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Autore	Asdecker Björn
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Sommario/riassunto	If company representatives have long laughed at the mail order business (Internet, catalog, teleshopping) in the past, it is now an established distribution channel. A quantitative classification manifests the development described. While consumer spending has stagnated for years and even declined slightly after adjusting for inflation, the number of mail order companies almost quadrupled from 2006 to 2013. The growth is largely due to online shopping. Currently, the share of sales in the mail order business, with a rapidly increasing trend, is approx. The central characteristic of the mail order business is the spatial separation of supply and demand. Consumers only have the opportunity to fully inform themselves about the condition and nature of the goods upon delivery, i.e. after the purchase contract has been concluded. This deficit can lead to the fact that delivered products do not meet customer expectations. In addition, customer needs can change in the period between ordering and delivery. Both circumstances favor returns, since customers consider whether the product benefit remaining after the end of the cancellation period exceeds the purchase price adjusted for the transaction costs incurred. If this is not the case, there will be a return. Returns management is

therefore a fundamental part of the mail order business model. Despite great practical relevance, there are only a few topics relevant to the topic in the German publication space. This is where the present thesis comes in, develops a theoretical foundation, derives a research agenda and contributes to the progress of research with three empirical studies. In addition, specific recommendations for action are developed for operational practice in German mail order.

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