynkowej. Artykuł podejmuje problematykę prosumpcjonizmu firm w ocenie konsumentów. Zaprezentowane zostały w nim wyniki badań na temat prosumpcjonizmu firm – korzyści, szanse i zagrożenia z nim związane, a także oczekiwania konsumentów odnośnie działań firm. Bo choć prosumpcja, prosumeryzm stają się coraz powszechniejsze i coraz częściej konsumenci są prosumentami (choć często nie mają świadomości, że są nimi), to oprócz dostrzeżonych szans i korzyści, widoczne są też problemy czy zagrożenia dla przedsiębiorstw.

*Słowa kluczowe:* prosumpcja, prosumeryzm, konsument, opinie społeczne.

JEL: D16, D12, A14.