

- Your background and previous experiences come from logistics to insurance, and now ecommerce – do these industries have anything in common? How did your path lead you in the ecommerce world?

*Before joining Intersport's digital project, I worked for over five years at one of the biggest insurance startups in Poland. Although the insurance products are quite different to what Intersport or The Athlete's Foot (Intersport's retailer of athletic inspired footwear) offer, their business models are largely the same: omnichannel sales. To be where the modern customer wants to meet us - one day it's at our store, the other it'll be an online purchase. The whole experience of omnichannel needs to be built for the customer seamlessly – the same offers, the same prices, the same level of service. This is what a customer expects, and if we cannot offer such a service, within just a few clicks he will already be with our competitors.*

*I have had the chance to work in various industries and to be involved in many interesting projects. This gives me a broad perspective on consumer behavior and needs, as well as on the internal business processes that need to be organized at any company. We are all consumers, and we can all imagine what a good online store might look like, but building the back-office capabilities to go with it is equally as important as developing a good webpage. The back-office, at the end of the day, must be able to deal with thousands of orders that are processed and delivered to customers quickly.*

- Intersport has a strong presence in brick and mortar shops but also online. Is online shopping the future? Or is in-store experience the future in retail in sport and fashion? How do you see the omnichannel strategy developing in the future?

*Intersport needs to be where the consumer is, and we all know that she/he is currently glued to his phone, to social media, and to the internet. Today, a retailer can easily be a solely online player. However, a retailer will not survive as a solely off-line player. We see examples of pure online players developing a brick and mortar presence recently. Likewise, we have many examples of retail chains losing market share because they were not able to build their presence online quickly enough, or at all. SEARS, Toys "R" Us, and RadioShack are just a few examples of big brick and mortar retailers that fell victim to the consumer behavior shift online.*

*Omnichannel seems to be the best way to grow. Our consumers want a choice. One day, they may choose to order some sporting goods online and pick them up at the nearest store. The other day, they might prefer a home delivery after trying the product in store. Intersport needs to be able to offer all the possible options to its customers. Convenience is one of the most important expectations of today's consumer. I strongly believe that omnichannel is the only way to make the customer satisfied – to let her/him visit and enjoy our stores, get advice from our specialists, experience the products firsthand, and at the same time have the ability to check out product features on our webpage, with a fast check-out order accessible.*

*Intersport, with its over 120 stores (+13 The Athlete's Foot stores) in the region, is in a unique position to offer such an experience. This is why, for the last 2 years, Intersport has been developing a strong online presence for the Intersport retail chain as well as for The Athlete's Foot.*

*Online is the reality of today, and omnichannel is the story of tomorrow. What next? Probably more consumer-oriented options – virtual reality webshops, mobile retail stores that come to your door and allow you to check out shoes in front of your house. We just need to keep manufacturing the next generation shopping experience.*

- You will host a talk at this year's Ecommerce Day in Zagreb about the challenges of digitalization – can you already make a sneak peek about your presentation?

*Each eCommerce project is different and has its own challenges. Sometimes it is a tight budget, sometimes some technical or regulatory requirement – I've experienced all of this in my previous assignments. I would like to share with the audience our journey through Intersport's digitalization, highlighting some of the main challenges we encountered. I cannot uncover what exactly the challenges were, as I do not want to remove the enjoyment of my presentation. However, I hope that this presentation will be interesting for all and will give the audience a good sense of the tasks we faced and how we coped with them.*

- What is the recipe for building an excellent (digital) marketing team?

*To find employees who want to develop their skills and support them every day. It does not matter whether you find motivated employees inside or outside the firm. The insiders may know more about the business, products, and consumers, but outsiders can bring in additional skills and external perspective to the group. It is always hard to find good people, especially those with digital skills. Demand for such personnel is high, and digital heads can easily find a new job.*

*Therefore, it is important to build something like a "startup atmosphere," in which we all feel that we build new things and progress every day. It is also important that employees can see strong leadership in a project- to have a clear view of what we are working on, why we make it that way, and who is responsible for what. Persistence, optimism, and energy are what help us to achieve our goals.*

*We have a small library in our marketing/digital division where the newest books related to digital and marketing appear every month. We do care about the development of our employees, and we want them to improve their skills every single day.*

- Change is the only constant in (business) lives – why do we need to accept this as soon as possible?

*We can fight with our competitors, but we cannot fight with the consumers. If consumers' expectations are changing, if they are visiting their phones more often, then we need to follow this trend. And we need to be quick, otherwise consumers may already be going somewhere else.*

*Of course, we all try to be one step ahead of the trends – as Steve Jobs once said, "people don't know what they want until you show it to them." I hope this will be our next challenge, and that it will be met successfully. 😊*