What does your work on product strategy involve?

Stefan Schmidt: My main objective is thinking about new products that hybris would like to develop in the future and creating new concepts and strategies. I do that by looking into different markets—those in the US, Europe and Asia-Pacific—and then trying to understand the trends taking shape in those markets. I’m like a trendspotter—someone who says, “OK, this is happening everywhere” or, “This is happening on a bigger scale.”

“Continuous investment in the product is our No. 1 priority. The market is changing so rapidly, and we are still learning what is actually possible.”

I think about what each trend means for us as a company, what it means for the product and what we should do in the next three to four years to offer our customers the benefit from such a trend. I report to the senior vice president of strategy and work in the corporate development department, which looks at the long-term corporate strategy in addition to the product.

What are your top three business priorities?

Schmidt: Continuous investment in the product is our No. 1 priority. The market is changing so rapidly, and we are still learning what is actually possible.

One of our top priorities is global growth, especially into Asia-Pacific. We had offices in Hong Kong and Japan, and then we added an office in South Korea. We opened one in Singapore and another in Shanghai. We’d like to have super regions—the US and the rest of North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific—that all contribute equally to overall revenues with double-digit growth.
We also want to cement our position as a leader in the commerce software space. The SAP acquisition works very well for us in this regard. What we bring to the table is our ability to enable customer interaction across all the different touchpoints and to fulfill the omnichannel, omnicommerce vision that SAP, hybris and our customers share.

“eMarketer offers us insights into customer behavior and trends across the globe, whether it’s B2C commerce, marketing effectiveness or how customers are actually consuming marketing messages.”

How has eMarketer helped you solve some of your business needs and challenges?

Schmidt: eMarketer offers us insights into customer behavior and trends across the globe, whether it’s business-to-consumer (B2C) commerce, marketing effectiveness or how customers are actually consuming marketing messages. Although many of the reports are geared toward companies that are actually our customers, so they can better understand which market they want to go into, we can take this data and derive ideas about what kind of products we would like to develop. Hopefully those products will solve the challenges highlighted in eMarketer’s reports. So when someone reads that report and wonders, “How am I going to do that?” hopefully we have developed a product that offers a solution.

Can you offer an example of an eMarketer asset that is particularly helpful?

Schmidt: For us, the Digital World Atlas is very interesting. We also found a report about the adaptation of Facebook for commerce very interesting because it showed how e-commerce has evolved in the past few years and the role it’s playing. It gave us confirmation that we are right on track with what we think. eMarketer reports are really outstanding and give very good insights—they provide details that are hard to find.

Some of the reports about how consumers in China use the internet and behave online really helped us to understand the kind of products we need to develop for the market in China to make our customers more successful. I want our own marketing team to use eMarketer more to optimize our marketing activity.