

Nürnberg, Germany 14.–17.2.2018

# VIVANESS2018

into natural beauty



## VIVANESS: Elfriede Dambacher column

### The future begins now

Sometimes I find the speed at which digitalization is challenging us dizzying. This became particularly clear to me at this year's Natural Cosmetics Conference in Berlin, which took place at the end of September. As both the conference's programme director and a consumer, I was fascinated as I followed the presentations of various experts on how digitalization is going to change our lives. And we're not talking about this happening at some point in the future, but right now, immediately! We really are already in the middle of a massive change that is encompassing and having an impact on many areas of our lives. The smartphone has only just turned 10, but has already changed our communication and information behaviour completely in its short life. This knowledge machine makes it possible to communicate easily and much more specifically, and to collect information that would have been difficult to find even just a few years ago.

It is also undeniable that smartphones have led to major changes in shopping behaviour. The "customer's journey", a widely used shopping behaviour term, is changing enormously – regardless of whether you are a manufacturer, a service provider or a retailer, and you should do all you can to prepare for these changes. Digitalization is a matter for managers to deal with, and those who don't have any knowledge in this area should simply opt for a new direction and work with organizations such as start-ups to speed up the process.

The Internet is already the number-one information channel today, but items are still purchased both online and from physical stores. And international trade experts are agreed that things will remain that way. Sure, online trade will continue to increase, but shopping at retailers' physical premises is definitely not in danger becoming a thing of the past. Pure demand satisfaction is occurring through online purchases more and more, but the desire to just look around and discover new products in great shopping centres is just as strong. Opportunity lies in the combination of options. Did you know that one in four women already like to arrange an appointment with a member of staff online before they go shopping to ensure they will receive competent advice when they get to the store?

Another thing I found out at the conference is how much product ranges are going to change. Standard is out. The cosmetics market and, of course, the natural and organic cosmetics market will fluctuate much more between the poles of demand satisfaction for daily care and premium products. Customer requirements will continue to grow and the speed at which product ranges change will therefore remain high – both at manufacturers and at retailers.

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So is this speed dizzying or not so frenetic after all? Every change begins with the next step, and anyone who takes one step at a time and offers the right products in the right place at the right time can look forward to the future. They just have to take one step at a time!

Elfriede Dambacher, the owner of consultancy firm naturkosmetik konzepte, is an international expert in the natural and organic cosmetics industry, the publisher of various market studies and a book author. [www.naturkosmetik-konzepte.de](http://www.naturkosmetik-konzepte.de)