

# Analysis, Comparison and Optimization of Online-Shops

## Masterarbeit

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades „Master of Science (M.Sc.)“  
im Studiengang Wirtschaftswissenschaft der Wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Fakultät  
der Leibniz Universität Hannover

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Hannover, den 31. März 2015

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# 1 Introduction

In modern times, the digitalization of everyday life affects society and economics to an increasing extent. In particular, internet activities are changing more and more economical structures and human behavior in a manner that was inconceivable as recently as a few decades ago. In this context, electronic commerce is gaining continuously in importance and transforms online businesses as well as corresponding shopping habits of consumers around the world. The opportunity of trading goods over the internet has opened a variety of transacting possibilities for both sellers and buyers (cf. Treutner/Ostermann 2011, p. 8). Experts are in agreement about the general perception that manufacturing companies can only survive in growing competition if the development of e-commerce is taken into account and appropriate corporate strategies on the internet are designed (cf. Fost 2014, p. 169). According to John Chambers, CEO of *Cisco Systems*, e-commerce companies indicate that they understand the economic future (cf. Fost 2014, p. 7). In general, sales on the internet take place by use of online-shops because of a wide range of benefits. Due to rising online-shopping activities, the configuration of online-shops provides the basis for effective e-commerce success. In recent years, the number and quality of e-shops have increased tremendously whereby all prosperous companies are present on the web. Appropriate decisions concerning promising success factors of online-shops and related processes are of essential importance in order to set oneself apart from competitors. The development and continuous optimization are therefore most significant for a suitable online presence and require structured implementation measures.

In consequence of steadily e-commerce growth, the relevance for research and practice is unabated further on. Especially, the analysis of key success factors in view of online-shop development and optimization constitute the emphasis of current investigations. However, several research gaps in this field are existing and give ample scope for further examination. For this reason, the work on hand is concerned with these issues of online-shop advancements. While previous studies were mainly focusing on e-commerce success factors at a higher level, this academic paper is concentrating on the analysis and elaboration of specific key factors which are highly significant for the appropriate online-shop optimization.

Hence, the *core target* of the following investigation consists in the identification and evaluation of promising solutions in relation to online-shop configuration including convenient concepts, success factors, shop system providers as well as implementation measures. For that purpose, the investigation is conducted by use of a practical single-case study within corporate environment. Moreover, particular focal points are specified in this research study. To these belong the predominantly consideration of manufacturer perceptions, the sale of goods, business-to-consumer transactions and coherences within a German context.

The paper is structured as follows: In *Chapter 2*, the theoretical background is elaborated for the understanding of thematic relationships. At this, the current state of the art is presented by means of a comprehensive literature search. The subsequent two chapters are capturing the single-case study. *Chapter 3* provides general and case-specific corporate information as transition between theoretical background and practical study. *Chapter 4* comprises all components of the empirical investigation. Initially, the procedure of the study is illustrated and research questions are declared which have to be replied during the examination. In this context, an employee survey and a management workshop are conducted to identify relevant online-shop success factors and create a requirements catalog for further investigation stages. Afterwards, optimization concepts and appropriate online-shop solution providers are recognized and evaluated. Furthermore, case-specific findings and recommendations are given. In *Chapter 5*, implications and references for research and practice are derived from generated investigation results of the single-case study. *Chapter 6* reflects selected limitations of the work. Finally, *Chapter 7* contains the conclusion with major results and insights as well as a thematic outlook in reference to additional research and future expectations.

## 7 Conclusion and Outlook

Nowadays, e-commerce represents a vital sales channel for both sellers and buyers. Online-shopping activities are gaining more and more in importance, particularly in comparison to alternative stationary or partial stationary distribution methods. The growing mobility of consumers together with increasing purchases by the use of portable terminals such as laptops, tablets and smartphones is strengthened this development additionally. Hence, companies are committed to move with the times and participate in the business on the web. E-commerce should be perceived as chance because of the elimination concerning spatial and temporal boundaries as well as reduced transaction costs. The global presence facilitates the possibility that companies are able to operate internationally and reach all consumers virtually around the world. Usually, successful web presences are realized by the use of online-shops. At this, only an appealing e-shop ensures that the company has the ability to withstand competition. For this reason, the development and continuous optimization of online-shops are playing an important role relating to successful e-commerce activities.

The work on hand has concentrated on illustrating the issues of online-shop development and optimization theoretically proven through existing literature as well as empirically analyzed by means of the single-case study in corporate environment. In this context, the investigation has adequately elaborated the core target mentioned at the beginning that is characterized by the identification and evaluation of promising solutions with reference to online-shop configuration including convenient concepts, success factors, shop system providers and implementation measures. To begin with, it could be pointed out that in addition to the initial development of online-shops various optimization concepts are available. To these belong the simple optimization of an existing shop, the adaption to another appealing e-shop or the comprehensive development of an entirely new shop. Beyond that, significant online-shop success factors have been recognized and verified with respect to individual relevance. At this, components in connection with convenience, usability and content should be primarily considered. Moreover, several online-shop solution providers have been identified and evaluated including software producers as well as IT developers. Even implementation possibilities concerning optimization procedures and measures have been presented. With reference to these issues several recommendations were given at last.

It should be noted that selection decisions and specifications of convenient concepts, significant online-shop factors, suitable software systems, reasonable solution partners as well as adequate implementation measures are generally dependent on individual company requirements. Hence, online-shop optimization projects are hardly generalizable because of highly different corporate conditions. Nonetheless, e-commerce solutions with regard to online-shop development or optimization exist for each company with individual requirements and conditions of any size or industry sector. Despite the tremendous growth of internet activities and e-commerce in detail over the last years, a lot of potential is not exhausted so far so that there is still much space for online businesses to grow (cf. Lim et al. 2006, p. 234).

Because of changing consumer demands and technological possibilities, the research area of internet businesses is altering on a permanent basis so that also success factors are subject to dynamic progression (cf. Ahrholdt 2010, p. 247). Therefore, continuous analyses are necessary in order to recognize changes and implement adaptations. For this, a number of analytical methods are available. Beside the already mentioned techniques such as surveys or workshops, companies have the ability to analyze benchmarks in view of other appealing e-shops. Even neuronal methods, for instance Eye-Tracking, will gain in importance prospectively.

Subsequent to investigations of this academic paper further or supplementary studies should be performed. In particular, the strength of single components, inter-correlations and connections with psychological or behavioral constructs are attractive research fields. Moreover, detailed investigations of individual industry sectors or product categories could provide outcomes that are more precise. Even different target groups, consumer types, cultural environments or countries can be considered separately. In future, the focus of research and practice should be especially on investigations of innovative online-shop success factors such as personalization and linkages to mobile or social commerce.